

## P R E F A C E

One of the bitterest debates in American history took place at midcentury, when the Republic of China, our friend and ally in World War II and the object of our most vigorous Protestant missionary enterprise, went over to "the enemy": atheistic communism. Americans could not believe that China had made this choice freely. Its adherence to the "World Communist Conspiracy," many thought, must have been coerced both by Soviet manipulation and by the treasonous actions of American diplomats and politicians. We had "lost" China because some Communist mastermind in the American government had deliberately sabotaged the efforts of Chiang Kai-shek (a Methodist) to defeat Mao Tse-tung in the Chinese civil war. After Mao won the war in 1949, the same Communist mastermind tried to influence the U.S. Department of State to recognize Mao's People's Republic and sell the remnant Nationalists on Taiwan down the river.

The "Who Lost China?" debate intensified in 1950, when Kim Il-sung attacked the South Korean government under Syngman Rhee. South Korea was an American protectorate in the same sense that China had been. MacArthur's successful early prosecution of the Korean War lessened the scapegoating over China, but when the Chinese armies joined the North Koreans and smashed the U.S. Eighth Army in December 1950, American fear and outrage became uncontrollable. The search for a scapegoat expanded: whoever had lost China had also lost Korea.

Harry Truman caught much of the blame, and the damage to his popularity because of these disasters in Asia seared the consciousness of American politicians for a generation. He was not the only person to suffer from the loss of China. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, General George Marshall, Ambassador Philip Jessup, and a handful of China specialists in the foreign service also came under attack. But a prominent China scholar who had never been in the State Department at all caught most of the blame when the American inquisition escalated in 1950: Owen

Lattimore. Lattimore was dead center in the gunsights of the politicians, journalists, Chinese Nationalist operatives, American Legionnaires, professional anti-Communists, internal security alarmists, and religious leaders who made up the China lobby. Lattimore was alleged to be the shadowy Communist mastermind behind American policy in Asia.

Two decades after the attack on Truman, Acheson, and Lattimore, a Republican who had been part of the attack, Richard Nixon, reversed course and began negotiations with the People's Republic of China. Nixon could do so because he could not be outflanked on the right.

Four decades after the midcentury attack on Democratic treason, another Republican president, George Bush, came full circle, defending continued friendship with a repressive Maoist government in Peking against almost universal outrage over the slaughter in Tiananmen Square. Lattimore did not live quite long enough to savor the irony. He died in May 1989.

Lattimore, a Johns Hopkins University professor specializing in China and Asia, became a headline figure when Senator Joseph R. McCarthy charged him with being the "top Soviet spy, the boss of the whole ring of which Hiss was a part" in the United States. Lattimore at that time was *persona non grata* in the Soviet Union, and this canard would not fly, even in the cold war atmosphere of the times. McCarthy downgraded Lattimore to merely "the architect of our Far Eastern policy," which still made him responsible for the loss of China. Lattimore was not only the alleged mastermind of U.S. Asian policy but also a heretic for advocating diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China. For those who did not buy the conspiracy charge, the heresy was sufficient damnation. The charges against him have never died; they are enshrined in our tribal memory.

Now that records of behind-the-scenes maneuvering during the mid-century Red Scare are becoming available, it is time that the full story be brought out. Our tribal memory needs correction. Nowhere in print are the corruption and viciousness of the forces behind Lattimore's persecution exposed. Even reputable scholars accept the conclusion that where there was so much smoke, there must have been some fire. According to this reasoning, since Hiss and the Rosenbergs were found guilty by juries of their peers, Lattimore was probably guilty also, even though never convicted.

To understand the United States since the 1950s, one must understand the pathology of that decade. A major symptom of that pathology was

the U.S. pretense that the rump Chinese Nationalist government on Taiwan was the legitimate government of China and that we should therefore refuse to recognize the People's Republic. It was the furious argument over the recognition of Peking that drew me into the China policy arena. In 1954 I was directing the intercollegiate debate program at the University of Pittsburgh. College and university debate coaches that year selected as the national debate topic "Resolved: That the United States Government should extend diplomatic recognition to the Communist Government of China." College debating is not usually a high-profile activity, but in 1954 the choice of the recognition topic attracted the wrath of a vast constituency. Hearst, Scripps Howard, and McCormick Patterson newspapers began a crusade to shut down this subversive activity. The Chiang Kai-shek bloc in Congress joined in. The conservatives partially succeeded: West Point, Annapolis, teachers' colleges in Nebraska, Catholic colleges in Ohio, and other skittish institutions canceled debates on this topic.

On Pearl Harbor Day, 1954, the *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, a Hearst paper, published a column by E. F. Tompkins under the headline "Coddling Communism: Campus Propaganda." Tompkins attacked the University of Pittsburgh for holding a tournament on the recognition topic. In each of these terrible debates one team would have to "advocate the Communist cause." Pitt trustees read the *Sun-Telegraph*, and some of them phoned Pitt's acting chancellor, Charles Nutting, inquiring, "Who's the subversive professor indoctrinating Pitt debaters?"

A strong believer in First Amendment freedoms, Nutting fended off the nervous trustees, and so far as I know, my career was not damaged by the Hearst attack. But the view that debating a topic such as recognition was a subversive activity stimulated anguished reflection, leading me to a six-year investigation of U.S. China policy and the publication in 1961 of *Recognition of Communist China? A Study in Argument*. I concluded that the arguments in favor of recognition were strong.

Not until 1977, however, did my path cross that of the preeminent advocate of recognition: Lattimore. As we talked, it became clear that this man not only had been a fearless opponent of the American inquisition but also had led a fascinating life. He began to tell me about it. When his Freedom of Information documents began to come from the FBI in 1978, he was living in France, and he commissioned me to read and evaluate them. This work led to a decade of correspondence, hundreds of hours of interviews, and access to Lattimore's private papers.

This book is the result. Lattimore had begun his memoirs but never finished them. I have had access to his manuscript and have borrowed parts of it, but the basic story and the judgments of his career and opinions are my own.

This book is not just a biography; it is a study in American political demonology.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### *Top Soviet Spy*

Until 1950 Owen Lattimore was a typically inner-directed, iconoclastic scholar. The constraints on his independence were self-chosen and only mildly inhibiting. No organizational bureaucracy stifled his creative thought, neither the Institute of Pacific Relations, nor Johns Hopkins, nor even the Chinese Nationalist government. He said what he thought, and it was often unconventional.

