

usa documents

Brussels. Tel. 13 44 50
23 avenue des Arts

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

U.S. UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE RICHARDSON'S ADDRESS ON WESTERN EUROPE, NATO

Chicago, January 21, 1970 -- Following is the text of an address made Tuesday, January 20 to the Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs by U.S. Under Secretary of State, Elliot Richardson.

I would like today to examine one of the most fundamental of our foreign policy concerns, and one which in some ways is too much taken for granted, if not overlooked -- the United States relationship to Western Europe and Western European security. of 441.2(103)

In a reverse twist on the early days of the Republic when George Washington used to preach against yielding to "the insidious wiles" of Europe's influence, our basic ties to Western Europe are now so firmly established that commentary on the subject is regarded as a tiresome reaffirmation of the obvious.

Whereas President Washington warned that European controversies were "essentially foreign to our concerns" President Nixon was moved to observe on NATO's birthday last spring that many people now find NATO "quaint and familiar and a bit old fashioned."

To much of the public the purposes of NATO have the character of a cliché. The very climate of security which NATO has fostered has, perversely, seemed to permit many to disregard it or to think it obsolete. In the wake of the re-examination of foreign commitments occasioned by the Vietnam war, there is a tendency by some to say that NATO has done its job, so why not bring those troops home? In the U.S. Senate this feeling has taken concrete political expression in the form of a resolution introduced by Senator Mansfield, one of the most thoughtful students of America's role in world affairs. His resolution calls for "substantial reductions" of U.S. forces in Europe.

Meanwhile, Western Europe itself, prosperous, mostly democratic, stable, and probably more secure than at any time in its modern history, has been preoccupied with the inevitable problems that are the by-product of affluence and rapid economic growth. These concerns seem to have caused it to drift somewhat from the lofty goals of a unified Europe and Atlantic partnership which gave a sense of mission to its leadership two decades ago.

On both sides of the Atlantic then, there are feelings of complacency and a restless anticipation of new events. The memory of Czechoslovakia is fading, the Brezhnev doctrine is dimmer, and a reduced sense of danger merges with the feeling that new initiatives are both called for and inevitable. Perhaps in response to this atmosphere the Warsaw Pact nations, led by the Soviet Union, have called for the convocation of a European security conference, although -- ironically -- their suggested agenda would not even touch the basic issues of European security.

In this situation, it is, I think, worthwhile to take a fresh look at the suppositions on which our European policy rests, to examine its continuing validity, and to appraise frankly and realistically the proposals being made for change and adjustment.

NATO

Two world wars have led the American people to perceive with great clarity that the security of the United States is directly linked to the security of Western Europe.

Pursuant to this belief, which was formalized in the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949, the United States has maintained a major military establishment on European soil since the early 1950's. U.S. nuclear power as well as conventional forces are available in support of this treaty commitment. Although Europe is now incomparably stronger than it was when this arrangement was first contracted, its ultimate security, like our own, continues to be linked to our power and nuclear deterrence. Because of this, one of President Nixon's first acts upon taking office was to reaffirm the American commitment to NATO and to promise close and continuing consultation within the Alliance.

Deterrence is a subtle concept. Its reality takes form largely in the minds of those who might be contemplating aggression. It is effective only when they conclude that any possible advantages of aggression would be offset by its predictable costs.

NATO's strategy of flexible response is calculated to insure that any potential aggressor would come to just this conclusion.

Our conventional forces are maintained in position in Europe to resist possible attacks by Warsaw Pact formations. They are meant also to deter piecemeal aggression which an enemy might be tempted to conclude he could get away with if the only alternative to our capitulation were the unleashing of nuclear war. These forces are supported by a broad arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons, available for use if the intensity of the aggression rises.

The entire effectiveness of the flexible response strategy rests perforce on the conviction in both parts of Europe that the United States will fulfill its determined role. And the United States military presence in Europe, whether we like it or not, continues to be taken as tangible evidence of our commitment.

We must face the fact, therefore, that any sudden or dramatic reduction in the United States military presence in Europe would have unpleasant consequences of two kinds.

First, as a practical military matter, NATO's conventional defense would be significantly weakened. Other NATO members might be tempted to follow suit and cut forces further. In the event of aggression, a less powerful NATO Alliance might be driven to resort more quickly to nuclear weapons.

Secondly, and of probably greater consequence, any sudden or major withdrawal of American forces would have a distinctly destabilizing effect on the European scene.

The structure of the Alliance, as indeed the entire structure of world order which we have helped erect since the war, rests in the final analysis on the shared confidence that we shall honor our commitments.

