

# Year of Departure: 1950

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Stationing US military forces in Europe has always been a controversial issue: President Truman's initial decision to send four divisions (in addition to the two divisions on occupation duty in Germany) to Europe to serve as a part of General Dwight D. Eisenhower's NATO command sparked what has been called the "great debate" in American foreign policy. Since then questions have been raised about the deterrent effect of the American "presence" in Europe, the war-fighting capabilities of the NATO command, and the costs involved. Moreover, the Mansfield amendments of the Vietnam era and the Mutual (and Balanced) Force Reduction talks in Vienna have raised questions about the continued maintenance of American force levels in Europe.

Much of the controversy surrounding the issue of American troops in Europe arises out of a very particularistic view of the US commitment, one that has been shaped and conditioned by the Cold War and the perception of threat from the Soviet Union. However, an examination of the origins of the American commitment of troops reveals that the structure of the American commitment to Europe — as evidenced by the assignment of ground troops to NATO — was shaped by factors which transcended the Soviet-American rivalry and embraced security issues of a more truly "European" nature. This structure was designed to permanently "entangle" the United States in Western European security affairs, even assuming a significant reduction of the perceived threat from the USSR, for not only did the North Korean invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950 lead to an increased American military commitment to the continent, it also raised the delicate question of German rearmament. It is maintained that this second factor — the perceived necessity to rearm the Federal Republic — was the key variable in determining the structure and permanence of the US commitment.

The linkage between German rearmament and the assignment of American forces to Europe is not new. Several writers, notably Laurence Martin, Robert McGeehan, and David McLellan have demonstrated the connection between the two issues.<sup>1</sup> This article argues that this linkage had significant long term

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1. Laurence Martin, "The American Decision to Rearm Germany", in Harold Stein, ed., *American Civil Military Decisions* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1966). Robert McGeehan, *The German Rearmament Question: American Diplomacy and European Defense After World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971). David McLellan, *Dean Acheson: The State Department Years* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1976), hereinafter cited as *The State Department Years*.

implications for the conduct of American foreign policy. Because the American commitment was so closely linked to German rearmament — and thereby to European security in its most general sense — that commitment assumed a depth and permanence that had not theretofore been envisaged.

It is important to realize that until the Korean invasion and the subsequent creation of the NATO organizational structure, none of the American policies for Europe — revolutionary though they were — implied permanent American involvement in the affairs of Europe. Indeed, the purpose of both the Marshall Plan and the Military Assistance Program was to strengthen Western Europe, to restore a balance of power on the European continent, so that US involvement could be made unnecessary. That neither of these programs was likely to permanently entangle the US in Europe is indicated by the fact that the Marshall Plan was terminated in the early 1950s, while the Military Assistance Program reached its peak in the same period and was eventually ended after long years of decline. It is the NATO organization that is the enduring legacy of America's immediate post-war European policy and that has assured the United States a role in European politics.

But when the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) was signed in 1949, it was viewed by American policy-makers as providing the *political* support necessary to supplement the economic and military support provided by the two programs mentioned above. The NAT did not require or include plans for the creation of military organization with an integrated command structure, a Supreme Commander, and contributions of troops from the member states. In fact, Secretary of State Acheson insisted at the Senate hearings on the NAT that the treaty would not necessitate the deployment of US troops to Europe. It was the leap from the NAT to the NAT *organization* (NATO) which created one of the fundamental structures of subsequent US foreign policy. To this day, NATO is a central preoccupation of American policy-makers (the Carter Administration has renewed that interest and sought to reinvigorate the organization) and remains a primary interest against which issues from Eurocommunism to MBFR are measured.

The transformation from a political treaty to a military organization was the result of the perceived need to rearm West Germany. If the United States was simply responding to the Soviet threat, there was no need to create a new institution with long-term political and military implications. The United States could have unilaterally increased the number of troops it deployed to Europe as part of its occupation forces. It could have supplemented this action with increased military assistance to its European allies to increase their military capabilities, and increased economic assistance so that Western European arms industries could prosper. Facing the Soviet threat, in itself, did not require the North Atlantic Treaty organization; it was the solution to the problem of making German rearmament acceptable to the other West European states.

Only five years after the end of World War II, the long term US role in the post-war world — and more specifically in European affairs — was still ill-defined and European fears of German power was still fresh. NATO was created to address the latter problem and, almost inadvertently — certainly unconsciously — it provided a lasting answer to the former.

What follows is evidence that the issue of German rearmament was the decisive factor in determining the form of the American commitment to Europe in 1950. While the Soviet threat provided the pretext, the German question necessitated the structure of the US involvement in Europe.

#### DEFINING THE PROBLEM: THE UNITED STATES, GERMANY, AND THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE

The outbreak of hostilities in Korea on June 25, 1950 seemed to confirm the worst Western fears regarding the intentions of the Soviet Union, and raised doubts about the defense of Western Europe. At that time Western forces in Europe consisted of two American and two British divisions on occupation duty in Germany, and a few poorly armed and ill-trained Benelux and French divisions — the bulk of the French regular army being tied down in Indochina. Moreover, preliminary NATO planning of a Western defense strategy had been initiated only shortly before the Korean invasion. The North Korean attack gave new urgency to defense planning and raised serious questions for the Truman Administration: Could Europe be successfully defended? If so, what should be the American contribution? And, what would be expected of the NATO allies?

In answering these questions American policy-makers came to the conclusion that it would be possible to defend Western Europe if the United States contributed substantial numbers of troops to the continent and if the Europeans themselves increased their defense capabilities, including, importantly, the military participation of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The question of linking German and American military contributions to Western defense dominated both the internal formulation of and international negotiations about the United States' commitment to Europe. While many in the Truman Administration, especially in the Defense Department, felt that German rearmament should proceed immediately, they soon encountered difficulties with the Europeans, especially France, who did not wish to provide the means of war to a country which so recently had been a powerful and ruthless enemy. Ultimately, it was the solution to the problem of German rearmament which determined the structure and permanence of the US commitment to Europe.

