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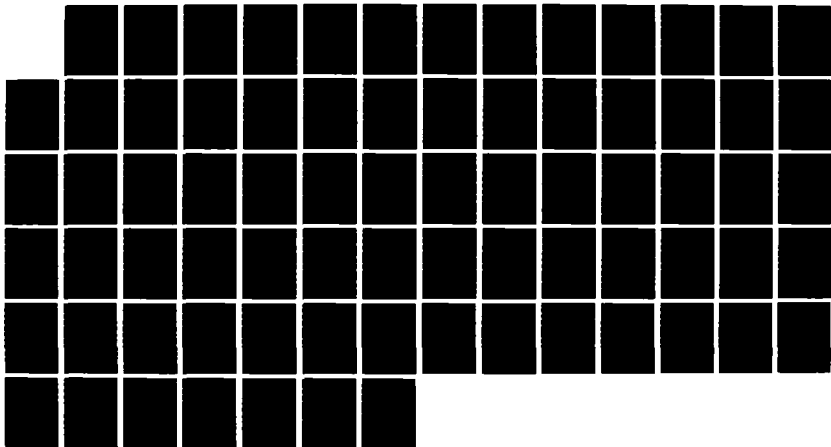
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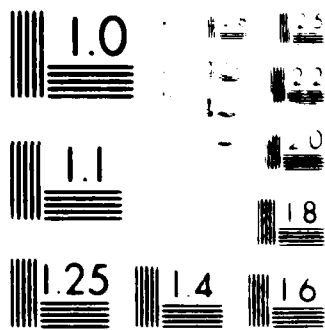
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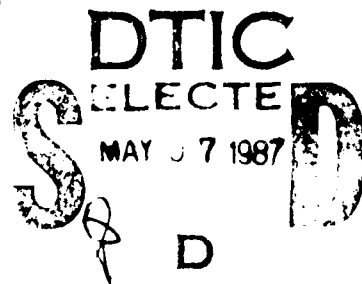
**NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THE ROLE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY**

**The US and European Security—Interests and Politics**

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**31 December 1983**

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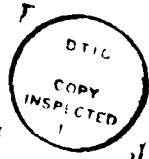
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### THE US AND EUROPEAN SECURITY: INTERESTS AND POLITICS

NATO has been beset with political difficulties ever since the treaty establishing the Alliance was signed and ratified in 1949. However, the current (1983) political disarray seems to most observers to be as serious as any in recent years, possibly since the Suez crisis. The problem is the shadow cast over the American security guarantee to NATO by the massive and sustained Soviet nuclear buildup of both intermediate and intercontinental forces.

When the NATO Treaty was signed, the United States possessed a monopoly of atomic weapons. The Soviets exploded an atomic device surprisingly early, only a few months after the ink dried on the NATO Treaty. Nevertheless, the United States did continue to possess overwhelming nuclear superiority into the 1950s. This fact, it is argued, lent substantial plausibility to the American assurance to respond to any Soviet attack upon NATO Europe with an atomic offensive against the Soviet Union, thereby deterring the attack from happening. Because the Soviet Union had little or no capability to attack the United States with nuclear weapons, the United States could implement this formidable promise with virtual impunity, thus making the guarantee entirely credible. Once the Soviets developed the capability to mount a devastating attack against the United States, many began to see their trust in American defense eroding. Would the United States sacrifice New York for Paris? As the Soviet Union passed from nuclear inferiority to the United States to parity, to maybe even more, this problem has only become more urgent. What is now the value of the American nuclear guarantee to NATO?

Although some Europeans worry that the United States would not defend them in case of Soviet attack, others have almost the opposite fear--that the United States will drag them into war, perhaps even nuclear war, over issues that have little to do with the vital interests of any of the countries in Western Europe. This fear is related to the current controversy over the deployment of American intermediate-range nuclear forces to Europe. Many Europeans wonder if the United States can be trusted to refrain from launching these weapons unless there is actually no alternative.

On this side of the Atlantic, foreign policy views are equally divided. The United States has a tradition of isolationism, especially noninvolvement in European political affairs, which worries those Europeans who fear that the United States would not come to their defense. After all, if the United States is basically isolationist, the vulnerability of American territory to Soviet nuclear attack is liable to reawaken the latent American desire to leave Europe alone to work out its own problems and fight its own wars. The United States also has a conflicting tradition of belligerence and messianism, also expressed in the nineteenth-century term for the ideology of American expansionism, "Manifest Destiny." The possible revival of this second tradition worries those in Europe who fear that the United States will involve them in a conflict. Will the United States, driven by domestic forces that have little to do with the true international situation, launch a nuclear war?

