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14. Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (London, 1983), 80.
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19. *Ibid.*, 476ff.: Notes Prepared by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs [Livingston Merchant] on the Restricted Session of the North Atlantic Council, 16 December 1953; PRO, PREM 11/396: Record of the restricted meeting of the NATO council, 16 December 1953.
20. *Ibid.*: Report by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff on the NATO Meetings in Paris, 7-16 December 1953, Confidential Annex to C. O. S. (53) 144th Meeting held on Tuesday, 22 December 1953.
21. Watson, op. cit., 305.
22. *FRUS* 1952-1954, vol. V, pt. 1, 496ff.: Memorandum of conversation by the Special Assistant to the Counselor of the Department of State [Galloway], 30 March 1954.
23. Secretary of Defense to Secretary of State, 16 August 1954, quoted from Watson, op. cit., 303ff.
24. *Ibid.*, 306.
25. Pierre Guillen, "Die französische Generalität, die Aufrüstung der Bundesrepublik und die EVG (1950-1954)," in: Hans-Erich Volkmann und Walter Schwengler, eds., *Die Europäische Verteidigungsgemeinschaft. Stand und Probleme der Forschung* (Militärsgeschichte seit 1945, vol. 7) (Boppard, 1985), 155-157.
26. Aline Coutrot, "La politique atomique sous le gouvernement de Mendès-France," in: François Bedarida and Jean-Pierre Rioux, eds., *Pierre Mendès-France et le Mendésisme. L'expérience gouvernementale (1954-1955) et sa postérité* (Paris, 1985), 309 ff.; Jean Delmas, "La perception de la puissance militaire en France en 1954-1958," unpublished conference paper, University of Florence, Faculty of Politics, Seminar on the History of International Relations, "L'Europa e la politica di potenza: alle origini della Comunità Economica Europea," Florence, 23-27 September 1987; Georges-Henri Soutou, "Die Nuklearpolitik der Vierten Republik," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 37 (1989), 605-610.
27. PRO, AIR 8/2031.

The Nuclearization of NATO and U.S.-West European Relations

Marc Trachtenberg*

1. FISCAL CONSTRAINT OR STRATEGIC DESIRABILITY?

In the early 1950s NATO went nuclear. It is often assumed that in opting for a strategy that placed such great emphasis on nuclear weapons, the Atlantic Alliance made the wrong decision: The nuclear strategy, it is argued, never really made sense even in purely military terms. The better strategy, the argument runs, was to build up conventional forces to the point where they alone would be able to defend Western Europe against a Soviet attack. But this turned out to be beyond reach, for both political and budgetary reasons. Nuclearization therefore supposedly emerged as a panacea—as the only way of bringing defense requirements into line with political realities. Budgetary constraints are thus seen as driving the whole process; the assumption is that, from an essentially military point of view, the nuclear strategy was misguided from the start.

But in reality the nuclear-oriented strategy did make military sense in the early 1950s. It is not that budgetary constraints were irrelevant. Fiscal considerations played an important role in the policy process on both sides of the Atlantic but their ultimate effect was to force a clarification of strategy. The policy that emerged was not out of line with the best military thinking at the time.

To understand what happened, one must go back to the great debate in the late 1940s and early 1950s over what American strategy in Europe should be. The argument was not really between "internationalists" and "isolationists." The real debate was between those who wanted to defend Europe as far to the east as possible—the supporters of the "forward defense"—and the advocates of a "peripheral strategy," which contemplated withdrawing from the continent and relied primarily on air and naval power.

Within the military establishment, the Army naturally championed the idea of forward defense while the Air Force leaned strongly toward the peripheral strategy. The Navy generally sided with the Army, at least during the crucial 1949-1950 period, and indeed often took the lead in opposing the Air Force position. In 1949, the Navy was in fact embroiled in a very bitter and very public dispute with the Air Force: This was the period of the famous revolt of the admirals," touched off by the cancellation of an aircraft carrier whose keel had just been laid. This controversy was marked by a sharp attack by the Navy on strategic bombing in general, and on the B-36 bomber in particular.

It was precisely during this period that the dispute over basic war-fighting strategy came to a head at the level of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary of Defense James Forrestal had asked the Chiefs in October 1948 to evaluate current plans for a strategic air offensive against the Soviet Union: Could the United States successfully bring off such an attack and, if so, what effect could it have on the Soviet war effort?¹ The crisis over Berlin might possibly add to war; it was important that this question be answered honestly and rapidly.

On 21 December General Hoyt Vandenberg, the Air Force Chief of Staff, proposed that the Chiefs tell the secretary simply that the attack could be carried out as planned. His memorandum set out the basic Air Force position: Major Soviet urban industrial concentrations" would be "the highest priority target system" for atomic attack. "Destruction of this target system," he wrote, "should so cripple the Soviet industrial and control centers as to reduce drastically the offensive and defensive power of their armed forces. This could well lead to Soviet capitulation and in any event should destroy their over-all capability for major offensive operations."²

Admiral Louis Denfeld, the Chief of Naval Operations, strongly objected to these claims. The opinions expressed in Vandenberg's memorandum, he said, were "predicated on assumptions not supported by known facts."³ The Director of Army Intelligence also thought that the inadequacy of "existing industrial intelligence on the USSR does not warrant an attack of the scale and magnitude envisaged" by the current Air Force strategy. "In view of the

doubt that exists concerning target analysis and the underestimation of Soviet air defenses," he felt that Vandenberg's conclusions were "overly optimistic."⁴