American interest in the rearmament of Germany preceded the Korean

War. Much of this interest stemmed from a reassessment of American foreign and security policy which was initiated by the National Security Council in the Fall of 1949, largely in response to the successful Soviet atomic bomb test. NSC 68 argued that there was a "sharp disparity between our actual military strength and our commitments," and stated that "[w]hen our military strength is related to the world situation and balanced against the likely exigencies of such a situation, it is clear that our military strength is becoming dangerously inadequate." In order to rectify this inadequacy the report recommended that the United States "[d]evelop a level of military readiness which can be maintained as long as necessary as a deterrent to Soviet aggression," and increase the military capability of allies and friendly nations.<sup>2</sup> NSC 68 reflected "a much sharpened fear of the Russian danger and a generally held belief that the Western alliance must rapidly increase its armed forces."<sup>3</sup>

Although NSC 68 did not specifically advocate German rearmament, such a course of action was entirely consistent with its conclusions. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, painfully aware of the inadequate status of the Western defense forces in Europe and supported by the conclusions of NSC 68, urged German rearmament as early as May, 1950.<sup>4</sup> However, at that time there was no connection between German rearmament and the stationing of American troops in Europe; the former was advocated entirely on its own merits and apart from any commitment of American forces to Europe.

With the invasion in Korea, however, American policy-makers rapidly connected the two issues. There also quickly emerged disagreement within the Truman Administration over the question of how quickly the United States should seek German rearmament, whether the rearmament should coincide with, precede, or follow the commitment of US forces, and how German troops should be integrated into a Western defense structure. During July and August of 1950, high-level American officials transmitted their advice on these matters.

Only two and a half weeks after the Korean invasion US Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Lewis Douglas, reported that in light of the Korean conflict the United States Government had to face two important issues: "[T]he establishment within the mutual defense structure of specific command relationships in Europe, and American involvement therein, and the question of commitments of US forces planned to be made available to NAT [North Atlantic Treaty] defense in case of an emergency."

2. *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1950, Volume I*, p. 261. NSC 68, A Report to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary (Lay). Hereinafter cited as *FRUS*.

3. Laurence Martin, "The American Decision to Rearm Germany", in Harold Stein, ed., *American Civil Military Decisions*, p. 649.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 649-650.

Douglas recommended:

- (1) Firstly, genuine merging of the military side of Western Union with the Western European Regional Groups of the NATO. . . .
- (2) Secondly, the correction of the grievous deficiencies in the command and general staff setup of the French armed forces. . . . When full U. S. Participation in the W. E. [Western European] Regional group takes place, and the French command deficiencies are corrected, it will then be possible to build real strength in Western Europe and the way will be paved for reaching our third objective.
- (3) The third objective is the utilization of the military potential of Germany.<sup>5</sup>

Douglas felt that the commitment of American troops to an integrated NATO command was a *prerequisite* to the subsequent steps of reorganizing the French establishment and rearming West Germany:

Trying to put these matters together in logical sequence, it seems to me that if we join up to the hilt in the WU [Western Union] - NAT Western European Groups, which implies a preparedness on our part to make the commitments regarding participation in command and furnishing troops, we then provide the basis for tackling the delicate French problem. If we can persuade the French to put their military house in order - and they do - we then will have got the framework on which real Western European military strength can be developed - and not until then - will we be in a position to consider the rearming of Western Germany.<sup>6</sup>

Douglas' position was concurred with by Secretary Acheson who "preferred that the question of German rearmament be held off until the ground-work for European rearmament had been laid."<sup>7</sup> The task that faced Acheson, then, was to formulate a method whereby the United States would become more closely associated with the defense of the continent and whereby France and the other European countries would increase their military capabilities.

On July 20 Acheson informed Charles Spofford, Deputy U. S. Representative to the NATO Council of Ministers, "that the Administration was prepared to ask for \$4 to \$6 billion in additional military assistance 'provided that the other NATO countries are prepared to go forward promptly with the necessary measures to implement their own rearmament programs.'"<sup>8</sup> It was

5. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 131. Douglas to Acheson.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

7. David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, p. 327.

8. *Ibid.*

hoped that by a demonstration of support the United States could spur the French and the other continental powers to greater defense efforts. However, on July 26 Spofford reported from London that the French were skeptical about their ability to make such an effort, citing internal difficulties and "the bleeding which was resulting from Indo-China."<sup>9</sup> Two days later Spofford reported that the French were anxious that the defense of Western Europe be conducted "as far east as possible" and that the "French Government found it necessary to insist [that] all agree where [the] line of defense should be drawn."<sup>10</sup> These French attitudes again raised questions concerning the necessity of a more direct American participation in European security and the issue of West Germany's role in Western defense plans.

Ambassador to France David Bruce suggested, on July 28, increased American participation as a basis for further rearmament efforts by the continental powers:

The unanimous view among the French officials . . . is that the French people will not give real support to a military effort by France if the effort is presented to them as purely French. . . . They have memories of 1939 and even of 1914. . . . These officials conclude that over a period of time the indispensable enthusiasm of the French people for an additional military effort can be generated if it is clearly demonstrated that in any war that might come, French soldiers would be dying for something that has a chance to survive.<sup>11</sup>

On the question of German participation in Western defense Bruce maintained:

Aside from all the other advantages of a really 'common NATO defense', the problem of Germany *is enough in itself* to compel such action. . . . [I]t will remain politically impossible to rearm German manpower or convert German industry to military production as long as the European peoples see in such action the risk of a resurgence of German military might. A truly common effort is the only way out.<sup>12</sup>

Bruce felt that one solution to the German problem would be the creation of a "European Army" in order to remove fears of strictly "national" German military forces, but concluded that some association of this European Army with the Atlantic Community and NATO would be preferable.

9. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 143. Spofford to Acheson.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 148. Spofford to Acheson.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 158. Bruce to Acheson. See also, *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171. Bruce to Acheson.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 157. Emphasis added.

John McCloy, American High Commissioner in Germany, also contributed his thoughts on the question of how to defend Western Europe. On August 3 McCloy sent a cable (#962) to the Secretary of State in which he called for an “effective defense to prevent invasion by the Soviets” but maintained that “this objective cannot be achieved merely by strengthening [the] national armies of the Western European countries.” McCloy based his opinion on the belief that

There is every evidence that even France lacks the capacity, if not the will, to build a national army able to carry the brunt of the defense of Western Europe. A similar feeling that the best they could do would be ineffective pervades the thinking of the other European countries.