This paper explores some of the factors bearing on these issues, principally from the viewpoint of American history and politics. Our conclusions can be summarized as follows:

1. The recognition in the United States that American security was vitally affected by major changes in the European balance of power is not a development of the post-World War II world. In fact, the entire twentieth century has seen the realization by American national security planners that European security and American security are inextricably bound together. Therefore, the American vital interest in the security of Western Europe was not a short-lived development of the brief era of overwhelming American nuclear superiority, but remains a vital interest today.

2. Even during the halcyon days of "massive retaliation," the United States was not in fact immune to a severe Soviet atomic attack. What is more, this unsettling fact was known and discussed publicly. If the American guarantee was highly credible in those days, it must have been for other reasons than American invulnerability to Soviet nuclear attack.

3. Although American isolationism is an undeniable historical fact, the reasons for the political strength of isolationism before the second World War are not well understood by many commentators. Isolationism was largely an ethnic phenomenon, with Americans of German and Italian extraction strongly opposed to American participation in a war against the lands of their ancestors. The Cold War has seen an ethnic consensus of Americans opposed to Soviet expansionism, as the United States is now the protector of the security of the countries from whence came the forebears of today's Americans. For this and other reasons, including the awareness of American vulnerability to nuclear attack, isolationism is very unlikely to again exercise political influence.

4. There is some evidence supporting recent European concern about American judgment in international affairs, but this probably can be successfully countered by a more restrained American declaratory policy and better consultation within NATO. There are additional reasons for mistrust and disagreement between the US and NATO-Europe, some rooted in history and geography, that will continue to make managing the Alliance a difficult task, even with improved consultation and more rhetorical restraint.

5. Current arguments favoring American isolationism rest on the desire to reduce the chances of the United States becoming involved in a nuclear war on Europe's account, a curious mirror image of the fear that some Europeans have of being dragged into nuclear war by the United States. These arguments are deficient in both analysis and history, and we conclude that there is no realistic alternative to the preservation of peace through a strong link between the United States and NATO Europe.

We now turn to each of the above points in order. First, the American security interests in Western Europe can be traced back to the emergence of the United States as a major power in 1898. Theodore Roosevelt recognized the importance of the European balance of power for American security when in 1910 he told a German diplomat that, should England be unable to maintain the balance, "The United States would be obliged to step in at least temporarily, in order to reestablish the balance of power in Europe, never mind against which country or group of countries our efforts may have to be directed." Woodrow Wilson reluctantly led the United States into the first World War, and some historians have argued that considerations of maintaining American security by defeating the

German attempt to dominate Europe were important factors in his decision. Walter Lippmann, an adviser to Wilson and long the senior commentator on American political affairs, argued the balance-of-power explanation for Wilson's actions.

Early US war plans also showed a major concern with European affairs. Drawing up plans for a possible war between the United States and a coalition of Great Britain and Japan in the 1920s and 1930s, the military officers believed that defeating Britain first was the desirable strategy because of the importance of the Atlantic approaches to the United States. This foreshadowed the well-known "Atlantic first" strategy of World War II. In 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt created a sensation when he was quoted as placing the American security frontier on the Rhine. "If the Rhine frontiers are threatened the rest of the world is, too. Once they have fallen before Hitler, the German sphere of action will be unlimited."

After the lessons of World War II, the United States was ready for substantial involvement in European affairs to try to prevent the next war. A mass of testimony and debate at the time of the negotiation and ratification of the NATO Treaty supported the realization that, in the words of a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, "World stability and European stability are inseparable; free institutions and genuine independence can not perish in Europe and be secure in the rest of the world." American military and diplomatic documents of the time give further evidence of the primacy of Europe in the American view of the world. An American war plan from 1949 seemed to echo Franklin Roosevelt's words of a decade earlier in arguing that the United States and allied nations must persevere in "holding a line covering the western Europe complex

preferably no farther to the west than the Rhine." In 1961, a key National Security Council report under the direction of Dean Acheson attested to the indispensability of Western Europe to American security arising from the European countries' vital geographical position, substantial power, and also "The common civilization and broad purposes which they share with us." These illustrations of the continuity of the vital American security interest in Western Europe show that it both preceded and followed the brief period of American nuclear predominance.