A great deal was at stake in this argument between the Air Force on the one hand, and the Army and Navy on the other. This was a formative period for American nuclear strategy. What was decided now would determine fundamental military policy for years to come. The dispute over basic strategy was, moreover, closely related to parallel arguments about the control of the weaponry—both the bombs themselves and the forces that would deliver them—and control of the target intelligence process. This last issue was quite important: These other conflicts among the military services turned in large measure on who controlled the target intelligence system. At the time, all of these issues were the object of fierce and prolonged dispute within the JCS.⁵

With so much at stake, Vandenberg responded very defensively to the criticism of his Army and Navy colleagues. Strategic bombing, he said, was the business of the Air Force. He was clearly angry that Admiral Denfeld would question "the ability of the United States Air Force to judge the feasibility, technical and otherwise, of conducting strategic air operations."⁶ Wasn't this its main area of expertise?

But this was just so much hand-waving. Vandenberg simply did not want to engage in serious debate with the other services over what was clearly the most basic issue of national strategy. The Army and the Navy, however, refused to defer to the Air Force. The Army's analysis in particular was very detailed and clearly reasoned. Vandenberg's conclusions were based on certain optimistic assumptions about the ineffectiveness of Soviet air defense; the Army intelligence division pointed out that the Air Force's own intelligence reports contained information that directly refuted some of the claims Vandenberg had made.⁷ The Army was able to prove, in its internal documents, that the Air Force was not being honest or objective in this matter.⁸

The general issue was referred to the JCS's Joint Intelligence Committee for further analysis. The JIC report, concurred in by the Director of Air Intelligence, supported the Army-Navy point of view.⁹ Eventually, the whole problem was turned over to two groups from outside the JCS system. An ad hoc committee under Air Force Lieutenant General Hubert Harmon would evaluate the effect of the bombing offensive on the Soviet war effort. The Weapons Systems Evaluation Group, then headed by Army Lieutenant General John E. Hull, would consider whether the attack could be carried out as planned. The Harmon Committee reported in May 1949 that the attack,

en if successful, would have a much more limited effect than Vandenberg claimed and that in particular it would not be able to knock the Soviets out of the war. The Hull Report of February 1950 cast grave doubts on the ability of the Air Force to execute the attack successfully in the first place. These reports were based on quite thorough analysis, and the leaders of these groups were highly respected throughout the military establishment. The effect of this review was therefore to pose a very serious challenge to the Air Force position.¹⁰

It is important to note, moreover, that an alternative strategy was available at this time. The Army, throughout the 1949-1954 period had a clear conception of how a general war should be fought. It was not opposed to strategic bombing as such, and it certainly was not against the use of atomic weapons in a global conflict. But given the small numbers and limited power of the atomic bombs available in the first part of the period, the Army insisted repeatedly that targets should be chosen with great care. It objected strongly to the Air Force strategy of urban-industrial targeting because even the successful destruction of much of the enemy's industrial infrastructure would not have a timely effect on the outcome of the land battle in Europe. Strategic bombing there would be, but only certain crucial targets—especially the enemy liquid fuels industry—would be hit. As the World War II experience had shown, this sort of attack could have dramatic and almost immediate impact on the ground war.¹¹

In the theater itself, the Army view was that the Red Army's supply system was its "Achilles heel"; Soviet lines of communication were "long and vulnerable."¹² The West might have to retreat during the initial phase of the war, but through "properly executed delaying tactics and demolitions" during this period, "the Soviet advance can be channelized into a few corridors." To conduct major offensive operations in Western Europe, the Soviets would have to "stockpile supplies at the end of very long and meager lines of communications." Both their concentrated forces and especially these stockpiles would be vulnerable to atomic attack.¹³ If such a strategy were implemented and appropriate weapons and delivery systems developed, even a numerically inferior land force might well be able to hold the line during the early part of the war against a full-scale attack from the east.

The Army strategy, moreover, corresponded to the political need for forward defense. The idea that the alliance with Western Europe implied a forward defense was constantly stressed by Army leaders at this time. General Omar Bradley, the Army Chief of Staff, made the point quite effectively in April 1949:

It must be perfectly apparent to the people of the United States that we cannot count on friends in Western Europe if our strategy in the event of war dictates that we shall first abandon them to the enemy with a promise of later liberation. Yet that is the only strategy that can prevail if the military balance of power in Europe is to be carried on the wings of our bombers and deposited in reserves on this side of the ocean. It is a strategy that would produce nothing better than impotent and disillusioned Allies in the event of war.

Unless plans for common defense of the existing free world provide for the security of Western Europe, these people cannot be expected to stake their lives on the common cause. As long as the helplessness of Western Europe would invite military aggression, its increasing prosperity shall grow more tempting to the armies of the east. Not until we share our strength on a common defensive front, can we hope to replace this temptation with a real deterrent to war.¹⁴

It was, finally, militarily vital that the United States not lose at least a foothold on the continent of Europe: In the nuclear age, a repeat of the Normandy invasion would be practically impossible.