In order to counter these feelings McCloy called for “real contributions of German resources and men” and maintained that the Germans should be integrated into a “European Army”. Although McCloy was “absolutely opposed” to the creation of a German national army, he urged the Western powers to move rapidly in the direction of an European army, arguing that it was “the only way to achieve effective defense and that any other course, even if vigorously followed, [would] not do so.” McCloy made no mention of a prior American commitment of forces, and in this regard was at variance with Acheson’s thinking.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, during the summer of 1950 a number of different, sometimes contradictory, ideas emerged from the confusion that surrounded American military policy toward Europe in the aftermath of the Korean invasion. Two central themes were common to the thoughts of men like Douglas, Spofford, Bruce, and McCloy — as well as Secretary of State Acheson. One was that a West German contribution was necessary if the defense of Europe was to be effective. The second was that German rearmament would only be possible in some sort of larger defense framework. It is apparent that there was no agreement within the highest levels of the US government over when and how the United States would associate with that larger framework. Only Douglas, at this point, presumed US integration in a European/NATO military organization; he felt such integration was a first step, necessary to make a European build-up including the eventual participation of Germany possible. Bruce supported the concept of a European army, with some form of unspecified — but “loose” — US participation. McCloy too supported the idea of a European army (to make German rearmament possible *quickly*) independent of the commitment of American troops. Acheson’s view — as evidenced by the July 20 message to the French — seemed closest to Douglas’ in that he saw German rearmament as a

13. *Ibid.*, p. 181. McCloy to Acheson.

goal that would gradually be achieved after a further US commitment and a European arms build-up. As the summer drew to a close, Acheson turned to the problem of drawing these ideas together into a coherent policy.

#### DEFINING US POLICY, AUGUST 1950

On July 31, Secretary of State Acheson communicated the State Department's thinking on the German question to President Truman. The Secretary informed the President that "[t]he question was not whether Germany should be brought into the general defensive plan but rather how this could be done without disrupting anything else that we were doing and without putting Germany into a position to act as the balance of power in Europe." It was becoming increasingly apparent that in order to accomplish the goal of rearming West Germany without at the same time creating an imbalance of power in Western Europe, West German military power would have to be integrated into a larger framework; a framework which would most likely have to include the United States. President Truman "expressed his strong approval of this line of thought" and directed the Secretary of State to proceed along the lines of a European Army which would include German units and which would "follow the decisions reached in accordance with the North Atlantic Treaty procedures."<sup>14</sup>

Prompted by Truman, Acheson immediately began work on a plan to lay the groundwork for *eventual* West German participation in a European army by strengthening the American commitment to Europe. He quickly ran into opposition from the Defense Department, which insisted that German rearmament be *simultaneous* with the commitment of any US troops. Whereas Acheson sought to create conditions in Europe that would make German rearmament acceptable to the French, the defense establishment was preoccupied with the adverse military balance on the continent, and pressed for the immediate integration of German units into Western defenses. The Defense Department's position was supported in part by American representatives in Europe — notably John McCloy, whose views are described above.

The Secretary of State approached the Pentagon in early August of 1950 with the idea of sending American troops to Europe in order to lay the groundwork for the creation of European army and German integration into that army. He later commented that

The Defense Department required no persuasion that the defense of Europe needed, in their phrase, 'beefing up', nor did its officers doubt that the beef would have to be provided by increased allied forces, in-

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168. Memorandum of Conversation by Acheson on a Meeting with Truman.



creased American troops and military aid, the inclusion of armed German units, and — to integrate the whole effort — a unified command. But again — and here come the rub — they wanted all of these elements in (their phrase again) ‘one package’.<sup>15</sup>

The first two weeks in August was thus a period of debate between the State Department and a “united and immovable” Pentagon.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, U.S. representatives in Europe began to press for immediate contributions of German troops to European defense. Admiral Kirk, Ambassador to the Soviet Union, felt that a decision on the question of rearmament could not be “postponed until France and Belgium are strong enough to match a rearmed Germany.”<sup>17</sup> McCloy also continued to advocate rapid rearmament:

While German participation even in [a] European Army must await French acceptance, I do not believe US or others should defer [from] arriving at [a] definite position awaiting that or other developments. The uncertainty as to time available for strengthening European defense and great desirability of having largest possible strength by next summer makes each month too precious to allow delay. My impression is that French will respond to the same necessities as US and will not oppose prompt action within a European army structure.<sup>18</sup>

Only Ambassador Bruce continued to support the gradual approach to German rearmament, preceded by the assignment of more US and British troops to Europe and the strengthening of the French armed forces.<sup>19</sup>

A turning point for American decision-makers was reached in mid-August. Spofford informed Acheson on August 9 that unless the United States made a substantial contribution of ground forces to Europe, NATO would stagnate.<sup>20</sup> On August 11, the Consultative Council of the European Assembly — with West German representatives participating for the first time — called “for the immediate creation of a unified European Army, under the authority of a

15. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1969), p. 437. See also *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, pp. 182-183. Memorandum of Conversation by Miss Barbara Evans, Personal Assistant to the Secretary of State.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 438.

17. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 193. Kirk to Acheson.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 206. McCloy to Acheson.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 194-195. Bruce to Acheson. For Acheson’s perception of his isolation on this issue see Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 438. On the other hand it was sometimes felt that Bruce and other State Department officials “who were most concerned with France represented French views with what many of their colleagues felt to be excessive vigor.” Laurence Martin, in Stein, ed., *American Civil Military Decisions*, p. 654.

20. David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, p. 328.

European Minister of Defense, subject to proper European democratic control and acting in full cooperation with the United States and Canada."<sup>21</sup>

Added to this pressure for an American commitment came increased calls for German participation. Acheson's "gradualist" position on this issue suffered a blow on August 16 when Deputy Under Secretary of State H. Freeman Matthews sent a paper to the Defense Department which supported the "formation of a European Defense of [the] United States, U.K. and Continental military contingents, including those from Germany, under a Supreme Commander will full command authority and supported by an international general staff." This report maintained that such a policy implied the "eventual German membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization" and held that "the keystone of European defense will center around what is now the Western Union grouping and which will be augmented by U.S. and German contingents."<sup>22</sup> Matthews' plan appeared to call for the simultaneous integration of American and German forces into the "European Army,"<sup>23</sup> and it could not help but add fuel to the Pentagon's adamant view that American participation in the initial defense of Europe be accompanied by the inclusion of West German troops so that in the event of a Soviet attack American forces would not run the risk of being isolated and destroyed.<sup>24</sup>

Not only was Acheson under pressure at home, but the French also began to pressure the United States to clarify its position regarding European defense. On August 5 the French Premier, Rene Pleven, informed Ambassador Bruce of a French three-year rearmament program in an attempt to move the Administration ahead with its military aid programs for Europe. However, the French made it clear that their increased military effort would not occur without increased financial aid, larger military efforts by other NATO members, and the creation of a unified command.<sup>25</sup>

On August 17, the French proposed to augment the NATO legal framework by creating a general staff or High Command, establishing a joint budget, and adopting a comprehensive "general program" for European defense. The French Government declared that it was "extremely anxious" to learn of the

21. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 207. Footnote 3.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 214. Matthews to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Foreign Military Affairs and Military Assistance (Burns). Acheson had not examined all of the conclusions and recommendations contained in Matthews memorandum. *Ibid.*, p. 211, 215.