In 1950 all this changed. He found his life taken charge of by lawyers, his privacy invaded by reporters and government sleuths, and his formerly freewheeling discourse forced to conform to the end of proving that he was not a tool of the Kremlin. For five and a half years the inquisition ran his life. The Lattimore story became a part of America's anti-Communist pathology.

The year began happily enough when President Truman announced disengagement from the struggle in China on January 5. The *White Paper* had exacerbated Republican dissatisfaction with China policy; Asia-first senators were pressing for a commitment to the remnant Nationalist regime on Taiwan. Truman wanted to put a stop to this talk. Disregarding the advice of his staff and of Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson (but agreeing with Secretary of State Dean Acheson), Truman read a statement at his morning press conference January 5: the United States had no predatory designs on Taiwan and would not establish military bases there, nor would it interfere in the Chinese civil war.<sup>1</sup>

Lattimore was pleased. He knew that American policy in Asia had to be built on the reality of nationalism and that continued support of a discredited regime could only increase Asian resentment at American meddling.

A week later, in Acheson's famous "defense perimeter" speech, the administration clarified its Asian policy further. Military authorities, including MacArthur, had drawn a defense line in the Pacific that included Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines, but excluded Taiwan and Korea. This defense line had been reported in the world's press; the Russians already knew well what American plans were. Acheson merely restated them on January 12 in a speech to the National Press Club; but in the heightened tension of 1950 his speech attracted a great deal of attention.<sup>2</sup>

Lattimore also approved of the defense perimeter. He thought South Korea was a loser under Syngman Rhee, who was as out of touch with his people as Chiang had been. He believed, as did the Department of State and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that South Korea was not a viable government and could not defend itself against a Soviet-supported attack from the north. And, like official Washington, he felt that American defense dollars were better spent elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Republican pique at Truman's hands-off stance toward China was intense. The China bloc in Congress, egged on by General Chennault, William Bullitt, the right-wing press, and Chiang's various representatives in the United States, began a long and powerful campaign to support Chiang for an effort to retake the mainland. This campaign was reinforced on January 21, when Alger Hiss was convicted of perjury.

The Hiss case had dragged through the courts all during 1949. A first trial, ending in July with a hung jury, was followed by a second. In both trials Whittaker Chambers was the crucial witness against Hiss. The second jury believed Chambers; and the conspiracy theories of Alfred Kohlberg, up to then generally ignored, received powerful reinforcement. There *were* traitors in the government conspiring to promote Soviet plans for world conquest. Hiss had been at Yalta, where China was "sold down the river." Hiss had been the assistant to Stanley Hornbeck, head of the Far Eastern desk at the State Department. Hiss had been general secretary of the United Nations Founding Conference at San Francisco. Now it was proved to the satisfaction of a jury that Hiss had been a Communist, working all along to deliver China into the hands of the enemy.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of the Hiss conviction to the developing witch-hunt. If this pillar of the foreign policy establishment could be a traitor, treason could be anywhere. Worse still, Secretary Acheson, who presided over the whole conspiratorial apparatus, refused now to disown Hiss. At a press conference January 25 Acheson was asked if he had any comment on the Hiss case. He refused to discuss legal aspects of the case but said friends of Hiss had to make a personal decision.

His own decision had been made: "I do not intend to turn my back on Alger Hiss." The standards that impelled him to this position "were stated on the Mount of Olives and if you are interested in seeing them you will find them in the 25th Chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew beginning with verse 34."<sup>4</sup> Congress, according to Acheson, flew into a tantrum. However motivated Acheson was by Christian charity, his words served as gasoline to the fires of Asia-first resentment.

All writers on the McCarthy years acknowledge that the Hiss verdict convinced a vast constituency that treason in the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt was widespread. It also showed that ex-Communists such as Whittaker Chambers were perceived as credible, and it demonstrated that politicians pursuing subversives could achieve national status, as Nixon did. All of these outcomes were salient for Owen Lattimore.

The tempo of traumatic events early in 1950 continued unabated. It was front-page news for every paper in the country when President Truman announced on January 30 that the United States would develop a hydrogen bomb. And on February 3 Klaus Fuchs, who had worked on the American atomic bomb project during the war but was now in England, confessed that he had passed atomic information to the Russians. Three days later the Republican National Committee announced "Liberty against Socialism" as the major issue of the 1950 congressional elections. The party statement declared: "We advocate a strong policy against the spread of communism or fascism at home and abroad, and we insist that America's efforts toward this end be directed by those who have no sympathy either with communism or fascism."<sup>5</sup> No one realized, that early in the campaign, how many thousands of people would be charged with sympathy for communism.

Lattimore's attention to these events was distracted by a request from the United Nations that he head a technical assistance mission to Afghanistan, exploring the kinds of economic aid appropriate for that country. The timing of this request was awkward. His lecture schedule in 1949 had kept him away from Baltimore more than normal, he had just returned from a three-week trip to India, and the Johns Hopkins Mongol project needed his attention. On the positive side, he strongly supported the UN, and Afghanistan was a part of the Sino-Soviet border he had never visited.

The Afghan mission would require that he be gone the month of March on an exploratory trip and then for the period from June to September to negotiate final agreements with the Afghan government. This was a big chunk of time. He was uneasy about accepting the assignment and wrote

John W. Gardner of the Carnegie Corporation, which supplied the major funding for his Mongol project, that he would not go if Carnegie thought he would be slighting the Mongols. Gardner replied that he thought the Mongol project well enough organized that it could safely be left in the hands of Lattimore's associates while he went to Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> Lattimore therefore accepted and prepared for this new venture. He was to leave March 6.