Thus the Army had come out with a strategy in the 1949-50 period that made a good deal of sense, given the military realities of the early atomic age. My own view is that, if the debate on strategy had been decided on intellectual merit alone, the basic Army approach would certainly have prevailed. But strategy is not decided by judges in a debating society, and what really proved decisive in this case was operational control. The Air Force controlled the bombers, the Strategic Air Command effectively controlled targeting, and the older services did not have enough clout to force a radical change in bombing strategy.¹⁵ As for the political authorities, it is not clear whether they were interested in this debate or, even if they were, whether they were tempted to intervene. But by late 1950 President Truman and Secretary of State Acheson were in any event probably too weak politically to bring about a radical change in the situation.

The upshot of all this was that for the time being—that is, for the period from 1949 through about 1952—forward defense meant effectively conventional defense. The situation changed only when the nuclear stockpile became so large as a result of the Korean War buildup and the technological breakthroughs so numerous that a significant quantity of weapons could be assigned to the sorts of targets called for in the Army strategy. This, in fact, was the most important reason why NATO planning during the late Truman period emphasized conventional defense and a conventional buildup. It should not be taken for granted, however, that from a purely strategic point

view the conventional strategy was clearly the “best” strategy, and that other departures from it did not make sense in strategic terms.

All these events, however, paved the way for the nuclearization of NATO. There are three points to be made in this connection. First, there was an effort made to implement the strategy of the massive conventional buildup, symbolized by the Lisbon force goals, and this effort clearly failed. For political and budgetary reasons, it was simply beyond reach. In effect—although it is not at all clear that this was the original intent—the United States was telling European allies: “You want forward defense? Then come up with the weapons. But if you can’t, then don’t complain if we end up relying on nuclear weapons.”

The second point is that the American military authorities most interested in the ground defense of Europe—namely, the Army leadership—were from very early on strongly attracted to a strategy in which nuclear forces played a central role. The move toward such a strategy cannot therefore be attributed essentially to political or budgetary considerations. The conceptual basis for the nuclear defense of Western Europe had been laid long before a formal strategy was worked out in the New Approach studies of 1954.

And finally, the third point is that the strength of the Air Force position, even after the signing of the NATO treaty in 1949, tended to confirm widespread fears in Western Europe that the “peripheral strategy” was not valid. This greatly increased their willingness to accept any American strategy—and in particular a nuclear-based strategy—that held out the prospect of an effective forward defense. Even as late as 1954 the French military authorities, for example, strongly recommended that the important “capabilities plan” worked out by the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (ACEUR), General Alfred Gruenther, be accepted. They agreed with Gruenther that the one and only way that Western Europe could be defended was through the massive and indeed immediate use of nuclear weapons, both tactically and in the theater. This policy, they stressed, was the only alternative to the peripheral strategy.¹⁶

2. NATO GOES NUCLEAR: THE EMERGENCE OF A FORMAL STRATEGY

This was the general context within which NATO strategy began to take shape in the early 1950s. At the end of 1950, Eisenhower was made the first NATO commander and in January 1951 he outlined his strategic concept for

the defense of Western Europe. His basic idea was to exploit the advantages of the defender: A numerically inferior force, well entrenched and supported by massive air and naval power, might well be able to hold the line against a full-scale Soviet offensive:

Europe appears to be shaped like a long bottleneck. The wide part of the bottle is Russia, the neck is Western Europe, stretching down to the end of the bottle, Spain. On either side of this neck are bodies of water that we control, with land on the far side of the water that is good for air bases. The North Sea, with England behind it, is on one side and the Mediterranean with the Near East and North Africa is on the other. We must apply great air and sea power on both these sides and we must rely on land forces in the center. “I want to build a great combination of sea and air strength in the North Sea,” Eisenhower said. “I’d make Denmark and Holland a great ‘hedgehog’ and I’d put 500 or 600 fighters behind them and heavy naval support in the North Sea. I’d do the same sort of thing in the Mediterranean and I’d give arms to Turkey and the ‘Jugs,’” “Then,” Eisenhower went on, “if the Russians tried to move ahead in the center, I’d hit them awfully hard from both flanks. I think if we built up the kind of force I want, the center will hold and they’ll have to pull back.”¹⁷

He wanted a 50-60 division force in Europe. Some people thought such a force would threaten Russia and thus might provoke a Soviet attack. This, he said, was “nonsense,” and his reasoning again reflects his understanding of the great advantage of the defense over the offense in ground warfare:

A 50 division force on the Rhine posed no threat to Russia at all and Russia knew it. Fifty divisions couldn’t possibly attack Russia. Fifty divisions on the Rhine is a lot different from 50 divisions on the Vistula. When an army moves forward, it has to leave all kinds of troops on its flanks and in the zone of the interior. A 50 division army would be too feeble, by the time it got to the borders of Russia, to do anything at all. On the other hand, he thought that a 50 or 60 division force was quite capable of *defending* Western Europe under the general strategic concept he had outlined above. He thinks that the Russians would believe the same thing.¹⁸

Eisenhower was taking a middle ground. Not only did he reject the more extreme “air power” notion that strategic bombing could win the war on its own but he was also taking his distance from the more traditional Army view. “Do not let anyone tell you that the essential nature of war has in any way changed,” General J. Lawton Collins, Army Chief of Staff, told the students at the National War College in May 1950. “A final decision must always be

reached on the ground."¹⁹ Eisenhower would never have taken this sort of line at the time.

