

America, Europe and German Rearmament, August-September 1950

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In September 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson met in New York with the British foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, and the French foreign minister, Robert Schuman. Acheson had an important announcement to make. The United States, he declared, was prepared to “take a step never before taken in history”. The American government was willing to send “substantial forces” to Europe. The American combat force would be part of a collective force with a unified command structure, a force which would ultimately be capable of defending Western Europe on the ground. But the Americans were willing to take this step only if the European allies, for their part, were prepared to do what was necessary to “make this defense of Europe a success”. And his government, he said, had come to the conclusion that the whole effort could not succeed without a German military contribution. So if the NATO allies wanted the American troops, they would have to accept the idea of German rearmament – and they would have to accept it right away. The U.S. government, he insisted, needed to “have an answer now on the possible use of German forces” in the defense of Western Europe.¹

The position Acheson took at the New York Conference was of quite extraordinary historical importance. The American government was finally committing itself to building an effective defense of Western Europe and to playing a central role in the military system that was to be set up. But the Americans were also trying to lay down the law to their European allies: the U.S. government wanted to force them to go along with a policy that made them very uneasy.

It was not, of course, that the Europeans disliked the whole package Acheson was now proposing. They knew that an effective defense of Western Europe would have to be based on American power and therefore welcomed much of the American plan. The offer of a major American troop presence in Europe, the proposal to set up a strong NATO military system, the suggestion that an American general would be sent over as NATO commander – all this was in itself music to their ears. The problem lay with the final part of Acheson's proposal, the part relating to German rearmament, and even here the issue had more to do with timing than with ultimate objectives.

The allied governments were not against the very idea of German rearmament. Of all the NATO allies, the French were the most reluctant at this point to accede to Acheson's demands. But Schuman was not dead set against German rearmament as a matter of principle.² He in fact now admitted that it was “illogical for us to defend Western Europe, including Germany, without contributions from Germany”.³ The French government, he told Acheson, was “not irrev-

1. Minutes of foreign ministers' meetings, September 12-13, 1950, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [FRUS], 1950, vol.3, Washington: GPO, 1977, pp.1192, 1208.

2. This claim is somewhat at variance with the conventional wisdom on this point. See, for example, L. MARTIN, *The American Decision to Rearm Germany*, in: H. STEIN (ed.), *American Civil-Military Decisions: A Book of Case Studies*, University of Alabama Press, Birmingham, 1963, p.658: “To the end of the New York meetings, however, the French representative refused to accept even the principle of German rearmament”. But the real story is not nearly that simple.

3. Foreign ministers' private meeting, September 12, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:1200.

cably opposed to German participation” in the NATO army. Indeed, he thought it was likely that “some day” Germany would join the Western defense force.⁴

The problem from Schuman's point of view was that Acheson wanted to move too quickly. The Americans were insisting on immediate and open acceptance of the principle of German rearmament. But Schuman could go along with the U.S. plan, he said, only if this were kept secret. It was politically impossible for him to accept the plan publicly at that point.⁵ Only a minority in France, he pointed out, appreciated “the importance of Germany in Western defense”.⁶ The French public could probably be brought along and would ultimately accept the idea of a German defense contribution, but only if the West moved ahead more cautiously – only if a strong European defense system had been built up first.

Domestic politics was not the only reason why Schuman took this line. The east-west military balance was perhaps an even more fundamental factor. In late 1950 the Western powers were just beginning to rearm. In military terms, they felt they could scarcely hold their own in a war with Russia. General Omar Bradley, the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS], for example, thought in November 1950 that if war broke out, the United States might well lose. The Soviets, on the other hand, seemed to be getting ready for a war: the sense was that they were poised on the brink and might be tempted to strike before the West built up its power. In such circumstances, people like Schuman asked, was it wise to move ahead with the rearmament of Germany, something the Russians were bound to find highly provocative? Rather than risk war now, at a time of Western weakness, didn't it make sense to put off the decision until after the West had rearmed itself and would thus be better able to withstand the shock?⁷

4. Acheson to Truman and Acting Secretary, September 16, 1950, *ibid.*, pp.312-313.

5. Acheson-Schuman meeting, September 12, 1950, and meeting of British, French and American foreign ministers and high commissioners, September 14, 1950, *ibid.*, pp.287, 299-300.

6. Acheson-Schuman meeting, September 12, 1950, *ibid.*, pp.287-288.

7. Schuman and Bevin in meeting of British, French and American foreign ministers and high commissioners, September 14, 1950, *ibid.*, pp.296-297. This fear of provoking a Soviet attack had been an important element in French policy since early 1948. The concern at that time was that the Russians would interpret movement toward the establishment of a West German state as a major step toward German rearmament, which, it was felt, might provoke preventive military action. See, for example, Chauvel to Bonnet, March 18 and May 19, 1948, Bonnet Papers, vol.1, and Massigli to Foreign Ministry, May 3, 1948, Massigli Papers, vol.67, both French Foreign Ministry Archives [FFMA], Paris. In 1950, this factor continued to play a fundamental role in French policy on the issue, even before the German rearmament question was pushed to the top of the agenda by the events in Korea in June. See, for example, a Quai d'Orsay memorandum from April 1950, published in H. MÖLLER and K. HILDEBRAND, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Frankreich: Dokumente 1949-1963*, vol.1, K.G. Saur, Munich, 1997, p.376: “Nous pouvons nous attendre à ce que les Américains posent le problème d'une contribution allemande éventuelle à l'armement des puissances occidentales. Un programme de ce genre ne pourra être accepté par nous que dans la mesure où il ne constituerait pas une provocation vis-à-vis de l'U.R.S.S”. On these issues in general, and for the Bradley quotation in particular, see the discussion in M. TRACHTENBERG, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999, pp.96-100, 111-112; and in M. TRACHTENBERG, *History and Strategy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991, pp.118-127, 130-131.

These were perfectly reasonable arguments, and were in fact supported by the U.S. government's own assessments of the risk of war with Russia at the time. The U.S. High Commissioner in Germany, John McCloy, thought, for example, in June 1950 that "the rearmament of Germany would undoubtedly speed up any Soviet schedule for any possible future action in Germany and would, no doubt, be regarded by [the Soviets] as sufficiently provocative to warrant extreme counter-measures".⁸ In December, the CIA concluded that the USSR would "seriously consider going to war whenever it becomes convinced that progress toward complete Western German rearmament", along with the rearmament of NATO as a whole, had reached the point where it could not be "arrested by other methods".⁹ It was of course possible that the Soviets might choose to live with a rearmed Germany, especially if there continued to be major limits on German power, but certain groups within the U.S. government – Army intelligence, for example – believed that if the West moved ahead in this area, it was more likely "that the Soviets would decide on resort to military action rather than make the required adjustment".¹⁰

So if even American officials were worried about what a decision to rearm Germany might lead to, it is not hard to understand why the Europeans, and especially the French, were so disturbed by the U.S. proposal. The NATO allies would have to accept the whole package, Acheson told them. They would have to agree, publicly and immediately, to the rearmament of Germany. They would have to go along with what they honestly viewed as a very provocative policy vis-à-vis Russia and risk war at a time when no effective defense was in place – either that, Acheson said, or the Americans would simply not defend them.

The fact that the U.S. government had chosen to deal so roughly with its allies had one very important effect: it helped bring France and Germany together. It helped bring about a certain change in perspective – a change in the way the Europeans viewed America and thus in the way they viewed each other. Up to this point, the French, for example, had tended to think of the policy of "building Europe" in essentially manipulative and instrumental terms. It was, to use Raymond Poidevin's phrase, a way "to seduce and to control" Germany.¹¹ But now the idea was beginning to take hold that the Europeans – that is, the continental West Europeans – were all in the same boat in strategic terms. The Europeans had interests of their own – interests that overlapped with, but which were in important ways distinct from those of the United States. The fact that the Americans could adopt a highly provocative policy toward Russia, with scant regard for European interests, meant that the Europeans could not afford to be too dependent on the United States. Yes, there had to be a strong counterweight to Soviet power in Europe, and yes, that counterweight had to rest largely on

8. McCloy to Acheson, June 13, 1950, President's Secretary's Files [PSF], box 178, Germany, folder 2, Harry S Truman Library [HSTL], Independence, Missouri.

9. "Probable Soviet Reactions to a Remilitarization of Western Germany", NIE 17, December 27, 1950, both in PSF/253/HSTL.

10. "Soviet Courses of Action with Respect to Germany", NIE 4, January 29, 1951, PSF/253/HSTL.

11. R. POIDEVIN, *Robert Schuman, Homme d'État: 1886-1963*, Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1986, p.220.

American power. The American presence in Europe was obviously essential and an American combat force would have to be the heart of an effective NATO defense system. But there needed to be some counterweight to American power within the Atlantic alliance. And given the fact that Britain held herself aloof from Europe, that counterweight had to be built on a real understanding between France and Germany.

We do not want to overstate the argument here. This sort of thinking was just beginning to take shape in 1950 and things obviously had a long way to go.¹² But the importance of what was going on at the time should not be underestimated either. The line Acheson took at the New York Conference was quite extraordinary, and what was at stake was of enormous importance. The events of late 1950 were therefore bound to make a profound impression. They were bound to lead many Europeans to begin thinking more seriously about the importance of coming together as a unit in order to give Europe more of a voice in setting the policy of the West as a whole.