There was another project to be attended to before he left. The rapid advances of the Chinese Communists into Tibet suggested that that area would be under their control in a year or two. Lattimore believed this overthrow would mean loss to the scholarly world, perhaps permanently, of the priceless manuscripts in Tibetan monasteries. Lattimore talked about prospects for rescuing these manuscripts with Dr. Arthur Hummel of the Library of Congress. Hummel, an orientalist, was convinced that Lattimore was right and suggested that the matter be put to Luther Evans, the Librarian. Lattimore wrote Evans on February 26, 1950: "As country after country comes under communist control it is cut off from the scholarship of the world, as well as from other contacts. There usually follows a scramble in which a few refugee scholars are brought to the United States or other countries and a few books, manuscripts, and other materials are salvaged. Such salvage is, however, just that—unplanned salvage. Tibet is clearly doomed to come under control of the Chinese Communists. There is, however, time for a planned salvage operation. . . . a wealth of material never yet worked on by Western scholars could be brought out during the next few months."<sup>7</sup>

Lattimore then described to Evans the major sources of manuscripts and what might be found; recommended that the Dilowa Hutukhtu be used to negotiate with Tibetan authorities; explained how Indian cooperation could be obtained; and urged prompt action before the curtain was rung down on Tibet. It was a prescient effort. Perhaps, had the United States not contracted inquisition fever, Luther Evans and the Library of Congress might have acquired the treasure trove of Lama Buddhist lore later destroyed in Mao's Cultural Revolution. As it happened, doctrinal purity took precedence over any kind of scholarship, especially esoteric orientalia.

While Lattimore was wrestling with a decision on Afghanistan, the FBI was wrestling with the problem of keeping up with Lattimore. Lacking a wiretap, the Baltimore office had trouble knowing where and when he was traveling. His home in Ruxton was like the farm in Bethel, Vermont: poor cover for spies. As SAC McFarlin complained to Hoover on February

16, "The peculiar location of the LATTIMORE home eliminates any possibility of successful physical surveillance without the aid of a technical surveillance."<sup>8</sup>

The Baltimore office had other troubles. McFarlin was worried about the local vigilantes. After the American Legion put Lattimore on its blacklist, ultrarightists in Baltimore began their own "investigations." Two of them were serious threats to the bureau.<sup>9</sup>

One of the vigilantes was a woman whose name the FBI will not divulge. She had been to the Baltimore FBI office several times, alerting them to Lattimore's subversive influence on impressionable Hopkins students and protesting his alleged role in formulating American China policy. McFarlin told headquarters in his February 16 letter that there was "the ever-present possibility that she will present the matter to the House Committee on Un-American Activities or other persons placed in high political positions in Washington, D.C., in which event there might be undesirable repercussions on the Bureau."<sup>10</sup>

Subsequent serials in the Lattimore file show that the bureau had trouble deciding how to handle the female informant. The matter was serious enough to wind up in the hands of Assistant Director D. M. Ladd. Writing to Hoover on February 17, Ladd recommended that the woman not be contacted again; her charges against Lattimore were trivial. But Hoover reversed Ladd; he did not want HUAC to get potentially important information from an informant directly. His embarrassment at Nixon's getting information from Chambers still rankled. Baltimore was therefore instructed to contact the woman, make sure that she had no new information, and convince her that the bureau was on top of the case. Baltimore found nothing new, and the woman apparently did not go to HUAC.<sup>11</sup>

A more serious private crusade against Lattimore was conducted by Kenneth Hammer, Maryland American Legion commander and chair of its Americanism Commission. According to Daniel H. Burkhardt, who was closely associated with Hammer as adjutant of the Maryland department of the Legion, Hammer was an attorney-investigator who had learned the trade as a military intelligence agent during the war.<sup>12</sup> Burkhardt thought Hammer brilliant; the bureau thought him dangerous. Hammer's activities included efforts to get the Baltimore police to tap Lattimore's telephone, amateur surveillance of Lattimore and the Mongols, and frequent calls to SAC McFarlin. The bureau wanted none of this freelancing. Headquarters Security Division dispatched Lee Pennington, a midlevel bureau official, to dampen Hammer's vendetta against Lattimore.

Pennington and McFarlin called on Hammer at Baltimore headquarters of the Legion February 23, 1950. As Pennington reported to Ladd, "It was pointed out to [Hammer] that we were very much perturbed concerning — activities in the Lattimore case and hoped that all information would be referred to us instead of being disseminated to a number of agencies and a policeman. It was pointed out to [Hammer] the activities of over zealous individuals might undo considerable work on the part of the Bureau and result in individuals under suspicion becoming aware that their activities were being scrutinized." <sup>13</sup>

Hammer agreed to back off, though it must have been hard for him. By the time of the Pennington visit McCarthy was riding high, Lattimore had been named as a dangerous subversive before the Senate, and Hammer's sedulous work was getting him no credit at all.

Joe McCarthy was now getting all the attention, and attention was what he wanted most. His ruthlessness was not channeled, as was Nixon's, to gain him higher office. McCarthy learned early that careful and constructive work, such as he did on the postwar housing problem, had no headline appeal. His publicity improved when he charged into the Malmedy investigation, attacking the U.S. army and defending German SS troops who had massacred American soldiers.<sup>14</sup> In 1949 McCarthy generated considerable notice by red-baiting the *Madison Capitol Times*. But he was still in the minor leagues. Nixon's coup with the Hiss case was the kind of promotion he needed.

McCarthy selected communism as the theme for his famous Wheeling speech on February 9, 1950, and his use of the issue caught fire. He did not content himself with generalized charges of subversion or treason or Communist sympathy. He gave numbers and claimed that his numbers represented current traitors, still working and making policy in the State Department. They were all known as risks to Secretary Acheson, who was protecting them. When the Democrats demanded that he put up or shut up, he named names. That was all it took.

McCarthy stepped up the tempo of the anti-Communist crusade far beyond any other evangelist. We know much about the character of the senator, of his devotion to the scabrous and scatological, from two extensive biographies by Thomas Reeves and David Oshinsky. Daniel Bell and his collaborators in *The Radical Right* show how McCarthy appealed to the status insecurities of both ethnic and religious groups. Richard Fried, Nelson Polsby, and Michael Rogin emphasize the part played in the McCarthy saga by Republican politicians for straightforward political rea-

sons. Edwin Bayley has shown McCarthy's consummate skill at anticipating news deadlines and manipulating the media.<sup>15</sup>

But an adequate account of the McCarthy power must deal with his instinct for reaching the dark places of the American mind. His "proof" was vacuous. Even though he bought the Kohlberg agenda, he did not really address the issues of China policy. He alluded to and presupposed these arguments. His direct appeal was to fear and conspiracy. Robert Griffith's classic book on McCarthy is aptly titled *The Politics of Fear*.