Given his basic approach, Eisenhower was relatively relaxed about the balance of forces in Europe, even during the great war scare of the winter of 1950-1951. For example, he thought at the time that the situation was not so desperate that the West needed to pay whatever price was necessary in order to get the Germans to provide troops for the defense of Western Europe. Eisenhower wanted German troops under his command, but only if "they came in without condition and without strings attached."²⁰

The Eisenhower strategy for the defense of Europe was the centerpiece of American military policy during the final part of the Truman administration. This in itself points to a certain continuity in basic strategy from the Truman to the Eisenhower administration. This was a point that Eisenhower himself, as President, stressed repeatedly during the early days of the New Look. The basic strategy his administration adopted, he said in August 1953, was a "reaffirmation and clarification" of the earlier strategy and should never be presented as a 'new concept'.²¹

The New Look can in fact be understood as Eisenhower's 1951 NATO strategy writ large. All of the key elements were in place prior to 1953. A meaningful ground defense of the continent, the crucial role that air and naval power would play in support of that defensive effort, the relaxed acceptance of a certain inferiority on the ground,²² and the desire eventually to withdraw American troops after the Europeans had built up defensive forces of their own—all of these elements may have been brought into sharper focus in 1953-1954, but the basic strategy had taken shape before the new administration took over.

The heart of the Eisenhower strategy as it developed in the 1953-1954 period was the idea that Europe could be defended, even with numerically inferior forces, provided a massive air attack was launched at the outset of the war. This was also the basic idea behind the fundamental NATO strategy adopted at the end of 1954, and summed up in the important NATO document MC-48.²³ The fundamental strategy was outlined by President Eisenhower in a meeting with the military leadership on 22 December 1954: "The President stressed that he does not contemplate allowing Europe to be overrun. The Soviets will, however, have great trouble maintaining an offense. He indicated his firm intention to launch a strategic air force immediately in case of actual attack. He stressed that a major war will be an atomic war."²⁴

Note especially the reference in this document to the force being launched in "alert of actual attack." As America's nuclear forces grew, and as her

ability to launch a rapid and massive attack developed, her strategy became increasingly "front-loaded." The first priority, Eisenhower said in the December 1954 meeting with the military leaders, was "to blunt the enemy's initial threat—by massive retaliatory power and ability to deliver it; and by a continental defense system of major capability." The "blunting" of the initial attack meant, in the idiom of the day, the destruction of the enemy's strategic forces, and this would only be possible if the United States struck first. Preemption, in fact, played a major role in the NATO strategy outlined in MC-48; in the case of a surprise attack on NATO, authority to order a nuclear strike was predelegated to SACEUR.²⁵ This emphasis on preemption was based on the notion that "our only chance of victory" would be, in Eisenhower's words, "to paralyze the enemy at the outset of the war."²⁶

The Europeans accepted this strategy. In so doing, they were transferring to the American President, and in some cases even to American military commanders, the power to start a war—a power which in extreme cases might have to be exercised without even consulting them. This was, of course, an extraordinary concession for them to make. It was natural that in exchange they would want to have some control over American policy during a crisis, or even before a crisis developed.²⁷ The Americans, for their part, understood that there was a fear in Europe that the United States might be too "trigger-happy"; the Europeans were particularly concerned about American policy in the Far East.²⁸

My guess is that the U.S. government sensed that for the arrangement to work in the military area—for the MC-48 strategy to be accepted for any period of time—the United States would have to draw in its horns and pursue a strictly defensive strategy. It is probably no accident that the proponents of a more aggressive American policy were defeated in the National Security Council at the end of 1954 at about the same time that MC-48 was adopted; arguments about the effect on the Alliance played a major role in the defeat of that policy.²⁹

The other great event that took place at the end of 1954 was the final settlement between the Western powers and the Federal Republic of Germany. This settlement had taken years to work out and had involved very complicated negotiations. The relationship between the nuclearization of NATO and the settlement with West Germany is not totally clear but I suspect that there was an important link: Nuclearization meant that the Americans, who controlled the most important forces and who in effect operated the strategy, would have to stay in Europe for a very considerable period of time and, as long as the Americans were in, the French and many of the other allies could be relatively relaxed about a buildup of German power. Any

possible German threat would be contained in a structure dominated by American power.

The problem here, however, was that the Americans did not want to stay in Europe indefinitely. Their presence in Europe, as Eisenhower said over and over again, was supposed to be temporary, "a stop-gap operation to bring confidence and security to our friends overseas."³⁰ The ultimate goal for Eisenhower was to transform Europe into a "third great power bloc"; after such a "solid power mass" emerged, America, he said, could "sit back and relax somewhat."³¹

American support for European political and military integration was thus not rooted in an essentially idealistic preference for transnational political structures as a kind of end in itself. America wanted Europe to pull together because she herself wanted eventually to pull out. Thus the more "isolationist" the United States was, the more ardently she supported the goal of European integration.