Consider, for example, the reaction of the German chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, to the American plan. Shortly after the New York Conference, Adenauer had his top advisor, Herbert Blankenhorn, tell Armand Bérard, the French deputy high commissioner in Germany, that he did not want Germany to simply provide forces for an American army – that is, an army in which the Americans would have all the power. The two men soon met again and Blankenhorn returned to the charge. “With great emphasis”, Bérard wrote, Blankenhorn “repeated what he had already told me a couple of weeks ago, namely, how desirable it was that an initiative come from the French side. Germany did not want to take her place in an American army”. “If France”, Blankenhorn continued, “proposed the creation of a European army under allied command, an army whose supreme commander might even be a Frenchman”, his government “would support that solution”.¹³

Bérard's comment on this is worth quoting at length:

“The chancellor is being honest when he says he is worried that what the German [military] contribution will boil down to is simply German forces in an American army. He is afraid that his country will end up providing foot soldiers and shock troops for an anti-Communist offensive force that the United States might build in Europe. People in our own country are worried about the same sort of thing. Adenauer is asking for a French initiative that would head off this American solution, which he fears. I think he is sincere in all this, just as sincere as he was, and still is, in

12. For the best study of the subject, see G.-H. SOUTOU, *L'Alliance incertaine: Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands, 1954-1996*, Fayard, Paris, 1996. Soutou begins his story in 1954, which, as he points out (for example, on p.22), is when a real bilateral Franco-German strategic relationship began. This is true enough; the point here is simply that the thinking had begun to take shape a number of years earlier.

13. “Puis, avec beaucoup d’insistance, il [Blankenhorn] m’a répété ce qu’il m’avait dit il y a une quinzaine de jours déjà, combien il paraissait désirable au Chancelier qu’une initiative vînt du côté français. L’Allemagne ne voulait pas prendre sa place dans une armée américaine. Si la France proposait la création d’une armée européenne sous commandement allié, dont le chef suprême pourrait même être un Français, le gouvernement fédéral se rallierait à cette solution”. Bérard to Foreign Ministry, mid-October 1950, series “Europe 1949-55”, subseries “Allemagne”, volume 70, folio 7, French Foreign Ministry Archives, Paris.

his support for the Schuman Plan [for a coal and steel community in Western Europe]. He believes that the problems of Western Europe have to be resolved on a Franco-German basis, the military problem as well as the economic problems".¹⁴

The important point here was that France and Germany had major interests in common, not just vis-à-vis Russia, but vis-à-vis America as well. There was, Bérard noted,

"a certain parallelism between the position of France and that of West Germany with regard to the defense of the West. Both of them are concerned above all with making sure that they are not invaded and that their territory does not serve as a battleground; they both feel very strongly that the West should hold back from provoking the Soviets, before a Western force, worthy of the name, has been set up".¹⁵

To go from that point to the conclusion that the Europeans had to act more as a strategic unit – that European integration had to be real, and not just a device to keep Germany from becoming a problem – did not require any great leap of the imagination.

Reading these and related documents, one thus has the sense of a new way of thinking beginning to take shape – of French leaders rubbing their eyes and waking up to the fact that they and the Germans had more in common than they had perhaps realized, of an important threshold being crossed, of France and Germany just starting to think of themselves as a strategic unit. And if this kind of thinking was beginning to emerge, it was in large part in reaction to the heavy-handed way in which the U.S. government had chosen to deal with its European allies in September 1950.

But had the American government, in any real sense, actually *chosen* to deal with the allies in that way? It is commonly argued that the policy that Acheson pursued in September

14. "Le Chancelier dit vrai quand il affirme son souci d'éviter que la contribution allemande se traduise par une participation à une armée américaine. Il redoute que son pays n'ait à fournir l'infanterie et les troupes de choc d'une force offensive anti-communiste que les Etats-Unis mettraient sur pied en Europe. Les mêmes préoccupations existent dans notre opinion en ce qui concerne notre pays. M. Adenauer sollicite une initiative française qui écarte la menace de cette solution américaine qu'il redoute. Je considère qu'il est sincère dans l'expression de ce souhait, comme il l'a été et comme il le reste dans son adhésion au Plan Schuman. Il croit à une solution franco-allemande des problèmes qui se posent à l'Europe Occidentale, du problème militaire comme des problèmes économiques". Bérard's next sentence is also worth noting, because it shows how French officials were already thinking in terms of balancing between Germany and America within the Western alliance: "Ce n'est pas à dire que l'on doive concevoir une armée occidentale dont les Américains seraient exclus et dont Français et Allemands fourniraient les forces principales. Pareille solution risquerait un jour de nous contraindre à nous battre, sinon pour le roi de Prusse, du moins pour la reconquête de la Prusse". Bérard to Foreign Ministry, October 17, 1950, Europe 1949-55, Allemagne, vol.70, ff.16-17, French Foreign Ministry archives. These documents shed light not only on the beginnings of European integration (and on the origins of the EDC project in particular), but also on the evolution of Franco-German relations. Adenauer, for example, is often portrayed as pursuing a very pro-American policy at this point; the standard view is that his attitude toward France at this time was relatively cool. Note the tone, for example, of the discussion in H.-P. SCHWARZ, *Adenauer: Der Aufstieg, 1876-1952*, 3rd ed., Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1986, p.836. But it is clear from these French sources that the roots of his later policy were already in place in 1950.

15. "Il existe une analogie certaine entre la position de la France et celle de l'Allemagne Fédérale concernant la défense de l'Occident. L'une et l'autre ont le souci d'écartier à tout prix de leur territoire la possibilité d'une invasion et d'éviter de servir de champ de bataille; elles sont préoccupées de s'abstenir de toute provocation à l'égard des Soviétiques, avant que ne soit constituée une force occidentale véritablement digne de ce nom". Bérard to Foreign Ministry, October 17, 1950 (as in n. 14).

1950 is not to be understood as a choice freely made at the top political level, but is rather to be seen as the outcome of a bureaucratic dispute in which Acheson ultimately had to give way to pressure from the Pentagon.¹⁶ The State Department, according to this argument, understood the need for an effective defense of Western Europe; now, following the outbreak of the Korean War in June, the need for action was obvious. It therefore wanted to begin building an effective defense by sending an American combat force over to Europe. But this gave the military authorities the leverage they needed to achieve their “long-standing objective of German rearmament”.¹⁷ They were willing, they now said, to go along with the plan to send over the U.S. combat divisions, but only as part of a “package”: the JCS “wanted categorical assurances that they could count on German assistance in the shape they desired and that they would be able to make an immediate start on raising and equipping the German units”; they insisted that the offer to deploy the U.S. force “be made strictly conditional upon iron-clad commitments by the Europeans to their own contributions, and in particular, upon unequivocal acceptance of an immediate start on German rearmament in a form technically acceptable to American strategists”.¹⁸

The State Department, the argument runs, resisted the Pentagon's efforts to bring the German rearmament question to a head in such a blunt and high-handed way. The two sides debated the issue for about two weeks in late August, but the “Pentagon stood united and unmovable”. Acheson, according to his own widely-accepted account, “agreed with their strategic purpose”, but “thought their tactics murderous”.¹⁹ At the end of August, however, Acheson had reluctantly decided that he had to give way. He had earlier felt that insisting on the inclusion of Germany at the outset “would delay and complicate the whole enterprise”, and that a more flexible approach made more sense, but, by his own account, he was almost totally isolated within the government and therefore had no choice but to back off from that position. “I was right”, he said, “but I was nearly alone”.²⁰ Most of the State Department, and even the president himself, seemed to be on the other side. So somewhat against his better judgment, he accepted what he later recognized as a mistaken policy.²¹ He accepted not only the “package” approach – that is, as one scholar put it, a formula which “tied German rearmament to the State Department package much more rigidly than the State Department had

16. See, for example, MARTIN, *Decision to Rearm Germany*, pp.656-657; R. MCGEEHAN, *The German Rearmament Question: American Diplomacy and European Defense after World War II*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1971, pp.41, 47; D. McLELLAN, *Dean Acheson: The State Department Years*, Dodd, Mead, New York, 1976, pp.328-329; J. CHACE, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1998, p.324; D. C. LARGE, *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1996, pp.84-85; S. DOCKRILL, *Britain's Policy for West German Rearmament, 1950-1955*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp.32-33.

17. McLELLAN, *Acheson*, p.328.

18. MARTIN, *American Decision to Rearm Germany*, p.656.

19. D. ACHESON, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department*, Norton, New York, 1969, p.438; McLELLAN, *Acheson*, p.329; MCGEEHAN, *German Rearmament Question*, p.41.

20. D. ACHESON, *Present at the Creation*, p.438.

21. *Ibid.*, p.440; D. ACHESON, *Sketches from Life of Men I Have Known*, Harper, New York, 1961, pp.26, 41; MCGEEHAN, *German Rearmament Question*, p.41.

intended”²² – but a plan that would allow Germany to rearm on a national basis, which was also very much at variance with what the State Department had originally wanted.²³ But this was the only way he could get the Pentagon to accept the rest of the plan.

If all this is true – if the American government just stumbled into the policy it pursued in September 1950, if the policy, that is, is to be understood essentially as the outcome of a bureaucratic process – then the episode might not tell us much about how the American government, at the top political level, dealt with its European allies. But if that standard interpretation is not accurate, then the story might tell us something fundamental about the nature of America’s European policy, and indeed about the nature of U.S.-European relations in general.