McCarthy sensed the country's need for simple answers to the challenges of the cold war, and he provided them. Clean out the conspirators (Acheson, Jessup, Lattimore), jail the traitorous dentist (Dr. Peress), fire the disloyal military (Marshall, Zwicker), and fortune will again smile on the United States.<sup>16</sup>

He came along when the climate was ready for this message, when many of America's military and masculine self-images had been bruised and battered. He had a technique that his colleagues could only view with awe. Without the McCarthy genius to underwrite the China lobby, the China myths could never have taken such powerful hold. William Knowland may have deserved the disparaging title "Senator from Formosa," but he was an honorable and decent man. Kenneth Wherry may have exaggerated a bit when he told a cheering crowd, while it was still conceivable that Chiang Kai-shek might endure, that "with God's help, we will lift Shanghai up and up, ever up, until it's just like Kansas City," but Wherry would not have descended into gutter politics without McCarthy's guidance.<sup>17</sup> Styles Bridges, Homer Capehart, Bourke Hickenlooper, H. Alexander Smith—these were vigorous partisans, but they were not without honor. It was McCarthy who engineered the descent into diabolism. Senator Arthur Watkins, the ultraconservative Utah Mormon who chaired the McCarthy censure committee, said that McCarthy took us into "depths as dark and fetid as ever stirred on this continent."<sup>18</sup>

For a while it appeared that McCarthy's crusade would abort. The Wheeling speech and his subsequent addresses at Denver, Salt Lake City, and Reno contained nothing substantial, and Democrats were outraged. He did name specific "security risks," citing Hiss, John Service, Harlow Shapley, and two unknowns, but he had little to back up his charges. When he went before the Senate on February 20, he was still talking about these same people and dealing with others who were only numbers. He had no evidence. Senator Robert Taft, called "Mr. Republican" by the pundits, said it was "a perfectly reckless performance."<sup>19</sup> But McCarthy

had gotten attention, and the Democratic leadership established a committee under conservative Maryland Senator Millard Tydings to investigate the loyalty of State Department employees; now McCarthy had a center ring in which to stage his circus. On March 8, two days after Lattimore left for Kabul, the Tydings hearings opened.<sup>20</sup> For Lattimore, these hearings were an affront to many of his State Department friends, but no personal threat. He had never worked for State.

McCarthy was now a magnet for all the Soviet haters and most of the China lovers in the country. Naturally Kohlberg was among those who unloaded their files on this new spokesman. Keeley, Kohlberg's biographer, writes that Kohlberg and McCarthy did not meet until March 23 or 24, after McCarthy had fingered Lattimore before the Senate.<sup>21</sup> But McCarthy had obtained the Kohlberg materials well before that; they had metastasized throughout the fanatical right wing. He got them from J. B. Matthews, from Willard Edwards and Walter Trohan of the *Chicago Tribune*, and from George Sokolsky, Westbrook Pegler, and Howard Rushmore of Hearst, all of whom were primed to provide the China sellout story.

McCarthy's first efforts to give Tydings a comprehensive account of government security risks centered on Judge Dorothy Kenyon, whom he falsely claimed held a prominent State Department appointment and belonged to twenty-eight Communist fronts. But as Oshinsky notes, "McCarthy's verbiage outran his evidence."<sup>22</sup> It developed that Kenyon's only connection with the State Department was as an unpaid delegate to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. For this she did not even need a security clearance. And only one of the subversive connections he charged against her had any cogency. When Kenyon appeared before Tydings, she gave a most convincing account of her loyalty. The case against Kenyon dissolved in short order.

McCarthy then moved on to Philip Jessup, who was a high State Department official but who also came before Tydings fortified with powerful evidence of his patriotism. Then McCarthy took potshots at seven other people, resurrecting the Service case and adding, for the first time, Owen Lattimore. This was on March 13. But it was hit and run, without substantial payoff, and McCarthy continued to lose ground.

He now saw that he needed a flagship case such as Nixon had had. On March 21 he claimed to have found it. Since Hiss had become such a symbol of subversion and had been judged guilty by a jury of his peers, why not top the charges against Hiss? Why not produce the very top of the spy ring, the "boss" of Alger Hiss?

It is not clear how McCarthy settled on Lattimore. Kohlberg would be the most likely source for the idea of making Lattimore into a Soviet spymaster, but if Keeley is correct, and McCarthy did not meet Kohlberg until two days after he promoted Lattimore to the exalted position of "top Soviet spy," Kohlberg could not have talked him into it.

The FBI was bereft of any explanation. Their files contained nothing even suggesting such a role for Lattimore. But they were concerned. Nixon had stolen a march on them in pressing the attack on Hiss. Were McCarthy now to sell a bill of goods on Lattimore, Hoover would indeed look bad.

One explanation of how McCarthy settled on Lattimore made the rounds of the State Department. Francis Sayre, who was in the State Department at the time, attended a conference in Geneva where he heard that McCarthy was going to name him as a spy. Sayre, a past president of the National Council of Churches (NCC), went for help to his old friend John Foster Dulles, also a former NCC president. Dulles allegedly went to see McCarthy and told him to lay off Sayre. McCarthy just laughed. "Sure, why not, we have lots more names in this file," he replied, and without looking, reached into a drawer and pulled out the Lattimore folder.<sup>23</sup> The story has this much plausibility: McCarthy's methods were that haphazard and reckless.

But McCarthy had a brilliant sense of timing and a sure instinct for what an uncritical press and a disillusioned public would buy. He passed the word to newsmen that he was about to name "the top espionage agent in the United States, the boss of Alger Hiss." This announcement got everyone's attention, and he let it simmer for several days. Then he told Jack Anderson, with whom he was on good terms, that "Mr. X" was Owen Lattimore, but this information was not for attribution. He also told Anderson "a Gothic tale about Communist spies who had been landed on the Atlantic coast by an enemy submarine and who hastened to Lattimore for their orders."