In the military sphere, the building up of European power came to mean the eventual nuclearization of the European armed forces. If the Europeans were armed only with conventional weapons, they would be no match for the Red Army. It was immediately understood that the nuclearization of NATO implied the nuclearization of the major European armies, and even of the West German army. But the prospect of the Federal Republic acquiring nuclear forces under its own control was to be a source of serious trouble in the late 1950s.³²

How then is the nuclearization of NATO to be understood? The reliance on nuclear forces was by no means a strategic absurdity. It made sense, given the military situation at the time. It was an artifact of the early atomic age, when explosive yields were low and weapons relatively scarce. During this period, an atomic war was actually fightable: The destruction would be immense but the nations involved would survive as functioning societies. The nuclear strategy perhaps even made sense in military terms in the early mononuclear era because Soviet nuclear forces throughout the 1950s were quite vulnerable to attack. The strategy is particularly defensible if one believes, as Eisenhower did, that general wars are inherently uncontrollable. In the 1950s environment, a strategy for the nuclear defense of Europe is bound to depend increasingly on rapid, and indeed on preemptive attack.

How did these developments affect the stability of the international system? Nuclearization tended to lock all the powers into essentially defensive policies. The counterpart of MC-48, with its emphasis on preemption and predelegation, was a drawing in of America's horns, the final abandonment of the aggressive options that were quite seriously considered in the

early 1950s—although these options themselves, one should add, had only emerged in the first place as a by-product of the nuclear revolution.³³

The existence of nuclear forces, moreover, was one of the major reasons why Eisenhower felt so comfortable about accepting Soviet superiority on the ground. The Army, in 1954, opposed cuts in ground forces with the argument that it would "lose any offensive capability, or ability to exploit the effects of air operations during the early phase" of the war.³⁴ But Eisenhower was not interested in offensive capabilities of that sort, which in any case would have required much higher force levels than were needed for an essentially defensive strategy.

Nuclearization, furthermore, helped transform the American presence in Europe from temporary expedient to permanent fact of life. It is easier to imagine an American withdrawal in a non-nuclear environment than in a nuclear one. For one thing, in a nuclear regime, a permanent American presence solved a whole series of problems, relating to such things as control of nuclear escalation and West Germany's acquisition of nuclear forces, that would have been much harder to resolve if the United States had withdrawn its troops from Europe.

The transformation of the American commitment to Europe in the course of the 1950s was undoubtedly an important element in the stabilization of Great Power politics.³⁵ For over a generation, American power balanced Soviet power so completely that neither the USSR nor the United States nor any of the European powers had any room to maneuver for fundamental change in the status quo.

3. THE POLITICS OF THE ALLIANCE

The transformation of the American presence from stop-gap arrangement to permanent feature of the system also had a dramatic effect on U.S.-West European relations. During the period when the Europeans were afraid that America would fall back to the "peripheral strategy," they went to great lengths to accommodate American views, and were ready to support any strategy that would provide for an effective forward defense. As the American presence became permanent, however, the whole structure of power within the Alliance was bound to shift. These shifts were related to other changes taking place at the time, especially the growth of Soviet nuclear capabilities, something which tended to make the implementation of formal NATO strategy increasingly problematical, and the growth also of European economic power. But the transformation of the American commitment was

of fundamental importance: As the Europeans came to take the American presence for granted, they felt freer to take a much more independent line.

Eisenhower and Dulles certainly understood what was going on. They understood the iron law of alliance politics: The more absolute our commitment, the less leverage we have over our allies.³⁶ Throughout his administration, Eisenhower had sought to withdraw American troops eventually from Europe but these efforts had all been frustrated. The result, he said in 1961, was that "because we have had our troops there, the Europeans had not done their share. They won't make the sacrifices to provide the soldiers for their own defense."³⁷

There is no question that these developments led to a certain resentment against the Europeans, especially during the period when De Gaulle was viewed as making trouble for the United States. President Kennedy, for example, understood that De Gaulle's attitude was not really based on the fear that the United States would abandon Europe. Quite the contrary: It was the American presence in Germany that shielded France and this gave De Gaulle the freedom to pursue an anti-American policy: "In analyzing De Gaulle's present actions, . . . the President [Kennedy] said De Gaulle did not question our support of Europe. The proof that he does not fear we would desert him is the deployment of only a small number of French troops opposite the Russians in Germany. He relies on our power to protect him while he launches his policies based solely on the self-interest of France." And then, turning to economic issues, he called for a very tough line toward Europe in the forthcoming trade negotiations: "We have been very generous to Europe and it is now time for us to look out for ourselves, knowing fully well that the Europeans will not do anything for us simply because we have in the past helped them."³⁸

The amazing thing, in fact, is not that such attitudes were expressed from time to time, but rather that they carried so little political weight. The whole ideological thrust of U.S. Cold War policy had given America's allies the idea that they were doing America a great favor by allowing her to defend them—which incidentally was one of the reasons why Eisenhower personally disliked taking a "strong anti-Communist line."³⁹ But the resentments generated in the United States by the allied policies were always kept within bounds. One can choose practically any year from 1949 to the present and find some book or article with a title referring to disarray within NATO. But it is an extraordinary fact that the politics of the Alliance never really became politics of mutual resentment.

And finally, one last point to make about this story is how inappropriate it is to talk about the Atlantic Alliance in terms of American "imperialism,"

or to refer to the Western bloc as an American "empire," even an "empire by invitation."⁴⁰ During the crucial formative period in the early 1950s, everyone always wanted a permanent American presence in Europe—everyone, that is, except the Americans themselves. It is hard to understand why the intensity and persistence of America's desire to pull out as soon as she reasonably could has never been recognized, either in the public discussion or in the scholarly literature, because it comes through with unmistakable clarity in the *Foreign Relations* documents.⁴¹

The real criticism to be leveled against American policy was not that the United States was "imperialistic" and sought to impose its presence and its control on its allies. It was that it failed to understand why its continued presence was a vital element in a stable international system, and thus failed to pursue a policy based on that premise.