If that confidence is eroded a rapid deterioration can occur -- a deterioration not unlike that which can send prices on the stock market plummeting. And for this reason it is doubly necessary that we not lightly or hastily make moves that might undermine confidence in the strength of our support. It is for this reason that we have pledged our present troop strength in Europe through fiscal year 1971.

Let me stress that none of this suggests that U.S. troops will have to remain in Europe at present strength forever and ever. Certainly we hope that future conditions will allow modifications of our role. Our current force level in Europe of 310,000 men already, in fact, represents a considerable drop from the peak of 408,000 in 1962 during the Soviet war of nerves on Berlin. We are also continually studying and trying to improve the means by which troops stationed in the United States can be rapidly returned to Europe in case of crisis. The Mansfield resolution urges that greater use be made of this redeployment option.

Our studies show, however, that under present conditions front-line forces hastily returned to Europe in time of crisis could not carry out their mission with the same effectiveness as forces already in place. Although rapid redeployment of limited forces is feasible, large-scale efforts of this sort expose these forces to hazards and potential confusion.

Moreover, financial savings would be negligible. If, for example, all of our current forces in Europe were brought home and stationed in this country, little or no savings would appear in our defense budget. We might even have to spend a bit more, because we would lose significant financial advantages.

In Germany, the Federal Government makes land, housing, facilities and services available to our forces at no cost, or at reduced cost. Duplicating such facilities and support in the United

States would involve a heavy and continuing expense -- one roughly cancelling out savings in shortened supply lines and transportation costs to Europe.

The balance-of-payments drain of our military deployment in Europe is currently about \$1.5 billion a year. This is unquestionably a large figure, and, if our forces were returned to this country, many of those dollars would stay at home. The problem is particularly neutralized, however, by offset arrangements with the European countries, particularly Germany and we are exploring means of making these arrangements more adequate. In addition, withdrawal of our forces from Europe would be likely to evoke prompt countervailing effects, notably in reduced sale of military equipment to our allies and in general exports to those countries.

CONSULTATIONS WITH OUR ALLIES

If we have not neglected the consideration of means by which our presence in Europe could be streamlined or modified without damaging the essential structure of the alliance, neither have we ignored the opportunities which the era of negotiation we have now entered may hold for the future. In this area we must also make meticulous and balanced judgments, taking care not to allow our efforts to bring about agreements with the Soviet Union to undermine our relations with our friends in Western Europe.

We must have a proper regard for the always latent fear that agreements will be reached detrimental to European interests. We cannot, of course, allow the existence of this fear to deter us from seeking to lower tensions. Ironically, in fact, there exists among a younger generation of Europeans the converse suspicion that the United States and the USSR are collaborators in defense of the status quo. But we intend to do everything possible to allay such fears and suspicions by sticking strictly to our pledge to consult closely with our allies and take their interests into account as talks go forward. Only by such close consultation can we quiet the Cassandras who see every effort at US-Soviet rapprochement or even minor moves to adjust force levels as evidence of betrayal.

During the past year in-depth consultations have been held on a wide range of subjects, including the question of strategic arms limitations. The deputy foreign ministers of the NATO governments, at President Nixon's suggestion, held the first of what we expect to be periodic reviews of major, long-range problems before the Alliance.

It is particularly important that there be the fullest consultations on the SALT talks. The very fact that these talks are going on has stimulated some uneasiness in Europe. It is well understood that the talks imply changing strategic relationships and that their success could further affect the situation. As

as President Nixon put it last spring: "The West does not have the massive nuclear predominance today that it once had, and any sort of broad-based arms agreement with the Soviet would confidy the present balance."

Given the European sensitivities on SALT and nervousness about changing military relationships, it would seem wise not to compound anxieties at this time by any moves to reduce our troop strength on the continent.

While attempting to keep our allies abreast of our own negotiating activities, we are welcoming and encouraging their own efforts, particularly those of West Germany, to improve relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. One of the most promising areas of potential progress with the Eastern European nations lies, we believe, in reaching agreement on mutual and balanced East-West force reductions.

We are now working with our allies to develop models which could form the basis for such an agreement. The NATO countries foreign ministers, meeting last December, said in their declaration that despite the fact that there had been no response on earlier suggestions, the allies "will continue their studies in order to prepare a realistic basis for active exploration at an early date." They concluded their studies on the subject had already progressed sufficiently to permit the establishment of criteria which reductions should meet. They directed their further consideration also go forward on related measures such as advance notification of military movements or maneuvers, the exchange of observers at maneuvers, and the establishment of observation posts. This, we are convinced is a constructive approach much more specifically directed at concrete issue generating tension than the Warsaw Pact's vague proposal for a European security conference.

We hope the Warsaw Pact nations will respond. Realism, however, suggests that they will be less likely to respond if a unilateral reduction of U.S. forces appears in the offing anyway. The firm belief that it would weaken our bargaining position on balanced force reduction is thus another reason why the Administration opposes the Mansfield resolution.