Shortly thereafter McCarthy named Lattimore in a secret session of the Tydings committee, and as Anderson puts it, "named him with a finality that was awesome in its bridge-burning: '. . . definitely an espionage agent . . . one of the top espionage agents . . . the top Russian spy . . . the key man in a Russian espionage ring.' Propelled by the gambler's bravura, he raised the bid even higher: 'I am willing to stand or fall on this one' " (Anderson's ellipses).<sup>24</sup>

McCarthy made his executive session charge against Lattimore on March 21. It leaked immediately. Peyton Ford, assistant to the attorney general,

called the FBI late that afternoon to request a summary of the Lattimore file. Attorney General McGrath reported to President Truman, who was vacationing in Florida; in turn, Truman asked that the whole Lattimore file be sent him.<sup>25</sup>

Hoover balked at this request. He could not let the complete file get out of his hands. The White House might blow the anonymity of some of the informants, and illegal and compromising activities by the bureau would be revealed. The bureau had been partly responsible for the collapse of the *Amerasia* case because of illegalities; such a debacle could not be allowed to happen again. So Hoover told Truman that the bureau could not part with the Lattimore file, which by now consisted of ten volumes and several thousand pages. He told McGrath that the case was active; the files were in constant use and "if released would seriously impair our investigative work. . . . As an alternative, I am having prepared a complete summary of the information developed . . . which I am transmitting to Mr. Peyton Ford."<sup>26</sup> This was the "complete summary" that was later shown to the Tydings committee; it was also sent to the president.

But Hoover covered all bases. In case he was ordered to release the complete file, he put a crew to work making photocopies of the whole thing. Ladd, in a memo to Hoover of March 24, reported, "(1) The complete Lattimore file has been photostated in accordance with your instructions. (2) The brief on the Lattimore case is being worked on. Supervisors will work Saturday and Sunday and have it ready Monday." Hoover responded, "I must have this Sunday afternoon."<sup>27</sup>

Just to make sure the director realized how compromising the Lattimore file could be, Supervisor A. H. Belmont instructed the compilers of the "complete summary" to make a list of compromising items. Belmont reported the results to Ladd March 27: "In connection with the preparation of the brief on Owen Lattimore, the volumes of the Lattimore file and the loose mail connected therewith were examined for possible embarrassing or objectionable material contained in each serial for consideration in the event this file is released outside the Bureau." Outcome: 167 items were found to be objectionable or embarrassing.<sup>28</sup> There were wire-taps and intercepted mail involving wholly innocent persons; the luggage search of the Dilowa's belongings; mentions of custodial detention; the warning to Blue Network not to hire Lattimore; the charge that Atlantic-Little Brown was a "Communist tinged" publishing house; unverified information; letters to and from the CIA; names of dozens of informants; bureau derogation of Barmine's credibility; acerbic comments by the director; and records of many illegal surveillances.

Hoover won this battle; he was not required to produce the complete file.

Lattimore found his time in Afghanistan, March 12–29, 1950, both profitable and fascinating. The mission dealt primarily with the Afghan minister of economics, who had a colorful background and was a good negotiator. Shortly after Lattimore arrived, however, he received disturbing cables from Washington. One, arriving March 14, was from Reuters: "SENATOR MC CARTHY IN SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE TODAY SAID YOU HAD COMMUNIST SYMPATHIES AND ADDED 'THIS MAN'S RECORD AS PRO-COMMUNIST GOES BACK MANY YEARS.' WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY REPLY YOU CARE TO MAKE FOR PUBLICATION WORLD-WIDE AND ESPECIALLY IN AMERICA. WE HAVE ARRANGED FOR PRE-PAID REPLY UP TO 100 WORDS ADDRESSED PRESS REUTERS NEWS AGENCY LONDON." <sup>29</sup>

Lattimore did not answer Reuters. A second cable, from Bert Andrews of the *New York Herald Tribune*, arrived the same day. "SENATOR MC CARTHY HAS MADE SERIOUS CHARGES AGAINST YOUR LOYALTY STOP COULD YOU CABLE ME FIVE HUNDRED WORD STATEMENT COLLECT." <sup>30</sup>

This one Lattimore did answer. "UNKNOWN HERE JUST WHAT MC CARTHY SAID THEREFORE DETAILED REPLY IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL RETURN IN FEW DAYS TIME WHEN WILL CONTACT YOU MEANTIME HOPE PUBLICITY WILL RESULT IN WIDE SALE MY BOOKS AND REALIZATION THAT COMMON SENSE IS POSSIBLE IN UNITED STATES FAR EASTERN POLICY." <sup>31</sup>

Nothing further arrived until March 24. By then McCarthy's "top Soviet spy" charge was circulating in Washington. No one had yet published it, but the Associated Press figured they could at least get Lattimore's reaction to use when it was safe to do so. AP cabled him on that date; he received the message in Kabul March 25. "SENATOR MC CARTHY SAYS OFF RECORD YOU TOP RUSSIAN ESPIONAGE AGENT IN UNITED STATES AND THAT HIS WHOLE CASE RESTS ON YOU STOP SAYS YOU STATE DEPARTMENT ADVISOR RECENTLY AS FOUR WEEKS AGO STOP HAVE CARRIED MRS. LATTIMORE'S AND DR. BRONK'S DENIALS OF MC CARTHY CHARGE AT PUBLIC SENATE HEARING THAT YOU PRO-COMMUNIST STOP PLEASE CABLE YOUR OWN COMMENT MC CARTHY'S ACCUSATIONS. BEALE ASSOCIATED PRESS." <sup>32</sup>

Lattimore knew then that he was in a dirty fight. None of his enemies or opponents had ever made such a charge: neither Schumpeter, nor Kohlberg, nor Eastman, nor Kearney, nor anyone else he was aware of. He talked to the members of his mission and to the Afghans; all were of the opinion that he should not break off the mission even two days early because of this nonsense. They were appalled at this new evidence of anti-

Communist hysteria and expressed full confidence in Lattimore. He therefore sent an answer to AP: "MC CARTHY'S OFF RECORD RANTINGS PURE MOONSHINE STOP DELIGHTED HIS WHOLE CASE RESTS ON ME AS THIS MEANS HE WILL FALL FLAT ON FACE STOP EXACTLY WHAT HE HAS SAID ON RECORD UNKNOWN HERE SO CANNOT REPLY IN DETAIL BUT WILL BE HOME IN FEW DAYS AND WILL CONTACT YOU THEN."<sup>33</sup> One of the myths about the Lattimore case is that Lattimore cut short his stay in Afghanistan to deal with the McCarthy charge. In fact, he stayed until the negotiations were completed on March 27.