To an American, in fact, the disgraceful thing about the policy of withdrawal (or "redeployment," as it was euphemistically called) was that it was a policy based on deceit: if the Europeans knew that the Americans intended to pull out, they would not agree to measures, relating especially to the rearmament of West Germany, that would make an American "redeployment" a real possibility. So the real American goal had to be concealed from them, and they had to be given false assurances about America's intention to stay in Europe. Dulles, for example, complained in an NSC meeting in December 1953 that the word was leaking out that the United States wanted eventually to pull out of Europe. Every time statements of this sort were made by U.S. officials, he immediately had to issue denials. But "the more often such denials had to be issued, the more solidly frozen was the United States position on this issue." Eisenhower agreed; "he wanted everybody to keep still." The goal, he said, was to get the European Defense Community agreements ratified, and get "the German contingents in place. Until these objectives are achieved, let us all keep quiet about redeployment."⁴²

The whole story of U.S.-West European relations in the 1950s is thus full of cross-currents that scholars have barely begun to examine. The story, in fact, is not easy to sort out. But in these days when people should be thinking of how to create a stable political system in Europe in the aftermath of the Cold War, it is important to look back and try to understand how the Cold War itself took shape. The way people interpret the past certainly affects the way they think about the future. There are always lessons to be learned. But even more important than that, there are always false lessons to be unlearned.

NOTES

- * With only minor deviations, this paper appears as Chapter 4 in the author's *History and Strategy* (Princeton, 1991), 153-168.
1. NA, RG 218 (Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) CCS 373 (10-23-48) sec. 1: McNeill to Gruenther, 3 October 1948, and Forrestal to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 23 and 24 October 1948. See also David Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision," *Journal of American History* 66 (1979), 73-75.
 2. NA, RG 218 CCS 373, JCS 1952/1, 21 December 1948.
 3. *Ibid.*, JCS 1952/2, 11 January 1949.
 4. *Ibid.*, Appendix A to JIC 439/5, 26 February 1949; see, in the same file, Enclosure A to JIC 439/3, 15 February 1949, giving the views of Army Intelligence on the subject in greater detail.
 5. For example: NA, RG 330, 1947-1950 series, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, CD 16-1-8: Sullivan to Symington, 9 August 1948, and Symington to Forrestal, 6 October 1949; NA, RG 319, P & O Army-Operations, Hot Files, Box 10, 1949 Hot File: Maddocks to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 8 February 1949, on "Final Report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff Evaluation Board for Operation 'Crossroads,'" P & O 000.99 RD/TS (25 Jan 49).
 6. NA, RG 218, CCS 373 (10-23-48): JCS 1952/3, 21 January 1949.
 7. *Ibid.*, Enclosure A to JIC 439/3, 15 February 1949.
 8. Vandenberg had claimed in his reply to Denfeld (JCS 1952/3, *supra*, note 6) that the Air Force had consulted with the JCS's Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) "in arriving at the Intelligence estimates" contained in his original memorandum. But Major General Ray Maddocks, Army Director of Plans and Operations, noted that, according to the JIC secretariat, the original Vandenberg document had *not* been referred to that body for comment. Maddocks also complained repeatedly about the Air Force's "lack of objectivity" in its use of intelligence. When it was arguing for support of its guided missile program or for the development of certain forms of aircraft, it strongly emphasized Soviet air defense capabilities. But when demonstrating its ability to deliver "the air offensive as planned, Russian anti-aircraft capabilities and other factors were greatly de-emphasized." NA, RG 319 P & O 323 TS: Maddocks to Army Chief of Staff, 8 February 1949, especially the enclosure "Typical Examples of the Subjective Use of Intelligence by USAF," in P & O 373 series 1a.
 9. NA, RG 319, P & O series 1a: Maddocks to Army Chief of Staff, 16 March 1949, which summarizes the JIC report to the JCS (JCS 1952/4). The original of that report has evidently not been declassified since the text is missing from the appropriate section of CCS 373 in RG 218.