Second, the era of overwhelming American nuclear superiority was not as overwhelming as it is often remembered. Studies available to the Joint Chiefs in the early and mid-1950s revealed that the Soviets were, or soon would be, able to rain enormous nuclear destruction upon the continental United States. For example, as early as February 1950, a JCS committee concluded that by 1955 the USSR would be capable of causing more than 10 million American casualties in an atomic attack, which would also reduce US military industrial capacity by up to 50 percent. Many other studies reached similar or even more disturbing conclusions. What is equally interesting is that these grim conclusions were publicly known in some detail. U.S. Civil Defense director Val Peterson was quoted again and again as warning of the devastating damage that a Soviet atomic attack at that time could do to the United States. For example, in 1956 he stated that, in the event of a thermonuclear attack on the United States, one-third of the population (56 million people) would be expected to be casualties.

Therefore, it was not possible in the 1950s for the United States to attack the Soviet Union with impunity, and this fact was available to the

public. Perhaps American vulnerability was minimized because it was not a pleasant subject to think about. Possibly the recent American fighting effort in World War II was fresh enough in the minds of Europeans to give credence to American promises to incur great costs in defending Europe, whereas that memory is now 40 years old. Whatever the explanation, the golden age of American pre-Sputnik invulnerability is largely a myth.

Third, in exploring the contours of American isolationism, we maintain that the United States has not really been as isolationist with regard to Europe as consistently before 1941 as many believe. Actual pre-World War II isolationism was supported by many factors that are less important today and likely to remain insignificant in the future. One was the belief, obviously rendered obsolete by technology, that the United States was physically safe unless it unnecessarily entered European quarrels. When Democratic Presidents Wilson and Roosevelt led the United States into two world wars, Republican opposition to these presidents gave political support to isolationism. The NATO commitment is now of such standing that several presidents of both parties have supported and enhanced this "entangling alliance," so that there is little organized political support for whatever isolationist tendencies remain. Isolationism is also related to low education and socioeconomic standing, both of which are becoming less prevalent in American society.

The major support for political isolationism in pre-1945 America was ethnic. In general, German-Americans and Italian-Americans opposed participation in European wars because of the countries the United States would be fighting, while Irish-Americans opposed participation because the principal American ally was England. As one student has written, "Far from

being indifferent to Europe's wars, the evidence argues that the isolationists actually were over-sensitive to them." To take one striking example, there were 20 counties in the United States where Roosevelt's percentage of the vote fell by over 35 percent between the 1936 and 1940 presidential elections. Nineteen of these 20 counties were predominantly German-speaking in background. On the other hand, Roosevelt did better in 1940 than in 1936 in areas of overwhelming British ancestry. An illustration of the ethnic basis for isolationist feelings in the first World War can be seen in the almost unanimous support given to the German sinking of the Lusitania by the German-language press in the United States.

With the Cold War, there has developed a virtual ethnic consensus favoring the general outlines of US foreign policy. The United States is now the protector of the security of Germany and Italy, and an Irish-American president is one of those who has helped to nurture the Anglo-American special relationship. For this reason alone, isolationism is not apt to disturb American relations with Europe, nor to pose a threat to NATO.

Additional evidence that isolationism is on the decline is suggested by the work of scholars who have compiled evidence showing the alternation of moods of introversion and extroversion in American foreign policy. These phases seem to have alternated in the American past as far back as the eighteenth century. A time of introversion seems to have begun about 1966 or 1967. And yet, even during this phase, which seems to have passed, there was little or no diminution in the American guarantee to NATO. This is even less apt to happen as the pendulum swings back toward an extroverted era.



Fourth, because extroverted America has had a way of shifting into belligerent America, there is historical and political basis for the disquiet felt by many Europeans regarding American leadership of the NATO Alliance. For example, in 1976 a majority of a national sample in the United States agreed with the rather bellicose proposition, "The United States should maintain its dominant position as the world's most powerful nation at all costs, even going to the very brink of war if necessary." In addition, there is much evidence that a firm response to an international crisis of almost any kind is good politics for an American president. Some Europeans wonder if underlying factors such as these, coupled with various recent events and pronouncements, mean that the United States is not to be trusted with great power. In Britain in 1982, only 4 (four) percent of a sampling had either "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of confidence in the ability of the United States to handle world problems. Reducing this and similar levels of distrust will not be easy or rapid, but some experts have suggested that less "loose talk" and more diplomatic conciliation would help the American image in Europe, and thereby help strengthen NATO and see the Alliance through this difficult period.