When Lattimore passed through Karachi on the way home, the public affairs officer in the U.S. embassy there, Merritt N. Cootes, talked to him several times. Cootes reported these conversations to the State Department, and his report wound up in FBI files. (Cootes had the distinction of giving Lattimore a new middle initial. Lattimore had no middle name or initial, but people were always giving him one. Mostly it was "J.," sometimes "M.," and Cootes tried "Owen L. Lattimore.")<sup>34</sup>

During the course of his conversations with Cootes, Lattimore commented on the many predictions in diplomatic circles that the Chinese Communist regime was doomed to an early demise; he thought, to the contrary, that it was solidly entrenched and that it would be "dangerous if America underestimated this new force."<sup>35</sup>

Ambassador-at-Large Philip Jessup had just been through Karachi on a fact-finding tour, and one of his major topics of inquiry had been Indochina. Cootes asked Lattimore what he thought about the American decision to back Bao Dai there; Lattimore said he "thought that the United States had made another mistake in recognizing Bao Dai, just like we did with Chiang." Cootes then noted that Jessup approved of Bao Dai but disparaged Ho Chi Minh; the latter was a shadowy figure who had "not actually been seen by any reliable person since December 1937." Lattimore said one would expect Jessup to say that, but the evidence in French reports indicated that Ho was getting steadily more powerful. Lattimore told Cootes he planned to return to Pakistan in May or June to do the same sort of broad survey he had just done for Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup>

Lattimore's prediction about Indochina was accurate; his assumption that he could continue in the service of the UN was not. The inquisition had already claimed him.

If the FBI, the Justice Department, and the White House were in a turmoil over McCarthy's sudden elevation of Lattimore to top Soviet spy, unofficial Washington was even more agitated. Everybody knew about it, but nobody could put the charge on the record until McCarthy made it

publicly. Nobody, that is, but the intrepid Drew Pearson. Pearson hated McCarthy. He realized the riskiness of being the first to broadcast the story, but he decided that McCarthy was bluffing and hoped he could squelch McCarthy's gamble by a vigorous defense of Lattimore. Accordingly, on March 26 he opened his national radio broadcast as follows: "I am now going to reveal the name of the man whom Senator McCarthy has designated the top Communist agent in the United States. Senator McCarthy has stated that he would rest his entire charge of State Department communism on this case. The man is Owen Lattimore of Johns Hopkins University."<sup>37</sup> Pearson continued with a ringing defense of Lattimore. Overnight Lattimore became a household word.

McCarthy's "gambler's bravura," as Jack Anderson called it, compelled the senator to assemble a detailed case against Lattimore. For this he needed all the help he could get. It was easy to come by. To his existing coterie of Hearst, Scripps Howard, and McCormick Patterson reporters he quickly added Kohlberg, who later claimed to have furnished most of the material McCarthy used in attacking Lattimore. The two met for a long dinner either March 23 or 24. Kohlberg wrote in his personal notes, "Joe asked me to give him the story of the China sellout step by step and in chronological order. This I did during a two-hour, leisurely eaten dinner. Jean Kerr took brief notes, not in shorthand, yet the following week in a speech on the Senate floor the Senator told the story of the sellout of China just as I had told it to him there, almost without error."<sup>38</sup>

Kohlberg exaggerated slightly; some of McCarthy's material came from Freda Uteley. McCarthy had a crew of thirteen assembling, organizing, and writing, among them Jean Kerr, later his wife; Charles Kersten, former congressman from Wisconsin; Ed Nellor, a reporter formerly with Hearst; Joe's chief investigator and right-hand man, Don Surine.<sup>39</sup>

McCarthy's dependence on Surine for the first two years of his crusade (Roy Cohn elbowed Surine aside in 1952) was symptomatic. Surine was everything a good investigator should not be: impulsive, inept, cocky, careless. He had been with the FBI for ten years; it was a miracle that he lasted so long. Hoover fired him in 1950 for involvement with a prostitute during an FBI investigation of a white slavery ring. Surine always lied about this, claiming that he had resigned from the bureau. Eventually, Hoover was forced to write a letter to Senator Mike Monroney disavowing responsibility for the former agent.<sup>40</sup>

Surine compounded McCarthy's recklessness and mendacity. He was instrumental in the attack on Anna Rosenberg, a prominent New York labor lawyer whom George Marshall nominated as Assistant Secretary of

Defense for Manpower. Surine almost single-handedly got McCarthy embroiled in the fraudulent activities of Charles Davis, a psychotic who fabricated documents intended to discredit John Carter Vincent and who falsely charged Edward R. Murrow with having been on the Soviet payroll in 1934. Davis was denied security clearance by the Department of Defense, yet he was McCarthy's "contact man" in collecting classified documents from McCarthy's loyal underground in the military, the CIA, Justice, and State.<sup>41</sup>

In the sleazy 1950 Maryland senatorial campaign, which saw the defeat of Millard Tydings, Surine played a prominent role, including a kidnapping and threats of violence against a mailing contractor. He wrote McCarthy's attack on Adlai Stevenson as pro-Communist in the 1952 presidential campaign.<sup>42</sup> Dan Burkhardt, Maryland American Legion adjutant and a member of a group of former intelligence agents active in the anti-Communist field, says that his group rejected Surine's application to join. He was "too wild."<sup>43</sup>

Hoover's contempt for Surine was total. Time after time he warned agents to be careful in dealing with Surine. At one stage of the Lattimore investigation, in March 1950, Baltimore agents were told that "they should not have any further contact with SURINE."<sup>44</sup> Reports of adventures in which Surine went astray over some crackpot would-be informer invariably carry a sarcastic notation by Hoover. To some extent, the cretinous nature of McCarthy's speech on Lattimore was due to Donald Surine.