The goal here, therefore, is to examine this interpretation of what happened in August and September 1950 in the light of the evidence. But is there any point, one might wonder, to conducting an analysis of this sort? If so many scholars who looked into the issue all reached essentially the same conclusion, that conclusion, one might reasonably assume, is probably correct. There is, however, a basic problem with this assumption: the standard interpretation rests on a very narrow evidentiary base. It rests, to a quite extraordinary extent, on Acheson’s own account and on scholarly accounts that depend heavily on Acheson’s story.²⁴ A self-serving account, however, should never be taken at face value; given the importance of the issue, the standard interpretation really needs to be tested against the evidence. And a good deal of archival evidence has become available since Acheson’s memoirs and the first scholarly accounts were published. But what light does this new material throw on the issue?

22. MARTIN, *American Decision to Rearm Germany*, p.657.

23. MCGEEHAN, *German Rearmament Question*, p.41. This aspect of the argument is emphasized in T. SCHWARTZ, *America’s Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p.134.

24. The two published accounts Acheson gave – *Present at the Creation*, pp.437-440, and *Sketches from Life*, pp.25-27, 41-43 – are cited frequently in the historical literature relating to this issue. Scholars sometimes also relied on information Acheson provided in personal interviews. See Martin, *Decision to Rearm Germany*, p.665, and McLELLAN, *Acheson*, p.viii. Other sources are sometimes cited, but this additional evidence turns out upon examination to be quite weak. McLellan, for example, cites a memorandum of a conversation between Acheson and JCS Chairman Bradley on August 30 from the Acheson Papers at the Truman Library as supporting his contention that Acheson had at this point “given in to the military point of view” (p. 329). But according to the archivists at the Truman Library, no such document exists in that collection. The press accounts cited in n. 41 in the Martin article also do not prove the point they are meant to support. They are cited to back up the claim that the JCS was insisting on including German rearmament in the package, but the picture they give is that the German rearmament issue was a relatively minor issue (“only an incidental part of a much larger American program”) and that the U.S. government had not embraced the package concept (“Acheson has not definitely made it a condition without which the United States would refuse to send troops to Europe”). *Western Europe* (editorial), in: *Washington Post*, August 31, 1950, p.8, and *Schuman Got Little Warning on U.S. Plans*, in: *Washington Post*, September 17, 1950, p.10.

German Rearmament: On What Basis?

The State and Defense departments did not see eye-to-eye on the German rearmament question in mid-1950. On that point, the standard interpretation is indeed correct. But the differences between the two departments were not nearly as great as they sometimes seemed, and the area of disagreement had virtually disappeared by the time the New York Conference met in early September.

The military authorities had favored German rearmament since 1947. On May 2, 1950, they had officially called for the “early rearming of Western Germany”, and had formally reiterated this call on June 8. But the State Department had taken a very different line and on July 3 had flatly rejected the idea that the time had come to press for German rearmament.²⁵ It was not that top State Department officials felt that Germany could never be rearmed. Acheson himself had noted, even in 1949, that one could not “have any sort of security in Western Europe without using German power”.²⁶ But until mid-1950, it was thought for a variety of reasons that it would be unwise to press the issue.

In July 1950, however, a major shift took place in State Department thinking. Acheson told President Truman at the end of that month that the issue now was not whether Germany should be “brought into the general defensive plan”, but rather how this could be done without undermining America’s other basic policy goals in Europe. He pointed out that the State Department was thinking in terms of a “European army or a North Atlantic army”; that force would include German troops, but the German units “would not be subject to the orders of Bonn.”²⁷ A whole series of key State Department officials, both in Washington and in the major embassies abroad, had, in fact, come to the conclusion at about this time that some kind of international army that included German troops would have to be created, and Acheson’s own thinking was fully in line with this emerging consensus.²⁸

This shift in State Department thinking is not to be viewed in bureaucratic politics terms as an attempt by the State Department to reach some kind of compromise with the JCS on the German rearmament issue. It was instead a quite straightforward consequence of the outbreak of the Korean War in June. As Acheson later noted, after the North Korean attack:

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25. “Extracts of Views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with Respect to Western Policy toward Germany,” NSC 71, June 8, 1950, and “Views of the Department of State on the Rearmament of Western Germany,” NSC 71/1, July 3, 1950, in FRUS 1950, 4:686-687, 691-695.
 26. Policy Planning Staff meeting, October 18, 1949, Records of the Policy Planning Staff, 1947-53, box 32, RG 59, U.S. National Archives [USNA], College Park, Maryland.
 27. Acheson memo of meeting with Truman, July 31, 1950, FRUS 1950, 4:702-703. President Truman had earlier opposed the JCS call for German rearmament. See Truman to Acheson, June 16, 1950, *ibid.*, pp.688-689.
 28. Bruce to Acheson, July 28, 1950; Acheson-Truman meeting, July 31, 1950; McCloy to Acheson, August 3, 1950; Douglas to Acheson, August 8, 1950; Kirk to Acheson, August 9, 1950; in FRUS 1950, 3:157, 167-168, 181-182, 190-193.

“We and everybody else in Europe and the United States took a new look at the German problem. It seemed to us that it was now clear that Germany had to take a part in the defense of Europe; it seemed clear that the idea that we had had before that this would work out through a process of evolution wasn’t adequate – there wasn’t time, the evolution had to be helped along by action. It was quite clear by this time, as a result of the staff talks in NATO, that the Western Union idea of defense on the Rhine was quite impractical and foolish, and that if you were going to have any defense at all, it had to be in the realm of forward strategy, which was as far east in Germany as possible. This made it absolutely clear that Germany had to be connected with defense, not merely through military formations, but emotionally and politically, because if the battle was going to be fought in Germany it meant that the German people had to be on our side, and enthusiastically so”.

The U.S. government “immediately went to work” on “this German matter” – at least as soon as it could, given the need to deal, in July especially, with even more urgent problems relating to the Korean War.²⁹

So there was now a certain sense of urgency: an effective defense of Western Europe had to be put in place and, indeed, put in place rather quickly. It was obvious from the start that this would “require real contributions of German resources and men”. But the German contribution could not take the form of a German national army; the Germans could not be allowed to build a military force able to operate independently. The only way the Germans could make their defense contribution was thus to create some kind of international army that included German forces – but forces not able to conduct military operations on their own.³⁰

A plan based on this fundamental concept was worked out by a key State Department official, Henry Byroade, at the beginning of August. Byroade, the Director of the State Department’s Bureau of German Affairs, discussed his ideas with the Army staff officers most directly concerned with these issues on August 3. (The Army, for obvious reasons, took the lead in setting policy on this issue for the military establishment as a whole). Those officers were pleased by the fact that the State Department now appeared “to be looking with favor toward the controlled rearmament of Western Germany”; they “felt that great progress had been achieved on the question of German rearmament, since both the State Department and the Department of Defense are now attempting to work out a suitable plan which would make possible a German contribution to the defense of Western Europe”.

29. Princeton Seminar, pp.910-911, 921, Acheson Papers, HSTL. Soon after he left office, Acheson and some of his former collaborators got together at Princeton to discuss what had happened during the Truman administration; tapes were made of those discussions and a transcript was prepared. Microfilm copies of the transcript of this “Princeton Seminar”, as it was called, are available at a number of university libraries in the United States. But the microfilm is often illegible and the best source is the original transcript at the Truman Library. All the references from this source cited here come from the transcript of October 11, 1953 discussion.

30. See the sources cited in n. 28 above, esp. pp.157, 181 (for the quotation), 190, 193.

These Army officers had in fact just come up with their own plan for a “controlled rearmament of Germany”.³¹

There were, however, major differences between the two plans, or so it seemed to both sides at the time. The Byroade plan called for the establishment of a highly integrated “European Army”; that army would include practically all the Western military forces – American and German as well as West European – stationed in Europe; it would have a “General Staff of truly international character”, and a single commander, an American general, with “complete jurisdiction” over the whole army. The force would have as much of an international flavor as possible. The goal, Byroade said, was to apply the Schuman Plan concept to the military field; the aim was to enable the Germans to contribute to the defense of the West, without at the same time becoming too independent – that is, without getting a national army of their own.³²

The Army, on the other hand, was not in favor of setting up a highly integrated “European Army”. The Army staff did not call explicitly for a “German national army”, but key officers did seem to feel that any plan the U.S. government came up with would need to “appeal to the nationalistic tendencies of the German people”. The Army plan, moreover, called for “controlled rearmament”, but the officers who drafted it were reluctant to state formally what the “nature of the controls” would be. In short, the State Department called for a truly international force, while the military authorities, it seemed, wanted a less highly integrated force composed of national armies. The two plans, in Byroade's view, were “miles apart”. Or as the Army staff put it: the State Department proposal would reduce the “military sovereignty status” of the European countries down “to the level of Germany in order to secure her contribution”, while the Army proposed “to raise Germany's status” to the level of the NATO allies.³³

So there was clearly a major difference of opinion on this issue at this point – at least at the level of rhetoric. But in practical terms were the two sides really so far apart? The great goal of the State Department was to make sure that there was no new German national army – that is, an army capable of independent action, and