23. *Ibid.* Matthews' report stated: "The political value of a U. S. commander carrying with it the implications of full U. S. participation . . . will add an element of strength to the European Defense Force concept and will be a clear indication of the full commitment of the U. S." *Ibid.*

24. David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, pp. 328-329. Especially the footnotes on page 329.

25. Laurence Martin in Harold Stein, ed., *American Civil Military Decisions*, p. 665. For Ambassador Bruce's summary of the French memorandum see *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 1386. Bruce to Acheson.

American response to these proposals. It is apparent that the French plans differed significantly from US thinking in that they did not address the problem of German rearmament, but sought instead to bind the United States — through military assistance and NATO — to the defense of France.<sup>26</sup>

Faced with both domestic and international pressure, Acheson and the State Department were hard pressed to develop a policy regarding the stationing of American troops in Europe and the rearmament of Germany. The fact that the foreign ministers of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States were scheduled to meet in New York on September 12 added to the sense of urgency.

On August 26, in an effort to resolve the issue prior to the September 12 meeting, President Truman directed Acheson and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson to prepare recommendations in response to a series of questions concerning American and German participation in the defense of Europe. These questions are crucial to understanding the confusion and uncertainty that continued to surround US policy toward Europe. Even at this late date, after two months of discussion within the administration and only two weeks before important negotiations with allies, Truman asked questions which revealed that a further American commitment to Europe was not taken for granted and that if such a further commitment was made that its form was far from having been decided. Truman's questions included:

- Are we prepared to commit additional United States forces to the defense of Europe?
- Are we prepared to support, and in what manner, the concept of a European defense force, including German participation on other than a national basis?
- Are we prepared to consider full United States participation in European defense organs?<sup>27</sup>

It was these questions that had been debated throughout the summer, and — as shown above — there were a number of plausible answers advanced by various American policymakers. Nearly thirty years later, it is difficult to envision a world without NATO in its present form. In the late summer of 1950, however, it was by no means clear how American policy would turn out.

On September 8, Acheson and Johnson delivered to the President their response to his questions. They "agreed that additional United States forces should be committed to the defense of Europe at the earliest feasible date in order that any doubts of American interest in the defense, rather than the

26. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, pp. 221, 224. Bruce to Acheson.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-251. Truman to Acheson.

liberation of Europe, will be removed, thus increasing the will of our allies to resist." The two Secretaries felt that

The creation of a European defense force within the North Atlantic Treaty framework seems to us to be the best means of obtaining the maximum contribution from European nations and to provide as well a framework in which German contribution of a significant nature could be realized. The objective should be the early creation of an integrated force adequate to insure the successful defense of Western Europe, including Western Germany, against possible Soviet invasion, commanded by a Supreme Commander at the earliest suitable date.<sup>28</sup>

Acheson and Johnson also recommended that "we should proceed *without delay* with the formation of adequate West German units . . ."<sup>29</sup>

This, of course, marked final acceptance of the Defense Department's "package plan" by the Administration. The next day President Truman made public his intention to send additional American ground troops to Europe. He indicated that the embarking of troops would depend on other NATO countries' making similar efforts, but he did not discuss the linkage that existed between German rearmament and the stationing of US forces in Europe,<sup>30</sup> a linkage which the United States' allies were only faintly, if at all, aware of. The acceptance of the "package plan" — requiring the simultaneous integration of American and German units into Western defense — put the United States on a collision course with the French; the collision occurred at the foreign ministers meeting in New York.

After the acceptance of the "package plan," the focus of attention shifted from the internal deliberations to international discussions with allies. What is important about the internal discussion is that it demonstrates the centrality of the issue of German rearmament in the Truman Administration's consideration of how to respond to the Soviet threat to Europe. Having formulated US policy, the next task was to convince the Europeans to accept that policy. It turned out to be an impossible task, for — in contrast to American perceptions — German rearmament was not viewed in a favorable light by the West Europeans.

#### THE COLLISION WITH FRANCE, SEPTEMBER 1950

As US policy was defined in response to Truman's questions, it became apparent that conflict with France was incipient. On September 2, Acheson

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 274. Acheson and Johnson to the President.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 275. For Acheson's negative reflections on the "package plan" see Dean Acheson, *Sketches from Life of Great Men I have Known* (New York: Harper, 1961), pp. 26-41.

30. For the text of Truman's speech see *New York Times* September 10, 1950.

informed the French that although no clear policy with regard to a European army had been developed, the State Department felt "that if such a force were created it would be necessary to establish a Supreme Commander with a Combined Staff, and that in this event, it should be possible to integrate into such a Force German units in a controlled status without thereby creating a German national army." To calm French apprehensions regarding German rearmament Acheson said "*that if these steps are to be effective larger participation by the US both in troops in Europe and in the direction of the unified force might be required.*"<sup>31</sup> These assurances were not enough for the French and Foreign Minister Schuman replied on September 5 that the upcoming ministers meeting would probably result in a significant "divergence of views upon certain problems, notably concerning that of German rearmament . . . ."<sup>32</sup>

As soon as he approved Acheson and Johnson's recommendations, Truman informed British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and Foreign Minister Schuman that the United States intended to present the German rearmament question for discussion at New York.<sup>33</sup> The two European leaders received word while in transit that the German question would be raised. They were so unprepared when they arrived in the United States that they had to send for new instructions almost immediately.<sup>34</sup>

When informal meetings between the three foreign ministers began on September 11, it became clear that the French were not going to accept the American position regarding German rearmament. At the initial meeting Schuman said that

French public opinion would not accept the rearmament of Germany when France itself was not armed. It would not accept such an arrangement until the first effect of our rearmament program was seen and felt. He thought that the French Parliament would reverse any decision which might be made now to move ahead with German rearmament.<sup>35</sup>

Secretary Acheson then suggested that an agreement on the "basic principle of the program" and a "decision to keep German rearmament lagging behind

31. *Ibid.*, p. 261. Acheson to Bruce.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 267. Bruce to Acheson.