One of the potential witnesses about Lattimore who came to Surine's attention was Alexander Barmine. The FBI, already suspicious of Barmine, interviewed him again on March 27. Barmine now had a new charge against Lattimore. As reported by SAC Scheidt in New York, "BARMINE SAID THAT IN FORTY NINE THE PANCHEN LAMA COMPETITOR OF THE DALAI LAMA OF TIBET VISITED THE US AND WAS RECEIVED BY THE SUBJECT [Lattimore]. UPON LEAVING THE US THE PANCHEN LAMA ARRIVED IN COMMUNIST CHINA AND CLAIMED HIS TITLE FROM THAT POINT." Bureau naïveté was sufficient to cause them to investigate this howler. They checked it out with State. The Panchen Lama had never visited the United States and could not have been "received" by Lattimore.<sup>45</sup>

Surine did not know of this latest evidence of Barmine's hyperactive imagination. Charged by his boss to gather any dirt that could be flung at Lattimore, Surine determined to extract an affidavit from Barmine for McCarthy to use in addressing the Senate. His channel for approaching Barmine was Barmine's old friend from *Reader's Digest*, Bill White. On March 28 White telephoned Barmine, telling him that McCarthy would

like to talk to him and that one of McCarthy's agents would contact him shortly. Barmine said he did not want to talk to McCarthy or his agent. This refusal did not deter Surine, who telephoned Barmine at Barmine's Voice of America office, invoked status as a Senate employee, and induced Barmine to meet him in a nearby bar. At the bar, Surine asked for an affidavit McCarthy could use against Lattimore. Barmine refused, said he would have nothing to do with McCarthy, and stalked out.<sup>46</sup>

Failed mission? Not for the intrepid Surine. He went to the nearby apartment of Eugene Lyons, another professional anti-Communist journalist, asked to use a typewriter, and typed up what he had heard from various people as Barmine's story about Lattimore. Surine headed his production "Expected testimony from Alexander Barmine." At the bottom of the page he wrote in longhand, "Above facts related to me by Alexander Barmine at Schrafft's Bar 57th St. N.Y.C. 5:30 p.m.—6:10 p.m.—3/29/50," and signed his name. Lyons, somewhat uneasy about this procedure, nonetheless was persuaded to add his bit. He countersigned the document: "I have read the above statement. Eugene Lyons." It was this flaky concoction that McCarthy flourished before the Senate the next day. After the McCarthy speech, Barmine was furious. He told the FBI that the McCarthy "affidavit" was a forgery and vowed that if he was ever confronted with the document he would accuse Surine of perjury.<sup>47</sup>

But McCarthy thought it was wonderful, and it came at the right moment. He had asked for time to address the full Senate on March 30. He was now confident that he had the goods on Lattimore. He sent telegrams to Republican friends: "Would like to have you share some pumpkin pie with me this afternoon on the Senate floor."<sup>48</sup> His flagship case was about to be launched; the pumpkin allusion was to the evidence Whittaker Chambers supplied about Hiss.

McCarthy also notified the FBI to have someone on hand after the speech to get the documents he was going to use. The bureau declined. They would be happy to have him send any documents over to the FBI building, but the attorney general did not want McCarthy to "mousetrap" the bureau by "having a photographer take a picture of him handing over the 'documents.'"<sup>49</sup>

The Lattimore speech did not represent the nadir of McCarthy performances; that honor must be reserved for his scurrilous attack on General George C. Marshall a year later. But the Lattimore speech was nonetheless unique in some ways. It was, for one thing, probably the only time

McCarthy came close to an apology and a retraction. Midway through the speech he stated, "I fear in the case of Lattimore, I may have perhaps placed too much stress on the question of whether or not he has been an espionage agent. In view of his position of tremendous power in the State Department as the 'architect' of our far eastern policy, the more important aspect of his case deals with his aims and what he advocates; whether his aims are American aims or whether they coincide with the aims of Soviet Russia. Therefore, forgetting for the time being any question of membership in the Communist Party or participation in espionage, I would like to deal briefly with what this man himself advocates and what he believes in." But it was a hollow retraction. McCarthy's whole effort was to brand Lattimore as a loyal Soviet servant, not in spying on the American government, which would only lead to loss of some documents, but in influencing American policy, which led to the loss of China. This charge required McCarthy to claim that Lattimore had "tremendous power" in the State Department; in truth, he had none whatsoever. One infelicitous remark on this theme brought sardonic laughter from the audience. Said McCarthy: "I believe you can ask almost any school child who the architect of our far eastern policy is, and he will say 'Owen Lattimore.'" <sup>50</sup>

The law firm of Arnold, Fortas, and Porter, engaged by Eleanor Lattimore, issued an analysis of McCarthy's speech, pointing out more than a hundred errors. There were at least that many. <sup>51</sup>

McCarthy's handling of the *Amerasia* case was typical. Hoover never claimed that the FBI had a "100% airtight case" of espionage and treason in *Amerasia*. When Hoover heard this claim, he caused a search to be made to see if he had gone overboard in 1945; he had never said anything like it. <sup>52</sup> Nor did the Justice Department prosecutor say that "he could cover all the facts in that case in less than 5 minutes," as McCarthy claimed. Nor did *Amerasia* have a "large photocopying department"; John Stewart Service was never "in communication from China with Jaffe"; no member of the grand jury voted to indict Service, who was unanimously no-billed; Service never wrote reports "urging that we torpedo our ally Chiang Kai-shek"; Joseph Grew was not "forced to resign" because he wanted Jaffe prosecuted; Service and Roth were not at Lattimore's home the night before the *Amerasia* arrests, but three days before, on an entirely innocent visit. <sup>53</sup> Contrary to McCarthy's claim, a congressional committee had upheld the Justice Department handling of *Amerasia*: on October 23, 1946, the Hobbs committee reported that Service had not "stolen" any documents; instead, he loaned some to Jaffe that he himself

had written and had army permission to retain. Jaffe did not get any of Service's reports before the State Department did.<sup>54</sup>

McCarthy had, despite his statement to the contrary, gotten information from the FBI. Lattimore was in no way "responsible" for Stilwell's activities in China. McCarthy did not have an affidavit from Barmine. Lattimore did not control the magazine *Amerasia*. Lattimore did not have two cameras with him on the Point Barrow trip, and the inference that he gave photographs of secret installations to the Russians was false.