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31. The Byroade Plan, “An Approach to the Formation of a 'European Army’”, was drafted on August 3; the text is included in Byroade to McCloy, August 4, 1950, 740.5/8-350, Department of State Central Files [DSCF], RG 59, USNA. For the record of Byroade's talks with the Army officers on August 3, see Memorandum for General Schuyler, August 5, 1950, Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA. For the Army plan, see “Staff Study: Rearmament of Western Germany”, August 2, 1950, and Bolté Memorandum for General Gruenther on Rearmament of Germany, August 10, 1950 (containing a systematic comparison of the State and Army plans), both in same file in RG 319.
 32. Byroade meeting with Army staff officers, August 3, 1950, in: Memorandum for General Schuyler, August 5, 1950, and Army “Staff Study: Rearmament of Western Germany”, August 2, 1950, both in Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA. “An Approach to the Formation of a ‘European Army’”, in Byroade to McCloy, August 3, 1950, 740.5/8-350, DSCF, RG 59, USNA.
 33. Army “Staff Study: Rearmament of Western Germany”, August 2, 1950; Byroade meeting with Army staff officers, August 3, 1950 (document dated August 5); Bolté to Gruenther, August 10, 1950 (with attached “Comparison of Plans”); all in Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA.

thus able to support an independent foreign policy. The military authorities understood the point, and it was for this reason that they, from the start, favored the “controlled” rearmament of Germany. And when one examines the sorts of controls they had in mind, and when one notes that certain key military controls in their plan would apply to Germany alone, it becomes obvious – the rhetoric notwithstanding – that military leaders had no intention of giving the Federal Republic the same “military sovereignty status” as the NATO allies. In the Byroade plan, not just allied headquarters, but also field army and corps headquarters were to be “international”; in the plan worked out by the officers in the Pentagon, “Army and Corps should be national”, except that the Germans would be “allowed none”. In both plans, the Germans would contribute only ground forces, and not air or naval forces; in both plans there would be German divisions, but no larger purely German units; in both plans, the German forces would be under allied control; in both plans, the Germans would not be allowed to manufacture certain kinds of weapons (“heavy ordnance, etc.”); and both plans implied German participation in NATO.³⁴

The real difference thus had to do not with Germany but with how the NATO forces were to be treated. Byroade was not too explicit about this part of the proposal, but his plan called for virtually all the allied forces in Europe to be integrated into the proposed European defense force. There would be no distinct British, French or even American army on the continent, only an international army with a single commander served by an integrated international staff. The U.S. military authorities did not like this proposal at all, even though the whole force would have an American general as its commander. Byroade, it seemed to them, wanted to go too far in pushing the allies down to the German level; the Chiefs also felt that something that radical was not essential, and that instead of creating an entirely new institution, the “European Defense Force”, it made more sense to build on the one basic institution that had already been created: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Both NATO and the Western Union military organization set up by the Brussels Treaty of 1948 were already in existence; to create a new international force would “tend to complicate an already confusing structure”.³⁵ And there was no point in doing so, because NATO itself could provide the necessary degree of integration; a German force integrated into the NATO system – especially a strengthened NATO system--would be incapable of independent action.

34. Bolté to Gruenther, August 10, 1950 (with attached “Comparison of Plans”), Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA. See also Byroade meeting with Army staff officers, August 3, 1950, Memorandum for General Schuyler, August 5, same file in RG 319, and, for the Byroade plan, see Byroade to McCloy, August 3, 1950, 740.5/8-350, DSCF, RG 59, USNA.

35. Byroade meeting with Army staff officers, August 3, 1950, in Memorandum for General Schuyler, August 5, 1950, and Army “Staff Study: Rearmament of Western Germany”, August 2, 1950, both in Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA.

This logic was quite compelling. It did not matter if the international force was called EDF or NATO. The name was not important. What really mattered was whether you had an international structure within which the Germans could make their contribution, but which at the same time would prevent them from becoming too independent. And if an institution that had already been created – that is, NATO – could achieve that result, then so much the better.³⁶

Even Byroade himself, who by his own account was quite conservative on these issues in comparison with other State Department officials, was quick to see the point. His original plan, in any event, had not really been put forward as a practical proposal; his aim there had been to sketch out a “theoretical solution from which one could work backwards” with an eye to working out a “compromise between the theoretical and what is already in existence”. So when a top Army officer explained to him on August 10 how NATO could do the trick, he at least temporarily dropped his objections and basically accepted their approach: he agreed that “German divisions, organized as such, might well be integrated into the NATO forces as now planned, provided only an American commander for these forces were set up in the near future”. The differences between the two departments were clearly narrowing. Indeed, it turned out that Byroade’s earlier objection to the Army plan had “stemmed entirely from a misunderstanding of terms”. Byroade had thought that when Army officers referred to “controlled rearmament”, they had in mind only a “limitation on numbers and types of divisions”. When he was told that the Army “also contemplated as part of the control a very definite limit as to the types and quantities of materiel and equipment which Germany should manufacture, Byroade said he was in complete accord”.³⁷

By the end of the month, it seemed that a full consensus had been reached. For Acheson, far more than for Byroade, only the core issue was really important. For him, it was not a problem that the Germans would have a national army in an administrative sense – that is, that they would recruit their own troops, pay them, provide them with uniforms, and so on. The only important thing was to make sure that things did not go too far – that the “old German power”, as Acheson put it, was

36. The idea that NATO could do it – that one did not need to create a new institution but could rely on a strong NATO structure to solve this whole complex of problems – reemerged in 1954 as the European Defense Community project was collapsing and people were looking for alternatives. The military authorities, especially the NATO commander, General Alfred Gruenther, played a key role at that point in pushing for the NATO solution; see M. TRACHTENBERG, *Constructed Peace*, p.127. But they were drawing on basic thinking that had taken shape in 1950. At that time, both Gruenther – then Deputy Army Chief of Staff for Plans – and General Schuyler, another top Army officer who would end up as Gruenther’s Chief of Staff in 1954, were already pressing for the NATO solution.

37. Byroade to McCloy, August 4, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:183-184; Bolté to Gruenther, July 25, 1950 (account of Byroade’s meeting with Schuyler the previous day), and memorandum of Byroade-Schuyler-Gerhardt meeting, August 10, 1950, in Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Books I and II, RG 319, USNA.

not resurrected.³⁸ If an arrangement could guarantee that, he was prepared to be quite flexible on the secondary issues. Acheson was certainly not going to go to the wall to defend those parts of the Byroade concept that would tend to strip the NATO forces, including the American force in Europe, of their national character.

Acheson had an important meeting with JCS Chairman Bradley on August 30 to work things out, and he discussed that meeting with his principal advisors later that morning. He did not complain that the military wanted to go too far toward creating a German national army; his real complaint was that the JCS was “confused” and had somehow gotten the idea that the State Department position was more extreme than it really was. The Pentagon's own position, Acheson thought, was just not clear enough: “he did not know what was meant by 'national basis' and 'controlled status'”.³⁹

But the military authorities were now willing to be more accommodating on this point and were prepared to state more explicitly what they meant by those terms. This represented a certain shift from the line they had taken at the beginning of the month. In early August, they had preferred not to outline formally the sorts of controls they had in mind.⁴⁰ But by the end of the month, the Army leadership had concluded that it needed to be more forthcoming.

This was because President Truman had intervened in these discussions on August 26. On that day, he had asked the two departments to come up with a common policy on the whole complex of issues relating to European defense and West German rearmament. Given the president's action, a simple rejection of the Byroade plan was no longer a viable option. Leading military officers now felt that they needed to come up with a more “positive approach” to the problem. A “Plan for the Development of West German Security Forces” was quickly worked out and approved by the Army leadership at the beginning of September. That plan spelled out the controls the military had long favored: the NATO organization would be strengthened; Germany would not be allowed to have an air force or a navy; the largest German unit would be the division; there would be no German general staff; German industry would be permitted to provide only light weapons and equipment. The military authorities were thus not pressing for the creation of a German national force that would have the same status as the British army or the French army or

38. Acheson-Nitze-Byroade-Perkins meeting, August 30, 1950, *Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson (1949-1953)*, University Publications of America microfilm, reel 3.

39. *Ibid.* The references are probably to various JCS documents from this period that contained these terms. See, for example, JCS 2124/18 of September 1, 1950, p.162, in CCS 092 Germany (5-4-49), JCS Geographic File for 1948-50, RG 218, USNA.

40. See the Army “Staff Study: Rearmament of Western Germany”, August 2, 1950, paragraph 8, Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA.

the American army. Indeed, by the beginning of September, there was no fundamental difference between their position and that of Acheson on this issue.⁴¹

The Origins of the Package Plan

So the State Department and the Pentagon had clashed in August 1950 on the question of German rearmament. That conflict had focused on the question of the extent to which the German force would be organized on a “national” basis – or, to look at the issue from the other side, the degree of military integration needed to keep Germany from having a capability for independent action. But by the end of the month that conflict had essentially been resolved. Misunderstandings had been cleared up and differences had been ironed out. There would be a German military contribution, both departments agreed, but no German national army. The German force would be fully integrated into the NATO force; the German force would not be able to operate independently. This was all Acheson really required, and the JCS had never really asked for anything more by way of a German national force.