10. Both the Harmon Report of 12 May 1949 (JCS 1953/1) and the Hull Report of 10 February 1950 (JCS 1952/11) are in NA, RG 218, CCS 373 (10-23-48), the Harmon Report in a bulky package. The Harmon Report is discussed in Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, 16, the Hull Report in Richard Rowe, unpublished Master's thesis, "American Nuclear Strategy and the Korean War," University of Pennsylvania, 1984.
11. This account of the Army strategy is based on two types of sources from the 1949-50 period. Of prime importance are the speeches given by top Army leaders to military audiences at the time, especially General Omar Bradley's address at the National War College, 24 May 1949, NA, RG 319, P & O Decimal Files, 1949-February 1950, 350.001, sec. 1, and General J. Lawton Collins's address to the Command and General Staff College, 5 May 1950, same file, sec. 2. This was supplemented by various documents from the JCS papers and the P & O (Army Plans and Operations) files. For a representative sample: NA, RG 218, CCS 373.11 (12-14-48): Briefing sheet for JCS chairman for 1 December 1949 on JCS 2056/3, a JIC evaluation of JCS 2056, "Target System for Implementation for Joint Outline Emergency War Plan"; NA, RG 319, P & O Hot Files, Box 11, 1950-51 Hot File: Schuyler to Lindsay, Ingersoll and Smith, 8 March 1950, on "Employment of the Strategic Air Command in Support of CINCEUR and CINCFE"; *ibid.*, OPS 416 RD/TS (12 Aug 50): Bolté to Army Chief of Staff, 14 August 1950, on "Target Selection for the Strategic Air Offensive," and draft enclosure in Schuyler to Lindsay, Ingersoll and Smith, 4 October 1950, "Target Selection for Strategic Air Offensive," same box.
12. Collins speech (cited in preceding note), 13.
13. NA, RG 319, OPS 416 RD/TS (30 June 50), Army G-3 (1950 51) Hot File, 471.94, Box 11: "Employment of Atomic Weapons against Military Targets," study prepared by Joint War Plans Branch, Assistant Chief of Staff G-3, General Staff, U.S. Army, 49, 51.
14. NA, RG 330, 1947-50 series, CD 6-4-18: Bradley remarks of 5 April 1949, quoted in draft aide-mémoire attached to Ives memo, 24 June 1949.
15. This is one of the basic themes of David Rosenberg's work. See especially his "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-1960," *International Security* 7 (1983). It is also reflected in many documents in the JCS files. For example, in April 1949 President Truman, after having expressed some concern that the Air Force was relying too heavily on strategic bombing, was given a briefing by the Air Force on its plans for strategic bombing operations in the event of war. When he heard about this, Rear Admiral Cato Glover, the deputy director of the Joint Staff, wrote to his chief, then-Major General Alfred Gruenther:

If the Air Force have plans for strategic bombing operations authentic enough to present to the President, it would appear to me that they should have been reviewed first by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I know that you are familiar with the fact that the Joint Chiefs of Staff have not yet received plans from the Commander in Chief Strategic Air Command and that this is the only major command

that has not submitted plans in support of our current emergency war plan.

On the origins of the original briefing: NA, RG 330, 1947-50 series, CD 12-2-8: Landry to Truman, 16 April 1949. For Truman's allusion to the briefing and Glover's comment: NA, RG 218, CCS 373 (10-23-48), sec. 2: Truman to Secretary of Defense, 21 April 1948, and Glover to Gruenther, 27 April 1949. This problem of targeting persisted throughout this period. See, for example, NA, RG 218, CCS 373.11 (12-14-48), sec. 23, Enclosure to JCS 2056/71, 12 April 1955: Memorandum of the Army Chief of Staff for the JCS:

I am concerned that the operations of the "Joint Arrangement" established by JCS 2056/47, dated 27 May 1953, have not resulted in the production of studies meeting the needs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The seriousness of this situation is evidenced by the fact that a firm intelligence basis for control by the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the use of nuclear weapons is not yet available. Participation under the "Joint Agreement" by Service representatives, in the production of studies of joint interest, has been under the control of the Directorate of Intelligence, U.S. Air Force. Unilateral control of the production of these studies largely accounts for their not being responsive to the needs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is doubtful that the needs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff could be satisfied by target studies unilaterally produced by ANY single service.

16. French War Ministry Archive (Vincennes), Blanc Papers (1K145), Box 2, folder "Comité de Défense Nationale du 10 Septembre 1954": "Examen du 'Plan des Possibilités établi par le commandement suprême des forces alliées en Europe." See also PRO, DEFE 6/26, Annex to JP (54)76(Final), 2 September 1954, and Annex to JP (54)77, 19 August 1954.
17. *FRUS* 1951, vol. III, pt. 1, 454: Notes on a Meeting at the White House, 31 January 1951; see also *ibid.*, 427.
18. *Ibid.*, 455 and 734.
19. See reference for the Collins speech, *supra*, n. 11.
20. *FRUS* 1951, vol. III, pt. 1, 453.
21. *FRUS* 1952-1954, vol. II, 456: Cutler to Dulles, 3 September 1953.
22. Indeed, Secretary of State Dulles accepted the principle of ground force inferiority as a basis for a European arms control formula in conversation with his Soviet counterpart Molotov in February 1954. *FRUS* 1952-1954, vol. VII, 987.
23. There is some material on this subject in *FRUS* 1952-1954, vol. V, 482ff. The long French document cited in n. 16, *supra*, is also quite revealing. My understanding of these matters, however, is based primarily on a series of papers by Robert Wampler [one of which is Chapter 16 of this volume. — Eds.].