Lattimore's statement that "the Communists were destined to win" applied only to China in 1948, not to anyplace else; McCarthy's extrapolation of it to all subsequent Soviet-American rivalries was wholly illegitimate. Jessup was never editor of *Pacific Affairs*; neither Jessup nor Lattimore "pioneered the fictional idea that the Communists of China were not Communists at all." The State Department did not send Lattimore to Afghanistan; the UN did. Roosevelt did not "appoint" Lattimore as adviser to Chiang; Roosevelt could only nominate him, and it was not on the recommendation of Henry Wallace. Wallace did not recommend the "torpedoing" of Chiang Kai-shek. Lattimore did not head the Pauley reparations mission to Japan; Pauley did. The list of falsehoods, great and small, is almost endless. Some of them McCarthy got from Freda Utey, though most came from Kohlberg.

The whole thing was typical paranoid rhetoric. Historian Richard Hofstadter was right in denoting McCarthy as the paradigm paranoid: the very fantastic character of his conclusions led to "heroic striving for 'evidence' to prove that the unbelievable is the only thing that can be believed."<sup>55</sup> Calling McCarthy's striving "heroic" is perhaps too complimentary. One incident during the McCarthy address foreshadowed the personal contempt for any opponent that steadily brought McCarthy into disrepute even with his early Republican backers.

When McCarthy quoted parts of Lattimore's letter to Barnes about hiring Chinese personnel for OWI, Senator Charles Tobey of New Hampshire questioned him as to why he did not place the whole letter in the record. McCarthy replied that the letter was classified secret. Tobey knew McCarthy's "quotation" was false, but McCarthy refused to release the whole document.

Senator Herbert Lehman of New York took over the questioning:

*Mr. Lehman:* When charges are made against the loyalty of a man he should be given an opportunity to answer those charges in the same forum in which the charges are

made. I should like to ask the distinguished Senator why he is so delicate in refusing to yield to the request of the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire to give the full text of the information, when the Senator from Wisconsin has no hesitation whatsoever in coming before this body and before the American people and attempting to damn and blacken the reputation of many people who may be innocent.

*Mr. McCarthy:* If the Senator would like to know why some of these documents are not being made available to the press, if he will step over here I will show him part of a document which will make very clear to him why it would be completely unfair to make them available. Does the Senator care to step over?

*Mr. Lehman:* I am delighted to.<sup>56</sup>

Lehman then walked down the aisle and stood with his hand out. The two men stared at each other. Stewart Alsop observed this tableau from the press gallery, and his account tells better than the *Congressional Record* what happened next:

McCarthy giggled his strange, rather terrifying little giggle. Lehman looked around the crowded Senate, obviously appealing for support. Not a man rose.

"Go back to your seat, old man," McCarthy growled at Lehman. The words do not appear in the *Congressional Record*, but they were clearly audible in the press gallery. Once more, Lehman looked all around the chamber, appealing for support. He was met with silence and lowered eyes. Slowly, he turned and walked . . . back to his seat.

"There goes the end of the Republic," I muttered to my wife, whom I had smuggled into the press gallery to see the show. It was a poor imitation of Lord Grey, but it did not seem exaggerated at the time. For at the time this triumph of the worst Senator who has ever sat in the Senate over one of the best did seem a decisive moment. . . . Thus old Senator Lehman's back, waddling off in retreat, seemed to symbolize the final defeat of decency and the triumph of the yahoos.<sup>57</sup>

Not many observers of the McCarthy performance thought the yahoos had triumphed. McCarthy's "evidence" was noticeably shoddy. The Luce publications, fervently pro-Chiang and anti-Communist, panned the speech. According to *Time*, the senator was in trouble; "McCarthy had promised to stand or fall on his case against Owen Lattimore, and he clearly had little left to stand on."<sup>58</sup>

But McCarthy's ultraright newsmen stood by him. Willard Edwards praised his speech in both the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Washington Times-Herald*. The *Tribune* article described McCarthy's output as "weighty new evidence . . . an extraordinary demonstration of what a one-man investigator of state department communism could disclose in a brief period." Edwards's *Times-Herald* article went beyond praising McCarthy to rub salt in FBI wounds. Edwards claimed, "A somewhat embarrassed FBI agent listened as McCarthy produced a series of documents which he said were being turned over to the FBI. Although FBI director Hoover has made no official statement on the Lattimore case, he has not denied reports that his agents have uncovered no evidence warranting criminal prosecution."<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the bureau had no such evidence. Neither did McCarthy.

Several months after the McCarthy speech, the bureau did have an analysis of the trash McCarthy had paraded before the Senate. This analysis was muted and, as released in 1980, heavily censored; but on those points not censored McCarthy came out losing. Hoover had not, as already noted, described the *Amerasia* charges as 100 percent airtight. The bureau did not accept the McCarthy "affidavits" about Lattimore and Roth declassifying documents "in favor of their friends" as true.<sup>60</sup>

The bureau knew Wallace had not recommended Lattimore to President Roosevelt and that Lattimore had not headed the Japanese reparations mission. As to the Barnes letter, the bureau noted, "Intensive investigation has failed to reflect corroboration of the charge that Lattimore loaded the OWI with Communists."<sup>61</sup> Only the claim McCarthy got from Freda Uteley that Lattimore's writings followed the Communist line had any support from the bureau.

McCarthy gave a number of documents to the bureau. By the end of June 1950 there were fifty-nine documents in McCarthy's donation. Most of them the bureau already had. The final disposition of most of them can be traced in the files. Twenty-six of the fifty-nine were discarded as false, meaningless, irrelevant, fraudulent, or hopelessly vague. Four were discarded because the informant was known to the bureau as unreliable or mentally unbalanced. One was impossible to check, and one contained useful information from a reliable informant.<sup>62</sup> The disposition of the rest is unknown.

By September 1950 someone on McCarthy's staff had begun to worry that their investigative batting average was low. Surine was dispatched to the FBI's Washington field office, where he told the agents that McCarthy wanted a copy of the bureau's current summary report on the Lattimore case. The reason, as reported by agent Guy Hottel: "Senator McCarthy,

in the future, would not make any further allegations without being able to support such allegations by an investigative report. He [Surine] said that if he could get the report, he would attribute the information contained therein to a different investigative agency," thus maintaining Hoover's cover story about never releasing reports outside eligible agencies.<sup>63</sup> This was a familiar charade, but Surine did not get the FBI summary that time.