Some difficulties between the United States and NATO-Europe are grounded in history and geography, and so seem to be permanent stresses that the Alliance will have to face. Being on the same land mass with the Soviet Union, the European members of NATO must fear a conventional Soviet attack, while the United States is virtually immune to any but the nuclear Soviet threat to its home territory. This helps to explain why Europeans have always been less enthusiastic than Americans about "raising the nuclear threshold" and beefing up NATO's capability to fight a limited

conventional war on the European continent. Additionally, Europe but not the US has been the scene of large-scale conventional warfare in living memory. This is often pointed out as one additional reason why the US is less fearful than Europe about renewed conventional warfare. The US has global interests that are greater than those of any European country. From time to time the US will thus ask for NATO's support on matters that do not seem to concern Western Europe directly. The internal politics of the two areas also differ. Generally speaking, there is less resistance to defense spending in the US, which has a domestic consensus on maintaining military superpower status, than there is in most countries of NATO-Europe. For these and other reasons, some disagreement between America and her NATO partners is probably endemic, a situation to be managed and ameliorated, but not solved once and for all.

Fifth, some recent US critics of the American security guarantee to Western Europe are a curious mirror image of current European critics: These Americans believe that Europe might drag the United States into nuclear war for reasons having little to do with vital American interests. They argue that thermonuclear weapons have made the European balance of power irrelevant to vital American security interests. Part of the problem with this approach is that, in a world where thermonuclear devastation is the final option, ultimate power may be neutralized, which brings a renewed importance to pre-nuclear power considerations. Physical security is not the whole of national security, as the Acheson Report stated. Some of these arguments neglect the great instability that would be introduced into the world by a shattering of NATO, and instabilities are one important cause of war.

One interesting warning of the dangers to the United States from involvement with Europe is given by Earl Ravenal, who contends that a dangerous first-strike counterforce strategy is imposed on the United States by the necessity of defending its allies, especially NATO. If there were no commitment to NATO, counterforce could be discarded, and the threat of nuclear war involving the United States thereby reduced. There would be dangers, which Ravenal faces squarely: "I would risk the loss of Europe rather than the destruction of the United States." Thus, Ravenal denigrates the importance that European security has for American security and the instabilities that would be caused by ending American membership in NATO. Also he is factually incorrect in his argument that Alliance considerations are the major determinant of counterforce targeting, which can be shown by examining US war plans and related documents from the 1940s and 1950s. We find the arguments against the American-NATO mutual security community unconvincing.

## PREFACE

This report, New Technologies and the Role of Nuclear Weapons in National Security Strategy, presents the results of an assessment, under the direction of Albert Wohlstetter, Director of Research, Pan Heuristics, for the Defense Nuclear Agency of the implications of new technologies and alternative nuclear and nonnuclear responses to Soviet aggression to protect Western interests. The choice of alternatives will strongly affect DNA's future mission. Topics covered include an analysis of Soviet objectives, ambiguous signals and Western response in conflict contingencies; nuclear strategy, collateral damage and the credibility of Western response; new attack technologies and the roles of nuclear and nonnuclear capabilities.

A synopsis of Pan Heuristics analytical research under this contract, prepared under the supervision of Fred Hoffman, Director of Pan Heuristics, and Henry Rowen, consultant, has been previously submitted to the Defense Nuclear Agency. The present report is one of a series of topical papers that describe in detail the results of Pan Heuristics research, carried out under the direction of Albert Wohlstetter, Fred Hoffman, and Roberta Wohlstetter (Program Manager), and sponsored by the Defense Nuclear Agency under contract DNA 001-82-C-0006-P00001.

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New Technologies and the Role of Nuclear Weapons  
in National Security Strategy

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## SECTION 1

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

One of the issues contributing to the current (1983) political disarray in NATO is the generally accepted belief that the American strategic nuclear umbrella sheltering Western Europe against the threat of Soviet aggression has been neutralized by the rise of Soviet strategic nuclear power to "rough parity" with that of the United States. With American cities defenseless against Soviet thermonuclear weapons, why would the United States risk bringing a Soviet attack to American territory by cooperating with other NATO countries in defending against a Soviet attack on Europe?

In the 1950s, the United States was considered immune to Soviet attack, and the American pledge to use conventional and nuclear means for repelling a Soviet attack against Europe appeared credible. This credibility, many now believe, is lost in current analogous promises because of America's increasing vulnerability. It is argued that the Soviet Union will be able to accelerate this estrangement between the United States and the European members of NATO, especially as American latent isolationism is reactivated. As US danger of involvement in a war with the Soviet Union from European problems becomes clearer, the American people will heed the advice of their first President and avoid entangling alliances. The future of NATO is therefore threatened by increasing Soviet might that aggravates American isolationist tendencies.

This paper will attempt to place the American national interests in the security of Western Europe into a longer historical perspective than that of the time since the formation of NATO in 1949. The recognition by policymakers of the vital connection between European and American

security dates from the infancy of the American role as a world power following the Spanish-American War. Twice, it will be remembered, America suffered substantial battle casualties to defeat aggression in Europe. The recognition that European security was a vital American interest impelled American participation in NATO. The link between American and European security is strengthened, not broken, by increasing Soviet power and assertiveness.