24. DDEL, Ann Whitman File, Ann Whitman Diary, Box 3, file "ACW Dairy December 1954 (2)": Goodpaster Memorandum of Conference, 22 December 1954.
25. See the French document cited in n. 16, *supra*, 10, 22.
26. *FRUS* 1952-1954, vol. II, 805: Notes of NSC Meeting, 3 December 1954. Eisenhower went on to say, however, that such a war could not be provoked by the United States, and that "if war comes, the other fellow must have started it." Note also Eisenhower's comment in 1957 that the Strategic Air Command had to realize that "we must not allow the enemy to strike the first blow." Quoted in Rosenberg, "Origins of Overkill," 47; see also the Eisenhower quotation, *ibid.*, 42.
27. Note *FRUS* 1952-1954, vol. V, 535 (views of French prime minister Pierre Mendes-France).
28. See, for example, *FRUS* 1951, vol. III, 535 (State Department memorandum, 5 January 1951): "There is also a belief [in Europe] that the United States is more prone to adopt an aggressive attitude toward the Soviet Union than is wise." Note also PRO, PREM 8/1439: Bevin to Attlee, 12 January 1951. Prime Minister Attlee had evidently argued that the American arms buildup might "force the United States into aggressive action because they will not be able to reconvert to civilian production without economic chaos."
29. See Trachtenberg, "A 'Wasting Asset': American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance, 1949-1954," *International Security* 13 (1988), especially 42-43 and the references cited there; note also the reference to U.S. China policy in late 1954, at 46.
30. *FRUS* 1952-1954, vol. II, 456, Cutler to Dulles, 3 September 1953, quoting a text that Eisenhower dictated "as he walked up and down the room." For an example of other such references, see *ibid.*, 527 (Eisenhower remarks in an NSC meeting, 7 October 1953):

The President went on to point out that properly speaking the stationing of U.S. divisions in Europe had been at the outset an emergency measure not intended to last indefinitely. Unhappily, however, the European nations have been slow in building up their own military forces and had now come to expect our forces to remain in Europe indefinitely.

Of course, one reason why they were slow was their reluctance to build up conventional forces—the only kind they were then capable of creating—which were viewed as obsolescent in the new military environment.

31. DDEL, Ann Whitman File, NSC series, Box 7: Notes of NSC Meeting, 21 November 1955, 10.
32. I have dealt with these and related issues in a paper on "The Berlin Crisis," to be published in Charles Brower, ed., *The Theory and Practice of American National Security*, also printed as Chapter 5 of the author's *History and Strategy*, cited in the introductory note.

33. This argument is developed at some length in the "Wasting Asset" article (Chapter 3 of *History and Strategy*).
34. The views of General Ridgway, Army Chief of Staff, are summarized in the Goodpaster Memorandum of Conversation, 22 December 1954, cited *supra*, n. 24.
35. For an exceptionally elegant analysis of this issue, see Pierre Hassner, "The American World Power and the Western European Powers," in Karl Kaiser and Hans Peter Schwarz, eds., *America and Western Europe* (Lexington, Massachusetts, 1977), 335-336.
36. On Eisenhower, see, for example, n. 39, below. As for Dulles, note this extract from the minutes of a meeting with top military leaders held on 28 January 1953. Dulles asked whether, if the European Defense Community negotiations failed, one might have to give up on continental defense, and instead "think of a defense based on Spain, Turkey and various islands." When General Bradley replied that that alternative was not very good, Dulles pointed out that "from the negotiations standpoint, it is useful to have alternatives. If the French and Germans should come to see that the military position would be tolerable for us if we could hold Turkey, Spain, etc., that would create pressures on them which would not exist if they think we are so committed that we must carry the entire load in the area. *FRUS* 1952-1954, vol. V, 712-713.
37. JFKL, National Security Files, Box 82: Allen Dulles, Memorandum for the President, 22 August 1961.
38. *Ibid.*, Box 314, folder "NSC Meetings, 1963: No. 508": Remarks of President Kennedy to the National Security Council Meeting of 22 January 1963.
39. The United States, he said in 1956, was taking "in many areas such a strong anti-Communist line that our allies are able to make demands on us, and claim that they are fighting our fight for us." DDEL, Staff Secretary Collection, Subject Series, Department of Defense Sub-series, box 4, file "Joint Chiefs of Staff (2) [January - April 1956]": Goodpaster Memorandum of Conference with the President, 13 March 1956.
40. This is a reference to Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-52," *Journal of Peace Research* 23 (1986).
41. Especially in *FRUS* 1952-1954, vols. II and V, where the references to an eventual American withdrawal are quite common.
42. *FRUS* 1952-1954, vol. II, 450: Notes of NSC Meeting, 10 December 1953; see also Eisenhower's comment, at 451, and, for one of the promises Dulles alluded to, *ibid.*, 447.

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Reflections at a Turning Point

Norman A. Graebner

Americans can contemplate the economic and political evolution of Europe during the past forty years with considerable satisfaction. Since 1949, Europe has enjoyed its longest peace in the modern age. There were numerous elements in this success story, but not the least was the role played by the United States in Europe's postwar reconstruction. It comprises perhaps the greatest peacetime achievement in the history of the world. One can scarcely question the importance of the Marshall Plan in this reconstruction. Supported, encouraged by American aid, Europe regained its prewar productivity shortly after mid-century, and soared onto new heights of economic growth and prosperity thereafter. If NATO contributed to that accomplishment by giving Europe a sense of security, then it appears reasonable that we endorse NATO and wish it a long future.

NATO's contribution to the peace and unity of the Atlantic world has been undeniably significant. Still its precise contribution is difficult to measure despite the logic of the decisions that led to its creation. One might well doubt the validity of the official definitions of the Soviet threat that led to the formation of NATO forty years ago. At the same time, one would scarcely question the fact that Western Europe could not build a stable and prosperous society within the international environment that then existed, except on the basis of military security convincing enough to reassure its own members and discourage those who might wish to limit Western progress. That Soviet purposes toward Europe might have excluded the