33. David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, p. 330.

34. Laurence Martin in Harold Stein, ed., *American Civil Military Decisions*, p. 658. Martin also comments on the existence of widely publicized statements in the press indicating the American decision to send troops to Europe was a part of a larger plan that included the rearmament of West Germany. Acheson himself writes of statements made to the press by John McCloy on the White House steps indicating that the Germans should be able to defend their own country. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 439.

35. *FRUS* 1950, Vol. III, p. 299. Minutes of a Private Conference between Acheson, Schuman, and Bevin.

that of the other powers” might be more acceptable to the French. Again, Schuman was negative, maintaining that because of the inevitable news leaks an agreement — if only in principle — would be interpreted in France “as an irrevocable decision which would result in German units receiving materials which France itself needed and France would be on the same footing as Germany.” In order to pressure the French, the United States delegation to the meeting continued to maintain that US forces could not be assigned to Europe without German rearmament,<sup>36</sup> but to no avail, and discussion of the German question as well as additional troop assignments by the United States was postponed until September 22, when the French, British, and American defense ministers would join the talks.<sup>37</sup>

By the time of the joint defense and foreign ministers meeting all of the NATO allies except France were in favor of the American proposal.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Secretary of Defense Johnson had been replaced in mid-September by former Secretary of State General George C. Marshall, whose working relationship with Acheson was excellent.<sup>39</sup> This new-found cooperation between the Defense and State Departments added an element of flexibility to the American position, and the United States began to slowly back off from its position calling for a rapid rearmament of Germany. Instead, the Americans continued to press for an “agreement in principle on the German question.”<sup>40</sup> However, the French position became more rigid with the arrival of Defense Minister Jules Moch (a Socialist) from Paris.

Moch’s son had been tortured by the Germans during the Second World War and he was vehemently opposed to German rearmament. In anticipation of his arrival, Acheson had informed President Truman that although Schuman was flexible, the real “difficulty lay in Paris, and specifically in the Socialist Party and even more specifically in Moch.”<sup>41</sup>

Because of Moch’s attitude the second round of September meetings was devoted to convincing him of the wisdom of German rearmament in order to gain his support before the French Assembly. In this effort the United States received help from the British Defense Minister Immanuel Shinwell, who was also a Socialist. On September 23, Shinwell pointed out to the French that it would “be fatal not to take advantage of [the] US offer of troops” by rejecting the principle of German rearmament, and he emphasized that for

36. *Ibid.*, p. 306. Memorandum of a Private Meeting with Mr. Bevin, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Bartle).

37. David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, pp. 330-331.

38. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, pp. 327-329. Memorandum by Acheson.

39. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 441-442. Also, *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 337. Acheson to Truman.

40. David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, p. 331.

41. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 336. Acheson to Truman.

psychological reasons alone the West Germans had to have a stake in their own defense.<sup>42</sup>

Secretary of Defense Marshall also sought to influence the French by linking future arms aid from the United States to the rearmament question. He told the French that "there would be no problem of priorities for NAT countries if the US can plan on the participation of Germany now." However, he pointed out that "[i]f the US Administration cannot assure Congress that all available means in Germany would be utilized to achieve an effective European force there would be serious problems regarding the appropriations for defense."<sup>43</sup>

Although Schuman and Moch pressured the Americans for a rapid commitment of money and men and counseled delay on the German rearmament question, there was some flexibility in their position. While they could not accept even the principle of German rearmament, neither did they want to reject it nor did they wish to prohibit discussions of the problem.<sup>44</sup>

The flexibility of the French position was also in evidence on September 23. After Marshall explained the difficulties the Truman Administration would encounter with Congress unless that body could be assured of German contributions to NATO defense forces, Moch offered hope to the Americans. Although he doubted that the French Assembly would support German participation in Western defense, he added that "there was a chance of getting a 'package' sold to the Parliament."<sup>45</sup> It was clear that Moch's idea of a "package" was far different than that agreed to by Acheson and Johnson in early September, yet it did allow continued work on the problem. The French "package" had to "include precise information of what [the] French [could] expect from the United States under the aid program and how many and at what date U.S. divisions would arrive in Europe."<sup>46</sup> In order to exploit this French flexibility Acheson informed Truman that Moch "needed much ammunition if he is to sell this package to his Parliament, but he was willing if the ammunition is forthcoming."<sup>47</sup>

The September 23 meeting was something of a breakthrough for the allies.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 340-341. Memorandum by Acheson. As a counter to this last argument Moch noted that his view of the role of NATO "was not to defend Germany as such but to preserve freedom in Europe and to take advantage of our occupation of Germany to fight further from the bulwarks of our own frontiers." *Ibid.*, p. 342.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, p. 342.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 1392. Memorandum of Conversation by Mr. Lucius D. Battle, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 344. Acheson to the Acting Secretary of State.

47. *Ibid.* According to David McLellan, "Moch admitted that one of the most telling appeals to a Frenchman was that the United States had for the first time made clear its intention to defend Europe in Europe . . ." David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, p. 331, footnote. McLellan cites Jules Moch, *Histoire du rearmement allemand depuis 1950* (Paris: Laffont, 1965), p. 47.

At its conclusion the three powers agreed — at the suggestion of Moch — to postpone a proposed meeting of defense ministers (scheduled for October 16) until October 28, “in order to attempt to get favorable French parliamentary action” on the principle of German rearmament.<sup>48</sup>

Yet even after the September 23 meeting Acheson continued to convey to the French a rather inflexible attitude. According to Moch, the Secretary of State told him that “if, in October, the French Government notifies us that it is irrevocably opposed to German rearmament, we shall have to reconsider our whole plan and consider another solution.”<sup>49</sup> But the sincerity of Acheson’s posture toward the French was undermined by the impression he gave to the British. He told Bevin that if the French Parliament did not approve the principle of German participation “he would have to consider going ahead anyway,” but was, in fact, optimistic about the possibility of French approval.<sup>50</sup> In light of subsequent American flexibility, it appears that Acheson was at this point trying to pressure the French into acquiescence by appearing more rigid than he really was. This tactic did not succeed because the French did not really believe the American threats.<sup>51</sup>

On September 25, the US position began to show increased signs of flexibility. On that date the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, George Perkins, wrote to Under Secretary of State James Webb regarding a proposed resolution of the North Atlantic Council.

In preparing the resolution for the [North Atlantic] Council meeting tomorrow the Deputies have submitted the following:

‘The Supreme Commander will be appointed as soon as sufficient national forces in being *have been committed* to the integrated Force to enable the latter to be reasonably capable of fulfilling its responsibilities.’