But even if the conflict had been sharper, even if the Pentagon had been intransigent on this issue, and even if the State Department had capitulated to the JCS on this question, all this would in itself tell us very little about the most important issue we are concerned with here: the question of the origins of the “package plan”. This was essentially a separate issue. The American government, at the New York Conference in mid-September, demanded that the NATO allies agree, immediately and publicly, to the rearmament of West Germany; if they refused to accept that demand, the Americans would not send over the combat divisions and would not send over an American general as NATO commander. Everything was tied together into a single package, and it was presented to the allies on a “take it or leave it” basis. It was this policy, this tactic, that created the whole problem in September 1950.

41. Gruenther to Davis, Duncan and Edwards, September 1, 1950, enclosing the “Plan for the Development of West German Security Forces”. The plan had been worked out “pursuant to verbal instructions” Gruenther had given General Schuyler on August 31; the feeling in military circles was that after the president’s letter, the JCS needed to take a more accommodating line in their discussions with the State Department than they had taken thus far. Gruenther, Bolté and Army Chief of Staff Collins were briefed on the plan on September 1, Collins approved it, and it was officially presented to the JCS that same day. Miller memorandum for record, September 1, 1950, Bolté to Collins on Rearmament of Western Germany, August 31, 1950, and Ware to JCS Secretary, September 1, 1950. All in Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA. The old conventional argument – laid out, for example, in McGEEHAN, *German Rearmament Question*, p. 41 – was that the U.S. government, by early September, had decided to press for a German national army “with no particular control arrangement other than that which would have resulted simply by virtue of the German troops being under NATO command and without their own general staff”. But this, it turns out, was incorrect: the controls the Army was now calling for were quite far-reaching.

How exactly did the issue of German rearmament get tied to the question of sending over American combat divisions and to appointing an American general as NATO commander? The standard view is that the JCS was responsible for the package plan. The military authorities, it is commonly argued, simply refused to accept the deployment of the American combat force unless the Europeans, for their part, agreed to the rearmament of West Germany. Acheson supposedly thought these tactics “murderous” and tried hard to get the Pentagon to change its mind. But the JCS was intransigent, this argument runs, and to get the troops sent, Acheson gave way in the end and reluctantly accepted the tactic the military leadership had insisted on.⁴² But does this basic interpretation hold up in the light of the archival evidence now available?

First of all, did the military push throughout August for the package approach? The military leaders certainly felt that a German military contribution was essential. The West European NATO allies, in their view, could not generate enough military force by themselves to provide for an effective defense; German troops were obviously necessary for that purpose; German rearmament was therefore seen as a “vital element” of an effective defense policy.⁴³ The military authorities also supported the idea of beefing up the U.S. military presence in Europe and of sending over an American general as NATO commander.⁴⁴ But the key point to note here is that these were treated as essentially separate issues. Military leaders did not say (at least not in any of the documents that we have seen) that U.S. troops should be sent only if the allies accepted German rearmament. They did not say that the way to press for German rearmament was to tell the allies that unless they went along with the American plan, the U.S. combat divisions would be kept at home.

Indeed, in the formal policy documents on the defense of Europe, the JCS did not make the German rearmament issue its top priority. The Chiefs instead tended to play it down. The basic JCS view in those documents was that NATO Europe – the “European signatories” of the North Atlantic Treaty – needed to “provide the balance of the forces required for the initial defense” over and above what the United States was prepared to supply.⁴⁵ West Germany, which at this time, of course, was not a member of NATO, was not even mentioned in this context. What this suggests

42. See especially McLELLAN, *Acheson*, pp.328-330; MARTIN, *Decision to Rearm Germany*, pp.656-657; and ACHESON, *Present at the Creation*, pp.437-438, 440

43. See, for example, Joint Strategic Survey Committee report on Rearmament of Western Germany, July 27, 1950, JCS 2124/11, JCS Geographic File for 1948-50, 092 Germany (5-4-49), RG 218, USNA.

44. Bolté to Collins, August 28, 1950, Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 20, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1, RG 319, USNA. Note also the initial draft that the military had prepared of a joint reply to the president’s “Eight Questions” letter, given in JCS 2116/28 of September 6, 1950. The original draft, according to another document, was given to the State Department on September 1. See Bolté to Collins, September 2, 1950. Both documents are in Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Books II and (for the September 6 document) III, RG 319, USNA.

45. This key phrase found its way into a whole series of major documents in early September. See appendix to memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, “United States Views on Measures for the Defense of Western Europe”, JCS 2073/61, September 3, 1950, JCS Geographic File for 1948-50, Box 25, RG 218, USNA. The same document, after being approved by the Secretary of Defense, was forwarded to the State Department on September 12 and appears in FRUS 1950 3:291-293. A very similar phrase was included in NSC 82; see FRUS 1950 3:274.

is that the military leadership was not pounding its fist on the table on the German rearmament question. The German issue was important, of course, but the choice of this kind of phrasing suggests that the Chiefs were prepared to deal with it in a relatively reasonable, gradual, businesslike way.

What about the State Department? How did it feel about the package approach? Did it agree to the inclusion of German rearmament in the package because this was the only way to get the Pentagon to go along with its plan to send additional troops to Europe? Some scholars suggest that this was the case, but the real picture is rather different.⁴⁶

The outbreak of the Korean War was the key development here, and State Department officials understood from the start that if Europe was to be defended, a German force of some sort would be required. As McCloy wrote Acheson on August 3: “to defend Western Europe effectively will obviously require real contributions of German resources and men”.⁴⁷ This was simply the conventional wisdom at the time: neither McCloy nor anyone else in the State Department needed the JCS to remind them that an effective defense meant a German military contribution. But they were also dead set against the idea of allowing the Germans to build up an army of their own – a national army, able to operate independently and thus capable of supporting an independent foreign policy. It followed that some kind of international force would have to be created: the Germans could make their contribution, an effective force could be built up, but there would be no risk of a German national army. The whole concept of a multinational force – of military integration, of a unified command structure, of a single supreme commander supported by an international staff – was thus rooted in an attempt to deal with the question of German rearmament. It was not as though the thinking about the defense of Western Europe and the shape of the NATO military system had developed on its own, and that it was only later that the German rearmament issue had been linked to it by the JCS for bargaining purposes.

The fundamental idea that the different elements in the equation – the U.S. divisions, the unified command structure, the forces provided by NATO Europe, and the German contribution – were all closely interrelated and needed to be dealt with as parts of a unified policy thus developed naturally and organically as the basic thinking about the defense of Europe took shape in mid-1950. This idea – in a sense, the basic idea behind the package concept – took hold quite early in August 1950, and it was the State Department that took the lead in pressing for this kind of approach. The Byroade plan, for example, explicitly tied all these different elements together: in this plan, which in mid-August became a kind of official State Department plan, German units could be created if and only if they were integrated into an allied force with an American commander.⁴⁸

46. See, for example, McLELLAN, *Acheson*, p.328.

47. McCloy to Acheson, August 3, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:181.

48. Byroade-Schuyler-Gerhardt meeting, August 10, 1950, Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA. For the final Byroade plan, and for its adoption as the official State Department position, see Matthews to Burns, August 16, 1950, with enclosure, FRUS 1950, 3:211-219.

The State Department was thus the driving force behind this kind of approach. For the entire month of August, its officials pressed for a unified policy. But the military authorities, because of their dislike for the Byroade plan, tended to drag their feet in this area.⁴⁹ The State Department, in frustration, and aware that a policy needed to be worked out before the NATO ministers met in mid-September, then got the president to intervene. On August 26 (as noted above), Truman asked the two departments, State and Defense, to come up with a common policy. He laid out a series of eight questions that the two departments were to answer by September 1, a deadline that was later extended to September 6.⁵⁰ The “Eight Questions” document was actually drafted in the State Department by two of Acheson’s closest advisors. The State Department goal, in getting Truman to sign it, was to prod the Pentagon into accepting a common plan.⁵¹

The tactic worked. Military leaders understood that the Eight Questions document was based on the State Department plan.⁵² Given the president’s intervention (again, as noted above), they now felt they could no longer simply “disregard” that plan, but instead needed to take a more accommodating and “positive” line.⁵³

The military authorities now drafted a document which, they felt, might serve as a basis for a joint reply to the president. That draft was given to the State Depart-

49. See, for example, P. NITZE, with A. SMITH and S. REARDEN, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost: At the Center of Decision*, Grove Weidenfeld, New York, 1989, p.123; and Princeton Seminar, p.914. Note also the tone of Secretary of Defense Johnson’s initial reply to State Department letter asking for comments on the August 16 Byroade plan: Johnson to Acheson, August 17, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:226-227.

50. Truman to Acheson and Johnson, August 26, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:250-251.

51. Draft memo by Nitze and Byroade, August 25, 1950, Records of the Policy Planning Staff, Country and Area File, Box 28, RG 59, USNA. Some scholars – Martin, for example, in *The Decision to Rearm Germany*, p.659 – portray the JCS as “prodding” the State Department to take “prompt diplomatic action”. And Acheson, in *Present at the Creation* (p.428), also portrays himself as having been pushed forward, especially by pressure from the president, and actually cites the “Eight Questions” document in this context. But in reality – and not just at this point, but throughout this episode – it was the State Department that was pushing things forward, and it was Truman who followed Acheson’s lead. The president, for example, had been against German rearmament when the JCS had pressed for it in June. But when Acheson told him on July 31 that it no longer was a question of whether Germany should be rearmed, that the real issue now was how it was to be done, and that the State Department was thinking in terms of creating “a European army or a North Atlantic army”, Truman immediately “expressed his strong approval” of this whole line of thought. Truman to Acheson, June 16, 1950 (two documents), and Acheson-Truman meeting, July 31, 1950, FRUS 1950, 4:688, 702.