Among the questions raised by those who favor an immediate and substantial reduction of our forces in Europe is whether the burden of NATO defense is now fairly allocated. The prosperous Europeans should, they feel, carry a much larger share of the defense of their own continent.

We agree up to one point. The United States believe that our European allies can and should do more. We have told them often that if they increase their own efforts, it would help us to maintain ours. So even though they actually have increased their defense budgets to cover improvements in their forces, while our own defense budget has been declining, we have and are continuing to press them to assume a larger share of Europe's defense responsibilities.

A precipitate reduction of United States forces in Europe would, however, not only fail to stimulate additional European effort, it would probably produce the contrary effect. The bulk of any substantial reductions in U.S. forces would have to be made up by West Germany, the most populous and wealthiest of our NATO allies. But the German people do not relish an enlargement of their country's military establishment. Nor certainly does a Soviet Union still highly emotional about its 20 million World War II dead and enormously sensitive on the subject of German "revanchism". Indeed, it would give pause even to some of Germany's allies.

Any significant rise in the German defensive effort could thus destroy Chancellor Brandt's constructive efforts to improve relationships with the Federal Republic's Eastern neighbors and thereby halt the attempts to lay the foundation for a settlement of the issues still dividing Europe.

I spoke earlier of the fact that we did not want to suggest that the present number of U.S. troops in Europe was inviolate and could or would never be changed. We hope that conditions will eventually come about which will render their presence altogether unnecessary. But when such conditions do come, I feel certain they will be the result of hard and patient bargaining.

Back in 1948, when the cold war was very cold indeed, Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henri Spaak, addressing himself to the Soviet's Andre Vyshinsky at a UN Secretary Council session, said: "The basis of our policy today in Europe is fear. We are afraid of you. We are afraid of your government and we are afraid of the policies which you are pursuing".

Twenty-two years later tensions are lower and East and West are engaged in substantive discussions aimed at lowering them further. But the basic cement holding together the alliance is still the threat from the East. The United States does not control the alliance. When France chose to withdraw from NATO we could not prevent it from doing so. Unlike the Warsaw Pact which rests on an ideological base guarded and sanctified by the Soviet Union, NATO has no dogmatic underpinnings, There is no Western version of the

Brezhnev doctrine. When there is no more threat to the security of the nations of Western Europe, there will be no more need for NATO. And only when the confrontation in Europe truly ends and a genuine peace replaces the always precarious peace of mutual deterrence will the role of our troops be finally accomplished.

On another front, in response to the President's initiative, the alliance has taken on a new dimension by creating a permanent committee on the challenges of modern society to help deal constructively with some of the most pressing problems common to all its members -- the problems of the environment.

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The United States, meanwhile, continues to support the goal of a politically and economically integrated Europe. Despite the recent signs of drift, economic integration has come far, and there are indications that new moves forward may be developing. The most ambitious of the European regional arrangements -- the European Community of the Six -- has already gone beyond the earlier conception of international cooperation to a new form of relationship among nation states.

Since the EEC was established in 1958 its members have abolished tariffs among themselves, agreed upon important measures of the harmonization, instituted an ambitious common agricultural policy and removed most barriers to the free movement of capital and labor. As a group the Six have enjoyed significantly higher rates of economic activity, trade and growth than before 1958. Inter-Community trade has almost quadrupled. Since 1967 Community trade with the outside world has exceeded that of the United States.

The recent Summit Conference of the Six at The Hague and the success of the Council of Ministers of the Community in agreeing on a far-reaching plan for financing their common agricultural policy preface moves to perfect the economic union and extend it to new members in the next year or two. On the latter point, the interests of the United States are very much engaged, not only economically but militarily, for enlargement of the European Communities to admit countries not committed to the defense of the West raises questions about the possibilities of political unity and the underlying strength of the NATO alliance itself.

The United States sees no conflict between the goal of European integration and the efforts now going forward to end

the dangerous and increasingly anachronistic division of the continent. We welcome the indication that dissatisfaction over the continuing gulf between the two halves of Europe is growing in the East as well. Stronger relationships in Western Europe itself can, we believe, facilitate the building of stronger relationships with the East.

"I believe we must build an alliance," the President has said, "strong enough to deter those who would threaten war; close enough to provide for continuous and far-reaching consultation; trusting enough to accept a diversity of views; realistic enough to deal with the world as it is; flexible enough to explore new channels of constructive cooperation."

In the past year, I believe, we have strengthened the alliance on each of these counts. Strength, closeness, trust, realism, flexibility -- these will be useful assets as we move toward the new hopes and new possibilities of the "era of negotiation."

* * * * *