When this was shown to [the] Defense [department] they suggested the following wording:

‘The Supreme Commander shall be appointed as soon as there is assurance that sufficient forces *will be provided* to the integrated Force to enable the latter to be reasonably capable of fulfilling its responsibilities.’

Perkins reported that “[t]he significance of the change is that in the latter version it would permit the appointment of a Supreme Commander *before* the

48. *Ibid.*

49. David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, p. 332, and Robert McGeehan, *The German Rearmament Question*, pp. 59-61. Both cite Jules Moch, *Histoire du rearmement allemand depuis 1950*, p. 47.

50. *FRUS: 1950*, Vol. III, p. 344.

51. Robert McGeehan, *The German Rearmament Question*, p. 60.



European force had actually been organized.”<sup>52</sup> The change obviously represented an effort to move towards an agreement in “principle” on the German question, and the fact that the suggested revision came from the Defense Department was illustrative of the new found cooperation between State and Defense.

On September 26, the North Atlantic Council adopted a resolution which included the revised paragraph mentioned above as well as two paragraphs calling for

- (a) The establishment at the earliest possible date of an integrated force under centralized command and control composed of forces made available by governments for the defense of Western Europe;
- (b) The full authorization of manpower and productive resources available from all sources . . . .

Moreover, the Defense Committee was requested “to make specific recommendations regarding the method by which, from the technical point of view, Germany could make its most useful contribution to the successful implementation of the plan” for the defense of Europe, bearing “in mind the unanimous conclusion of the Council that it would not serve the best interests of Europe or of Germany to bring into being a German national army or a German general staff.”<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, at the end of the second round of September talks in New York, the United States and France were beginning to search for ways to heal the breach which had opened over the question of the American “package plan” which linked German rearmament and the assignment of U.S. troops to Europe. Although the United States Government maintained that it could not assign a commander or station its troops in Europe as a part of an integrated European defense plan unless accompanied by the inclusion of German units, this position was not as rigid as it appeared. On the French side, although they continued to reject the notion of any form of German rearmament — even in principle — it was clear to all concerned that this position was subject to change as well. Acheson was even able to report that Moch appeared to have “changed from an opponent to an advocate.”<sup>54</sup>

An indication of what the next round of negotiations would look like came at the end of the New York meetings. Schuman had told Acheson that “he [Schuman] was thinking personally of taking [the] initiative re[garding]

52. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 345. Perkins to Webb. Emphasis added.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 350. Memorandum by Acheson. Any specific mention of “German Army units” was deleted from the text at French insistence. Robert McGeehan, *The German Rearmament Question*, p. 61.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 353. Acheson to Truman.

Ger[man] participation in [a North Atlantic] force. He realized [the] importance [of] France not being 'dragged along' and was considering what he cld [could] do to bring about some sort of Franco - German agreement."<sup>55</sup>

#### THE PLEVEN PLAN

After October 1, the initiative was clearly with the French to effect a plan whereby German contributions to the defense of Western Europe could be accepted. Acheson, despite his private signs of flexibility, placed the burden on France for the development of new ideas.<sup>56</sup> Added to the pressure from the United States, the French were suffering financially and the war in Indochina made their dependence on American assistance all the greater.<sup>57</sup>

On the American side, the Defense Department, especially the Joint Chiefs of Staff, continued to oppose any integrated force that did not include the participation of German units. On October 13 the Chiefs informed Acheson that if no agreement was reached on the issue of immediate German participation in the defense of Europe during the defense ministers meeting at the end of October "the United States course of action for the conduct of a war against the USSR, including the magnitude and extent of the United States contribution to the defense of Western Europe, should be reexamined by the United States."<sup>58</sup> Acheson's response indicated his realization that some basic compromise in the US position might be necessary:

If there is continued delay of securing agreement of the French Government to the plan which we have placed before them, we will rather quickly arrive at a situation where we must, under our present position, delay our moves for support of the integrated force. When that moment arrives, it may be that delay in creation of the integrated force will not appear to be in the best interests of the United States. This would be particularly true if we were convinced by that time that the French Government would be able, within a relatively short period of time, to agree to German participation in the force.<sup>59</sup>

Acheson's flexibility was tested when he received word of the "Pleven Plan" (so named for the French Premier, Rene Pleven) for a European Defense Community.<sup>60</sup> Essentially the Pleven Plan envisaged the creation of a "European Army" into which German units would be integrated. This

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 357-358. Acheson to Bruce.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 368. Memorandum by Acheson.

57. David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, p. 332.

58. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III. Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 382. Acheson to Marshall.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 377-381. Bruce to Acheson.

European Army would come into being only after the establishment of a European institutional framework — including a European minister of defense, a European parliament with the power to vote a European defense budget, and a European Council of Defense Ministers — designed to oversee the whole project. In addition, Pleven maintained “that the proposal for a European army should in no way interfere with the establishment of the integrated NATO force . . .” and thereby “sought to gain the benefits of the American package proposal minus German rearmament.”<sup>61</sup>

Most American officials regarded the Pleven Plan as merely a delaying action by the French. The problem, from the American perspective, was that the Pleven Plan saw German rearmament as an eventual rather than an immediate concern which would be faced only *after* the European political and military superstructure was in place. The Americans saw the Pleven Plan as an attempt to avoid rather than to confront the problem of German rearmament. An additional American fear was that the Pleven Plan would greatly diminish American influence on the German rearmament process. As Ambassador Bruce reported to Acheson: “It might turn over to a purely European (probably continental) group the responsibility without US participation for the vital question of German military contribution to European defense and should the study and the negotiations envisaged in this study bog down, it might be difficult for us to intervene successfully.”<sup>62</sup>

Although the American reaction was cool, Acheson saw within the Pleven proposal reason for hope. He explained that even though the French would deny that the Pleven proposal constituted their acceptance of the principle of German rearmament, “we were considering whether or not, without stating it, to proceed on that basis.”<sup>63</sup> Following the conclusion of the defense ministers’ meeting a few days later, Acheson would begin to do just that.