52. Bolté to Collins, August 28, 1950: “The questions listed in the President’s letter are apparently based upon the State Department’s proposal for the establishment of a European defense force”. Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 20, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1, RG 319, USNA. The point was clear from the text of the letter. The two departments were not simply asked, for example, to consider what, if anything, should be done on the German rearmament question; they were asked instead to consider whether the U.S. government was prepared to support “the concept of a European defense force, including German participation on other than a national basis” – which was not exactly a neutral way of putting the issue. Truman to Acheson and Johnson, August 26, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:250.

53. Bolté to Collins, August 31, 1950, and Gruenther to Davis, Duncan and Edwards, September 1, 1950, enclosing the “Plan for the Development of West German Security Forces”, both in Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA.

ment on September 1; Acheson had been shown a preliminary version a couple of days earlier.⁵⁴ Events now moved quickly. In a few days of intensive talks, a joint reply acceptable to both departments was worked out. The final document was approved by the president and circulated to top officials as NSC 82 on September 11, a day before the New York Conference was due to begin.⁵⁵

This period from August 26 through September 8 – from the Eight Questions letter to the joint reply – is thus the most important phase of this whole episode, and the evidence relating to this period needs to be examined with particular care. Does it support the view that the military insisted on the package approach and that the State Department opposed it, but gave in reluctantly at the end?

By far the most important document bearing on these issues is the record of a meeting Acheson had on August 30 with his three top advisors in this area, the three officials who, in fact, were conducting the negotiations with the Defense Department: Byroade, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Perkins, and Paul Nitze, head of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff. Acheson (as noted in the previous section) had just met with JCS Chairman Bradley earlier that morning. He had also just seen the draft reply the JCS had prepared to the president's Eight Questions letter. At the meeting with his advisors, Acheson discussed the JCS draft section by section and found most of it acceptable. The few small problems he had with it did not involve any issue of principle. At no point did Acheson complain about, or even comment on, any insistence on the part of the military that all the elements in the program were to be tied together in a single package. The conclusion to be drawn from this is absolutely fundamental for the purposes of the analysis here: if the JCS had been insisting on the package concept and if Acheson and the State Department had been opposed to that concept, it is scarcely conceivable that the issue would not have come up at this meeting.

Nor is it very likely that a conflict over the package issue developed suddenly over the next few days. Nitze's recollection (in 1953) was that following the Acheson-Bradley meeting things moved very quickly.⁵⁶ He says nothing about a dispute over the package question suddenly emerging at that point, and it is in fact highly unlikely that things could have moved so quickly if a serious dispute had developed. Indeed, Perkins and Nitze spoke in those 1953 discussions of the common policy document – the document that later became NSC 82 – as though it essentially reflected their views, and which, through great efforts on their part, they had finally managed to get the military authorities to accept. “We had great difficulty”, Perkins recalled, “in finally getting the Pentagon to sign on to the common policy”.⁵⁷ Nitze agreed: he remembered going over to the Pentagon after Acheson had worked “this thing” out with General Bradley on August 30, and “we trotted out the specific

54. Bolté to Collins, September 2, 1950, Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book II, RG 319, USNA; Acheson-Nitze-Byroade-Perkins meeting, August 30, 1950, cited in n. 38 above.

55. Acheson and Johnson to Truman, September 8, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:273-278.

56. Princeton Seminar, pp.920-921.

57. Princeton Seminar, p.914.

piece of paper which spelled out the package proposal with the Pentagon people and got their agreement to this document”.⁵⁸ It was scarcely as though the State Department was going along with the package plan reluctantly or against its better judgment.

An analysis of the drafting history points to the same general conclusion. The passage in NSC 82 that served as the basis for the package policy – indeed, the only passage in the document that called for such a policy – was part of the answer to the sixth question:

“We recommend that an American national be appointed now as Chief of Staff and eventually as a Supreme Commander for the European defense force but only upon the request of the European nations and upon their assurance that they will provide sufficient forces, including adequate German units, to constitute a command reasonably capable of fulfilling its responsibilities”.⁵⁹

That final document was based on the draft the JCS had turned over on September 1; the key phrase “including adequate German units” did not appear in the original JCS draft.⁶⁰ It scarcely stands to reason that the military authorities, having decided to be cooperative, would harden their position in the course of their talks with State Department representatives, above all if State Department officials had argued strongly against an intransigent policy.

None of this means, of course, that the JCS was opposed to including a call for German rearmament in the package. This was in their view a goal that the U.S. government obviously had to pursue. But this does not mean that the Chiefs were going to try to dictate negotiating tactics to the State Department – that they were going to insist on a diplomatic strategy that Acheson and his top advisors rejected.

State Department officials, in fact, did not really blame the JCS for what had happened at the New York Conference. Nitze, for example, although he said in 1953 that the Chiefs would not agree to send additional forces until they got assurances from the British and the French about a German military contribution, did not actually hold them primarily responsible for the confrontation with the Europeans in mid-September.⁶¹ He pointed out at that time that the German rearmament issue could have been dealt with very differently. The issue, he said, could have been presented “to the British and French in a way which emphasized the supreme commander and the American commitment”; the “question of German participation” could have been “put in a lower category and kind of weaved in gradually”.⁶² Nitze did not blame the JCS for vetoing that approach. In his view, the real responsibility lay elsewhere. “We were fouled up on

58. Princeton Seminar, p.914.

59. NSC 82, FRUS 1950, 3:276.

60. See JCS 2116/28, September 6, 1950, which gives the final draft and shows changes from the earlier draft; Army Operations General Decimal File 1950-51, box 21, file G-3 091 Germany TS, Sec 1c, Case 12, Book III, RG 319, USNA. For another copy, see JCS to Johnson, September 5, 1950, Records of the Administrative Secretary, Correspondence Control Section Decimal File: July to Dec 1950, CD 091.7 (Europe), box 175, RG 330, USNA.

61. Princeton Seminar, p. 915.

62. Princeton Seminar, p. 916.

this”, he said, by press leaks primarily coming from McCloy, “who agreed entirely with the tactical importance of doing it the other way” – that is, of dealing with the German rearmament issue head on.⁶³

But Acheson was not fundamentally opposed to the blunt approach, and (contrary to his later disclaimers) he himself, on balance, thought that the U.S. government had chosen the right course of action at the time. Would it have been better, he asked in that same discussion, to have opted for quiet talks with the British and the French, when a plan had just been worked out, when a NATO foreign ministers' meeting was about to be held, and when the issue was being “talked about everywhere”? “It seemed to me then”, he said, “and it seems to me now, that we did the right thing”.⁶⁴

And indeed, in his reports to Truman from the New York Conference, Acheson gave no sign that he was pursuing the package plan strategy reluctantly or against his better judgment. He gave no sign that he was looking for a way to soften the general line and deal with the allies in a more conciliatory manner. He explained to the president on September 15 how he had laid out the American demands, how he had discussed the issue “with the gloves off”, how he had “blown” some of the allies' objections to the American plan “out of the water”, and how it might well be a question of “whose nerve lasts longer”. He was clearly pleased with his own performance and was not at all unhappy about the line he had taken.⁶⁵

As one of its top officials pointed out at the time, the State Department was conducting a “hard-hitting kind of operation” in this area – and was proud of it.⁶⁶

63. Princeton Seminar, p. 916; see also p.912. The archival evidence confirms the point that McCloy favored a very tough line at this time. See especially the handwritten letter from McCloy to Acheson, September 20, 1950, in the Acheson Papers, Memoranda of Conversations, September 1950, HSTL. A high French official, McCloy reported, had just “referred again to the delicacy of French opinion” on the German rearmament issue. “I think the time has come”, he wrote, “to tell these people that there is other opinion to deal with and that U.S. opinion is getting damn delicate itself. If there should be an incursion in January and U.S. troops should get pushed around without German troops to help them because of a French reluctance to face facts, I shudder to think how indelicate U.S. opinion would suddenly become”.

64. Princeton Seminar, p.913.

65. Acheson to Truman, September 15, 1950, FRUS 1950, 3:1229-31. For more information relating to the part of the story from the New York Conference on, see C. GEHRZ, *Dean Acheson, the JCS, and the 'Single Package': American Policy on German Rearmament, 1950. Diplomacy and Statecraft* (forthcoming).

66. Under Secretary Webb, in telephone conversation with Acheson, September 27, 1950, Acheson Papers (Lot File 53D 444), box 13, RG 59, USNA. Webb was comparing the State Department “operation” with the way the Defense Department under Marshall was handling the issue.

Dean Acheson: The Man and the Statesman

There is one final set of considerations that needs to be taken into account in an assessment of U.S. policy in September 1950, and this has to do with what we know about Acheson in general – about the sort of person he was and the kind of policy he favored throughout his career. Was he the type of leader who believed in compromise, especially with America's most important allies, and was inclined to take a relatively moderate and cautious line? Or was he, as General Bradley later called him, an “uncompromising hawk”, aggressive both in terms of his goals and his tactics?⁶⁷

The great bulk of the evidence points in the latter direction.⁶⁸ In 1950 in particular, he tended to take a very hard line. He was in favor of a rollback policy at that time. This was the real meaning of NSC 68, an important policy document with which Acheson was closely associated.⁶⁹ American scholars generally tend to portray U.S. policy as essentially defensive and status quo-oriented, and NSC 68 is commonly interpreted as simply a “strategy of containment”.⁷⁰ But the aggressive thrust of this document is clear from its own text: NSC 68 called explicitly for a “policy of calculated and gradual coercion”; the aim of that policy was to “check and roll back the Kremlin's drive for world domination”. The whole goal at that time, as Nitze recalled in 1954, was to “lay the basis”, through massive rearmament, for a policy of “taking increased risks of general war” in order to achieve “a satisfactory solution” of America's problems with Russia while the Soviet nuclear stockpile “was still small”.⁷¹

This extraordinary aggressiveness was not out of character for Acheson, and its wellspring was not simply anti-Communism or extreme distrust of the Soviet Union. His general hawkishness can in fact be traced back to the summer of 1941, when, as a mid-level State Department official, he played a major role in shaping the policy that put the United States on a collision course with Japan. Acheson was one of a handful of officials who helped engineer the oil embargo in mid-1941 – a

67. O. BRADLEY and C. BLAIR, *A General's Life*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983, p.519.

68. The idea that Acheson was an exceptionally aggressive statesman is scarcely the consensus view. American writers tend to treat Acheson rather gently, but this, we think, is to be understood in essentially political terms. Acheson's reputation profited enormously from the fact that during his period in office he had been the target of a great deal of ill-informed criticism from right-wing Republicans; Richard Nixon's famous reference at the time to the “Acheson College of Cowardly Communist Containment” is a good case in point. And with enemies like that, it was not hard to find friends—among liberal academics, at any rate.

69. M. TRACHTENBERG, *History and Strategy*, pp.109-110.

70. See, for example, E. MAY (ed.), *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*, St. Martin's, New York, 1993, and J. L. GADDIS, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1982, chapter 4.

71. NSC 68, April 7, 1950, FRUS 1950, 1:253, 255, 284; Nitze quoted in M. TRACHTENBERG, *History and Strategy*, p.112n. Nitze, the principal author of NSC 68, was quite close to Acheson throughout this period. See, for example, D. CALLAHAN, *Dangerous Capabilities: Paul Nitze and the Cold War*, HarperCollins, New York, 1990, pp.95-96, 155, and S. TALBOTT, *The Master of the Game: Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace*, Knopf, New York, 1988, p.51.

development that led directly to a sharp crisis in U.S.-Japanese relations and ultimately to the attack on Pearl Harbor in December.⁷²

His aggressiveness was also apparent in the early 1960s. During the Berlin and Cuban missile crises especially, he pushed for very tough policies. In 1963, he even called (in a talk to the Institute for Strategic Studies) for what amounted to a policy of armed intervention in East Germany.⁷³ When he was attacked for taking this line, he lashed out at his critics: "Call me anything you like, but don't call me a fool; everybody knows I'm not a fool". "I will not say that Mr. Acheson is a fool", one of his critics replied. "I will only say that he is completely and utterly reckless".⁷⁴

Acheson often sneered at those he viewed as soft and indecisive. After Eisenhower took office in 1953, Acheson complained repeatedly to Truman about the "weakness" of the new administration.⁷⁵ After the Democrats returned to power in 1961, President Kennedy allowed Acheson to play a major role in the making of American policy, but Acheson viewed the young president with barely-concealed contempt. The Kennedy administration, in his view, was weak, indecisive, and obsessed with appearances.⁷⁶ He even criticized the administration in public, going so far at one point that he was virtually forced to apologize.⁷⁷

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72. See J. UTLEY, *Upstairs, Downstairs at Foggy Bottom: Oil Exports and Japan, 1940-41*, in: *Prologue*, vol.8 (Spring 1976), pp.17-28; J. UTLEY, *Going to War with Japan*, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1985, pp.153-156, 180; I. ANDERSON, *The 1941 de facto Embargo on Oil to Japan: A Bureaucratic Reflex*, in: *Pacific Historical Review*, vol.44 (1975), pp.201-231; and I. ANDERSON, *The Standard Vacuum Oil Company and United States East Asian Policy, 1933-1941*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1975.
73. Acheson speech at annual meeting of the Institute of Strategic Studies, September 1963, in Adelphi Paper No. 5, *The Evolution of NATO*. See also D. BRINKLEY, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-71*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p.153. Note also Acheson's comment in 1961 about the need for the sort of forces which would enable the western powers to intervene in the event, for example, of a new uprising in Hungary: Acheson-de Gaulle meeting, April 20, 1961, *Documents diplomatiques français*, 1961, vol.1, p.494.
74. B. BRODIE, *War and Politics*, Macmillan, New York, 1973, p.402. The critic in question was the former Defense Minister in the Macmillan government, Harold Watkinson.
75. See, for example, Acheson to Truman, May 28, 1953, box 30, folder 391, and Acheson memorandum of conversation, June 23, 1953, box 68, folder 172, in Acheson Papers, Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Note also Nitze's complaint at the very end of the Truman period that the U.S. government had adopted for a purely defensive policy. America, he was afraid, was in danger of becoming "a sort of hedge-hog, unattractive to attack, but basically not very worrisome over a period of time beyond our immediate position". Nitze to Acheson, January 12, 1953, FRUS 1952-54, 2:59.
76. See especially Acheson to Truman, June 24, July 14, August 4, and September 21, 1961, Acheson Papers, Box 166, Acheson-Truman Correspondence, 1961, Sterling Library, Yale University; some extracts are quoted in M. TRACHTENBERG, *History and Strategy*, p.230. See also M. BESCHLOSS, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960-1963*, Edward Burlingame, New York, 1991, p.410; and H. CATUDAL, *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall Crisis: A Study in U.S. Decision-Making*, Berlin-Verlag, Berlin, 1980, p.182n.
77. W. ISAACSON and E. THOMAS, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1986, pp.612-613; see also BRINKLEY, *Acheson*, pp.138.

At another point, he practically told the president to his face that he was indecisive. Kennedy had asked Acheson to look into the balance of payments problem, and in early 1963 he presented his report to the president. It was a

“very strong, vivid, Achesonian presentation. And the President thanked him and said, ‘Well, we have to think about that’. Acheson said, ‘There’s nothing to think about, Mr. President. All you have to do is decide. Here it is, and why don’t you decide’?”

Kennedy turned red, and then broke up the meeting. He was furious. “It’s a long time before Dean Acheson’s going to be here again,” he remarked to an aide.⁷⁸ As for Acheson, he continued to criticize Kennedy as weak and indecisive, even after Kennedy’s death.⁷⁹

Acheson treated President Johnson the same way he had treated President Kennedy. When he met with Johnson in 1965, he was so irritated by the president’s whining and indecisiveness that he “blew [his] top” and told him to his face that all the trouble America was having in Europe “came about because under him and Kennedy there had been no American leadership at all. The idea that the Europeans could come to their own conclusion had led to an unchallenged de Gaulle”.⁸⁰

These stories reveal a lot about Acheson. A man who could deal with presidents that way was not the type of person who would allow himself to be pushed around by mere military officers on an issue of central political importance – above all at a time when he was at the height of his power and had the full confidence of President Truman. Nor was he the type who would be understanding if he thought allied leaders were reluctant to face up to fundamental problems and make the really tough decisions.

Acheson, in fact, did not believe in taking a soft line with the allies or in treating them as full partners. In 1961, he played the key role in shaping the new Kennedy administration’s policy on NATO issues; the goal of that policy was to get the Europeans “out of the nuclear business” (as people said at the time) – that is, to concentrate power, and especially nuclear power, in American hands.⁸¹

Acheson, moreover, was not the sort of statesman who viewed consultation and compromise as ends in themselves. At one point during the Berlin crisis in 1961, he complained that the U.S. had been trying too hard to reach agreement with the Europeans. The U.S. government did not need to coordinate policy with the allies, he said, “*we need to tell them*”.⁸² “We must not be too delicate”, he said at another point, “about being vigorous in our leadership”. It was America’s job, practically

78. Carl Kaysen oral history interview, July 11, 1966, p. 85, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston. We are grateful to Frank Gavin for providing this reference.

79. See, for example, BRINKLEY, *Acheson*, pp.174, 202.

80. Acheson to Truman, July 10, 1965, in D. ACHESON, *Among Friends: Personal Letters of Dean Acheson*, ed. D. McLELLAN and D. ACHESON, Dodd, Mead, New York, 1980, p.273.

81. See M. TRACHTENBERG, *Constructed Peace*, pp.304-311. Acheson, however, deliberately gave the Europeans a very different impression. Note especially his discussion of the issue in an April 20, 1961, meeting with de Gaulle, and especially his reference to a system which “permettrait à l’Europe de prendre sa décision en matière nucléaire”. *Documents diplomatiques français*, 1961, vol.1, p.495.

82. White House meeting, October 20, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 14:518-519. Emphasis in original.