On the eve of the defense ministers’ meeting Jules Moch met with Secretary Marshall in order to outline the French position. The French Defense Minister told Marshall that their plan envisaged the immediate appointment of a Supreme Commander and included the stipulation that “all troops that can be made available will be placed under the Supreme Commander at once.” Moch also stated that the European Defense Minister could not be appointed until after the completion of the Schuman Plan (for the European Coal and Steel Community), “perhaps in 1951, and only then would the Europeans develop a “special experimental force with German units” included.<sup>64</sup>

However, Marshall responded that “until [the] US knows what arrangements will be agreed [to] by NATO on [the] contribution of Germany to [the] defense

61. Robert McGeehan, *The German Rearmament Question*, p. 64, 66.

62. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 380. Bruce to Acheson.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 404. Memorandum of Conversation by Acheson.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 411. Acheson to Bruce.

of [Western Europe] including Western Germany, it is not possible to give final form to command and [military] structure for [the] integration force.”<sup>65</sup> Given these opposing positions the October meeting ended in deadlock and some acrimony.

On November 3, Acheson cabled Ambassador Bruce in Paris expressing his displeasure over Moch’s “quasi dictatorial” attitude during the October meeting with Marshall, and instructing Bruce to inquire whether Moch’s position was in accord with that of the French Government. He also gave Bruce an explanation of State Department thinking on the German rearmament problem:

Unless [the French] give evidence they are willing to use all available means [for] organizing [the] defenses of Western [Europe] including France, they can hardly expect [the American] people to feel they [should] make a major contribution to this end. In particular, proof [of] their sincerity will be tested by [the] attitude which their [Representatives] take in [the Military Committee] and in Council [of Deputies] which now are endeavoring to arrive at a formula which will permit us to move forward in [the] common task of building up [the] defensive strength of [the] West.

Acheson added that he could not “over stress [his] conviction [of the] importance [of] reaching [a] genuinely workable agreement that makes [military] sense well before [the] end of the year . . . .”<sup>66</sup>

Bruce reported on November 4 that he had conferred with Pleven. The French Premier had indicated that he was aware of Moch’s intransigence and felt that he would be able to “handle” his Defense Minister. Pleven also agreed that the French representatives on the Military Committee and on the Council of Deputies could discuss any plans “affecting [the] contribution of German armed forces to the defense of the West.”<sup>67</sup> It is apparent that Pleven, as well as Acheson was anxious that agreement on the German rearmament question be reached before the end of the year.

#### THE SPOFFORD COMPROMISE

The scene then shifted to the Council of Deputies and the Defense Committee, where the French showed willingness to discuss the various plans for German rearmament. By mid-November Charles Spofford was able to report that the “French would like to accept something close to the American plan on condition that we can take some action toward European integration and in so

65. *Ibid.*, p. 423. Acheson to Bruce.

66. *Ibid.*, pp. 427, 430. Acheson to Bruce.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 433. Bruce to Acheson.

doing save [the Government's] political face." He also reported to Washington that French military thinking was generally close to that of the United States, and with some pressure the French might be willing to drop their requirement that a European political superstructure precede moves toward German rearmament. However, Spofford cautioned that if too much pressure was applied the French Government would fall.<sup>68</sup>

On November 16 Ambassador Douglas reported agreement between himself, Bruce, McCloy and Spofford to the effect that as long as the final solution to the rearmament problem came within the NATO framework the United States "should . . . accept in principle and take a benevolent attitude toward the concepts of continental political institutions provided their development is not permitted to delay or weaken development of integrated North Atlantic defense."<sup>69</sup> The next day Douglas added: "This would include the acceptance of a European army." As a trade-off for American acceptance of the European army concept the American representatives felt that the French should begin "[i]mmediate initial steps toward recruitment and training of German forces and such steps should not be limited to purely planning activities . . . ."<sup>70</sup>

On November 18, the first tangible evidence of progress was seen in a report to the Military Committee by a special "Standing Group" on "Military Aspects of German Participation in the Defense of Western Europe." This report (designated MC 30) reflected the growing tendency to find a "transitional" arrangement regarding German rearmament which would breach the gap between American and French policy. The report held:

- a. A European defense force, i.e., a composite force under political control of a European body as desired by the French, is militarily acceptable but its achievement must not delay the contribution of Germany.
- b. By inference, if a European defense force . . . is not successful, that Germany would contribute units directly into an integrated NATO defense force.<sup>71</sup>

MC 30 also called for immediate work on recruitment of German troops.

Four days later a memorandum from Spofford — also emphasizing the transitional approach — proposed:

While work proceeds toward the solution of the political problems, certain

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 457, 459. Spofford to Acheson.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 460. Douglas to Acheson.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 461, footnote 2.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 518. Memorandum to Marshall by his Assistant (Burns). Dated December 5 (summary of November 18 meeting).

measures, upon which there already exist large measure of agreement, can and should be undertaken immediately. Logic of situation therefore appears to compel [the] separation of two aspects of [the] problem and use of [a] transitional period. The purpose of such [a] transitional period would be:

- (1) To permit essentials of military organization to proceed immediately;
- (2) To proceed with recruitment of German manpower and production of material under strong provisional controls pending [the] development of [a] more permanent system; and
- (3) To enable broader political problems to be dealt with concurrently but freed from pressure of military urgency.<sup>72</sup>

Not only did the work of the Council of Deputies and the Military Committee spur the French and Americans towards reaching a compromise, but the situation in Germany itself also dictated caution to the Americans. Throughout the entire negotiations on German rearmament, it had been assumed that the Germans would willingly participate within a European army framework. However, on November 18, the Adenauer Government informed the allies that the Federal Republic would not agree to any rearmament proposals except on the basis of complete equality and the restoration of full sovereignty. This development heightened the need to reassure the French, and raised serious doubts about the wisdom of the US approach among many American policy-makers.<sup>73</sup>

As a result of these mounting pressures, as well as the reversal of fortunes in Korea, Acheson urged Schuman to accept the compromise submitted by Spofford and stated that the Supreme Commander should be appointed immediately "as a tangible step to give form and impetus to our military effort."<sup>74</sup> Acheson gave the French Foreign Minister his assurance of the strength of the American commitment to European security:

The US has given every evidence in statements, actions, and treaties, of the depth and permanence of its interest in Europe, its support for closer European association, its willingness to cooperate with Europe .... It is my conviction that the broad framework of the Atlantic Community is an essential part of the free world structure, whether it be from the point of view of global security or of *permanently ending the threat of German domination*.<sup>75</sup>

72. *Ibid.*, p. 480. Spofford to Acheson.

73. David McLellan, *The State Department Years*, p. 335. Also, Konrad Adenauer, *Memoirs*, 1945-1953 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1960), pp. 302-328.