America's duty, to lay down the law to the allies. The United States – and he actually used this phrase – was “the greatest imperial power the world has ever seen”.⁸³ “In the final analysis” he told McGeorge Bundy, “the United States [is] the locomotive at the head of mankind, and the rest of the world is the caboose”.⁸⁴

American interests were fundamental; European concerns were of purely secondary importance. Paul Nitze, who was very close to Acheson throughout this period, made the point quite explicitly in 1954. The “primary goal”, he said, was the “preservation of the United States and the continuation of a 'salutary' world environment”; the “avoidance of war” was of secondary importance. “Even if war were to destroy the world as we know it today, still the US must win that war decisively”. He then again stressed the point that “the preservation of the US” was “the overriding goal, not the fate of our allies”.⁸⁵

People like Nitze and Acheson were thus not inclined to take European interests too seriously or to deal with the Europeans on a basis of mutual respect. And Acheson himself was clearly not the kind of person who would have found it difficult to deal roughly with the allies in September 1950.

The Meaning of the Story

The goal here was to test a particular interpretation of what happened in the late summer of 1950. According to that interpretation, the military authorities had essentially forced the package plan on Acheson, who had accepted it reluctantly, and only after a struggle. The basic conclusion here is that that interpretation simply does not stand up in the light of the evidence from late 1950 and in the light of what we know about Acheson in general. The policy the U.S. government pursued at the New York Conference is not to be understood as a more or less accidental by-product of a bureaucratic dispute in Washington. The way Acheson dealt with the allies at the New York conference – the bare-knuckled tactics he pursued, the way he tried to lay down the law to the Europeans, the way he dismissed their most fundamental concerns out of hand – has to be seen as deliberate: he knew what he was doing, and he had not been forced by the Pentagon to proceed in that way. There is certainly no evidence that he thought those tactics were “murderous”: he did not give way on this point after a long battle; he never complained at the time

83. Quoted in F. COSTGIOLA, LBJ, *Germany and the 'End of the Cold War'*, in: W. COHEN and N. TUCKER (eds.), *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1994, p.195. Acheson was complaining about what he viewed as Johnson's weak response to de Gaulle's decision in 1966 to take France out of the NATO military organization.

84. BRINKLEY, *Acheson*, p.133.

85. Notes of Council on Foreign Relations Study Group on Nuclear Weapons and U.S. Foreign Policy, November 8, 1954, meeting, p.12, Hanson Baldwin Papers, box 125, folder 23, Yale University Library. Emphasis in original.

about the military's (alleged) insistence on this strategy; he never raised the issue with Truman or expressed misgivings about the policy as he was carrying it out.

Does this mean that the Acheson interpretation was a complete fabrication? The truth is probably not quite that simple. For Acheson, as for many people in public life, honesty was not the top priority, and he was fully capable of deliberately misleading the public on these issues.⁸⁶ But that in itself does not mean that the Acheson story about the package plan was manufactured out of whole cloth.

Indeed, in a certain sense at least, there was probably some basis to the story. After all, the military authorities were willing to send over the American troops only if the European allies agreed to provide the balance of the forces needed to make an effective defense possible, and the JCS did believe that German forces would be needed for that purpose. So in that sense, from the military point of view, German rearmament was certainly a vital part of the package. But this was at the level of fundamental objectives, not at the level of tactics, and the basic JCS view was consistent with a relatively soft negotiating strategy: if the State Department (to paraphrase Nitze) had called for emphasizing the U.S. troop commitment and only then gradually "weaving in" the question of a German defense contribution, it is hard to believe that the JCS would have objected. But an agreement on the part of the JCS that all the elements of the problem were interconnected could be interpreted as a call for presenting the allies with a single package: the basic policy could be interpreted as translating directly into a particular negotiating strategy. The basic military point of view, in other words, could serve as cover – that is, as a kind of license for pursuing the sort of negotiating policy State Department officials considered essential at this point.⁸⁷ The fact that the military view could be interpreted (or misinterpreted) in this way – whether deliberately or not is not the issue here – made it easier for Acheson and his advisors to do what they probably really wanted to do in any case.

This is all quite speculative, of course, and there is really not enough evidence to get to the bottom of this particular issue. But these uncertainties should not be allowed to obscure the facts that the documents are able to establish. And one thing, at least, is very clear: the State Department did not fight the military over the package plan. If Acheson actually thought the tactics the U.S. government adopted were "murderous", he certainly had a very odd way of showing it.

Why is this story important? Partly because it shows how easy it is for scholars to get taken in by self-serving memoir accounts, and thus how crucial it is to test claims against the archival evidence; partly because of what it tells us about civil-military rela-

86. An account Acheson gave in 1952, implying that the issue emerged only in the course of the New York meeting, was particularly misleading. For the quotation and a discussion pointing out how inaccurate that account was, see McGEEHAN, *German Rearmament Question*, pp.48-49.

87. This point is suggested by the structure of the discussion of this issue in the Princeton Seminar: after establishing the basic point that the Pentagon had insisted on the package plan and was thus responsible for what happened in September (pp. 911, 915), Acheson and Nitze then felt free to ease up and talk about how the real reason why the German rearmament issue could not have been played down and "kind of weaved in gradually" had to do not with the JCS but rather with what McCloy was doing (p.916). They then went on to say that McCloy, in fact, probably performed a service in forcing people to face the issue then and there (pp.922-925).

tions in the United States, about the willingness and ability of the military leadership to impose its views on issues of great political importance, and about the validity of the bureaucratic politics theory of policy-making in general; but mainly because of the light it throws on the political meaning of what happened in September 1950. The American government did not just stumble along and adopt a policy against its better judgment because of pressure from the military; the package policy was adopted quite deliberately; and that fact has a certain bearing on how American policy toward Europe during the early Cold War period is to be interpreted.

There has been a certain tendency in recent years to idealize U.S.-European relations during the Cold War period. The argument is that the NATO system worked because, no matter how lopsided power relations were, the Americans did not simply insist on running the show. Instinctively the democratic countries dealt with the problems that arose in their relations with each other the same way they dealt with domestic issues: not through coercion, but through persuasion and compromise, “by cutting deals instead of imposing wills”.⁸⁸ The democratic habit of compromise, of give and take, was the bedrock upon which the Atlantic Alliance was built. The Americans treated their allies with respect, and this, it is said, was one major reason why the Europeans were able to live with a system that rested so heavily on American power.⁸⁹

The story of how the U.S. government managed the German rearmament issue in late 1950 suggests that things were not quite so simple. The Americans were capable of dealing rather roughly with their European allies, even on issues of absolutely central political importance. If the package plan story tells us nothing else, it certainly tells us that. And the fact that the Americans were capable of treating their allies that way had a certain bearing on how many people, especially in Europe, thought about core political issues.

In 1880, after a remarkable electoral campaign, William Gladstone was swept back into office as prime minister of Great Britain. Gladstone, in that campaign, had laid out a series of principles on which British foreign policy was to be based; one fundamental aim was “to cultivate to the utmost the concert of Europe”. Five years later, Gladstone's policy lay in ruins. He had managed to alienate every other major power in Europe – even France and Germany had come together in 1884 in a short-lived anti-British entente – and in 1885 his government fell from power. The Gladstone government had achieved its “long desired ‘Concert of Europe’” all right, Lord Salisbury noted bitterly at the time. It had succeeded in “uniting the continent of Europe – against England”.⁹⁰

The parallel with American policy during the early Cold War period is striking. The U.S. government very much wanted the European countries to come together as a political unit, and support for European unification was one of the basic tenets of American

88. J. L. GADDIS, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1997, p.201.

89. GADDIS, *We Now Know*, pp.199-203, 288-289.

90. R.W. SETON-WATSON, *Britain in Europe, 1789-1914*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1938, p.547; Lady G. CECIL, *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury*, vol.3, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1931, p.136.

foreign policy in this period.⁹¹ But it was not American preaching that led the Europeans to cooperate with each other and begin to form themselves into a bloc. The United States played an important role in the European integration process, but America had an impact mainly because of the kind of policy she pursued – a policy which, on occasion, did not pay due regard to the most basic interests of the European allies.

Acheson's policy in late 1950 is perhaps the most important case in point. Acheson was pressing for a course of action that would have greatly increased the risk of war at a time when Western Europe was particularly vulnerable. The U.S. government could treat its allies like that – it could pursue a policy that might well have led to total disaster for Europe – only because the United States was so much stronger than any single European country. It followed that there had to be a counterweight to American power within the Western alliance, a counterweight based on the sense that the Europeans had major strategic interests in common and that those interests were distinct from those of the United States. The events of late 1950 helped push the Europeans – especially the French and the Germans – to that conclusion: it helped get them to see why they had to put their differences aside and come together as a kind of strategic unit. This episode thus plays an important role in the history of European integration, and indeed in the history of the Western alliance as a whole.

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91. See especially G. LUNDESTAD, *“Empire” by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, and P. MELANDRI, *Les Etats-Unis face à l'unification de l'Europe, 1945-1954*, A. Pedone, Paris, 1980. Note also an important series of interpretative articles on the subject by K. SCHWABE: *Die Vereinigten Staaten und die europäische Integration: Alternativen der amerikanischen Außenpolitik*, in: G. TRAUSCH (ed.), *Die europäische Integration vom Schuman-Plan bis zu den Verträgen von Rom*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 1993; *The United States and European Integration*, in: C. WURM (ed.), *Western Europe and Germany: The Beginnings of European Integration, 1945-1969*, Berg, Oxford, 1995; and *Atlantic Partnership and European Integration: American-European Policies and the German Problem, 1947-1969*, in: G. LUNDESTAD (ed.), *No End to Alliance: The United States and Western Europe: Past, Present and Future*, St. Martin's, New York, 1998.