74. *FRUS*: 1950, Vol. III, p. 497. Acheson to Bruce.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 498. Emphasis added.

Since the appointment of a Supreme Commander carried with it the implication that troops would necessarily follow, this marked Acheson's abandonment of the State - Defense "package plan."<sup>76</sup>

Of course, the final agreement to reject the "package plan" needed the approval of the Defense Department. This was achieved on December 6 in a meeting between the British and American Heads of Government, foreign ministers, and military leaders at the White House. At this meeting Acheson asked Marshall if the Spofford compromise was approved by the French, would the Defense Department agree to the appointment of a Supreme Commander? Marshall replied that "[i]f a reasonable basis was established, they would go ahead ... in the approval of the appointment of a Supreme Commander." The Secretary of State had already informed those in attendance that the French Cabinet had agreed to accept the Spofford proposals.<sup>77</sup>

By December 12, the NATO Military Committee and the NATO Council of Deputies approved the creation of a European Defense Force so long as it did not delay the addition of German manpower to the defense of the West.<sup>78</sup> The Military Committee recommended the establishment of a Supreme Headquarters Atlantic Powers in Europe (SHAPE) and the appointment of a Supreme Commander, who "should be a U. S. Officer and should be appointed forthwith."<sup>79</sup>

These proposals were formally accepted by the French on December 15, and on December 17 the North Atlantic Council met in Brussels to finalize the compromise agreement. At that time Acheson announced that President Truman — as per Council request — had appointed General Dwight D. Eisenhower as Supreme Commander and would shortly increase the number of American troops "under the command of the Supreme Commander."<sup>80</sup>

The acceptance of the Spofford compromise represented a bargain in which the United States agreed to trade support for a European defense structure and a decoupling of American troop commitments from immediate German rearmament for French acceptance of the idea that the commitment of American troops to Europe represented part of a larger plan which included German rearmament in the not-too-distant future. With this compromise, both sides could feel that they had achieved their essential objectives. The United States had gained French adherence to at least the idea of German rearmament. The French gained an immediate American military commitment

76. *Ibid.*, p. 1747. United States Minutes, Truman - Acheson Conversations, The White House, December 6. Especially the statement by Acheson that the appointment of the Supreme Commander and the assignment of troops "go together."

77. *Ibid.*, pp. 1749, 1750.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 547. Report of the North Atlantic Military Committee.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 557. Report by the Military Committee to the Defense Committee.

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 595-596.

to the defense of Europe while delaying the rearming of Germany. The operational impact of this compromise was American participation in an integrated NATO command structure and the deployment of American troops to Europe.

### CONCLUSION

It is therefore apparent that the American response to the perceived increase of the Soviet military threat to Europe was largely shaped by the necessity to accommodate French fears regarding a resurgence of German military power to the realities of the European military situation. Though the Korean invasion provided the impetus for the stationing of American troops in Europe, the need to rearm West Germany — stemming from the same perception of threat — was the major determinant of the shape of the American commitment.

Throughout the internal and international discussions about the assignment of American ground forces to Europe that issue was linked to the question of German rearmament. In this sense the question was not whether West Germany would participate in the military defense of Western Europe, but when and how. The American "package plan," developed in August and September of 1950, sought to bring in German units immediately and attempted to tie the stationing of American troops to the simultaneous inclusion of German formations in a NATO force. The French Plevin Plan, developed in October, sought to delay the German contribution by making such a move dependent on the prior commitment of American troops and the creation of a "European army" with a European political superstructure. In the compromise Spofford plan, the principle of German rearmament was accepted by the French, while the United States agreed to deploy four additional divisions to Europe as a part of an integrated command framework designed to accommodate German units should the European army concept fail.

Had American policy makers not assumed that German rearmament was necessary, the shape of the US commitment to Europe might very well have been much different. The United States could have responded to the Soviet threat by simply increasing its military assistance programs and by strengthening the occupation forces in Germany. Nothing in the North Atlantic Treaty required participation in a unified command structure or the deployment of American troops to Europe in an integrated defense arrangement. These structures, it is argued, were made necessary by the American desire to gain French acceptance for German rearmament, thereby giving the US commitment a shape and permanence it might otherwise not have assumed.

The fact that this American action envisaged a permanent commitment to European security is interesting in light of the "great debate" on American foreign policy which took place during the winter of 1951 when the wisdom of



the Truman Administration's steps were questioned in the Senate.<sup>81</sup> What strikes one about the debates is that the linkage between German rearmament, the American troop commitment to NATO, and assurances to the French were never acknowledged by the Administration. This was despite the fact that the chief spokesman for the opposition — Republican Robert Taft from Ohio — did not object to the stationing of additional troops in Europe in response to the Korean invasion, but rather to their assignment to an integrated NATO command structure.<sup>82</sup> Moreover when American military leaders were questioned about the rearmament of Germany, they deferred the question by maintaining that such a move would require a long diplomatic process which was just then getting under way.<sup>83</sup>

The motivation for this secrecy appears to be twofold. First, it is apparent from Marshall's statements to the French<sup>84</sup> that he feared an adverse domestic reaction to the stationing of American troops in Europe if he could not assure the Congress that such a move would be accompanied by an increase in European (including German) military potential. Obviously knowledge of the fact that the Defense Department itself questioned the wisdom of sending American troops to Europe without the simultaneous rearmament of Germany would have added fuel to the opposition's arguments. Second, and perhaps more important, by concentrating exclusively on the Soviet threat as a motivation for the assignment of troops to Europe, the Administration could present that action as a temporary commitment which could be reduced and eventually eliminated with the reduction of the perception of threat from the Soviet Union. By ignoring the more complex and permanent implications of the American commitment, the Administration was able to avoid strengthening the isolationist sentiment opposing its policy.

Finally, because the commitment of US forces to Europe was in response to security issues which transcended the Cold War, questions have to be asked about the feasibility of force reductions by the United States in the near future. If, as appears to be the case, the American military commitment to Europe carried with it far reaching political implications embracing traditional European security concerns, the ability of the United States to reduce or change that commitment must be viewed in terms other than those purely military and economic issues centering on Soviet - American relations which have tended to dominate the debates on the status of American forces in Europe.

81. For a comprehensive record of the "great debate" see U. S. Congress, Senate, Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Relations, *Joint Hearings, The Assignment of Ground Forces of the United States to Duty in the European Area*, Eighty Second Congress, First Session, 1951 (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1951).

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 629-632, p. 640.

83. *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 50.

84. *Supra.*, p. 15.