Cool calculations of the "national interest" are not the only factors shaping the foreign policies of the United States or any other countries. The US relationship with Europe has been affected by many important aspects of American history and politics. The isolationist tradition, which repudiated American involvement in European political and military affairs, contended with the growing realization that European security and American security were closely linked. As late as the 1930s, the political strength of the isolationist tradition obstructed American participation in an antifascist coalition.

Another theme, less widely discussed than isolationism in the US approach to world politics, is American messianism--the belief that the United States has a special mission to bestow the blessings of liberty on the entire globe. Often, this argument shades into American belligerence--the belief that America has an obligation to lead other nations away from dangerous paths by whatever means necessary. Some observers have detected a periodic alternation of mood in American foreign relations, with messianism and isolationism succeeding each other at regular intervals. Both moods can be dangerous to America and the world, as well as harmful to the American relationship with other countries in NATO.



Several trends in American politics since 1945 have tended to increase the strength of the belligerent approach and correspondingly reduce that of isolationism. Much of the political strength of isolationism before World War II was based on ethnic considerations. German-Americans and Italian-Americans opposed US participation in the second World War because they identified with our opponents in their home countries, while Irish-Americans favored isolationism because of their long-standing controversy with our major ally England. Since 1945, an ethnic consensus has developed against Soviet expansionism from the threat the USSR poses to the independence of many Americans' countries of origin. Electoral politics has assisted the repudiation of isolationism in another way: US presidents have discovered that international crises, followed by strong presidential response, tend to boost presidential popularity.

None of this is to deny the importance of increased realism and responsibility for the conduct of American foreign policy since World War II. The changes in relative national power and weapons technology that have combined to make the United States a superpower with global responsibilities have rendered American diplomacy less vulnerable to the swings of the popular and political mood. No longer is the argument tenable that the United States cannot be harmed by foreign military power if it stays clear of entangling alliances with European powers. In an age of nuclear weapons, the United States does not go to war as quickly as it did against Spain in 1898. Still, the internal forces shaping America's response to the rest of the world cannot be dismissed entirely as factors in American foreign policy.

Theodore Roosevelt was the first US president to realize that the security of the United States was bound up with the evolution of the balance of power in Europe (and also in the Far East). In the words of one of the most careful students of his foreign policy,

Throughout his Presidency, Roosevelt thought in terms of the possibility of a war that might become a general world war if the world balance were not maintained. He was concerned about all the smaller rivalries between two powers that might start such a general war.... In his consciousness of the possibility of world war and of America's involvement in it, and hence of America's concern to help avoid it, he was unusual in an America that was for the most part innocent of the danger of war and certain that a war in Europe or Asia would not concern us if it did come.

Underlying Roosevelt's concern about the world was a conviction that his country's interests could be protected only if no power became powerful enough to threaten the rights of other powers.... Britain had always held aloof until the delicate balance of power was threatened and then had intervened. If Britain should ever prove inadequate to maintaining the balance, then, Roosevelt was convinced the United States, for the sake of her own interests would have to abandon her aloofness and interfere to restore the balance. (Ref. 3)

When France and Germany clashed over interests in Morocco in 1905 and war threatened, Roosevelt involved the United States for the first time as a mediator in a European crisis. The crisis was resolved peacefully, but in 1910 Roosevelt told a German diplomat that if German armies had overrun France, "We in America would not have kept quiet. I certainly would have found myself compelled to interfere" (Ref.18). He continued:

As long as England succeeds in keeping up the balance of power in Europe, not only on principle, but in reality, well and good; should she however for some reason or other fail in doing so, the United States would be obliged to step in at least temporarily, in order to reestablish the balance of power in Europe, never mind against which country or group of countries our efforts may have to be directed. In fact we ourselves are becoming, owing to our strength and geographical situation, more and more the balance of power of the whole globe (Ref. 16).

The agonies suffered by Woodrow Wilson in his long and unsuccessful struggle to keep the United States out of the first World War are a familiar chapter in American history. Still controversial among historians is whether Wilson finally asked Congress for a declaration of war because he feared for American security, or for more idealistic hopes, or out of complete exasperation with the Germans' broken promises and their methods of warfare. For example, Arthur S. Link, generally considered to be the leading authority on Wilson, wrote in 1957 that several factors were decisive in convincing Wilson "that the immediate circumstances left the United States with no choice but full-scale participation." According to Link, one such circumstance was

Wilson's apparent fear that the threat of a German victory imperiled the balance of power and all his hopes for the future reconstruction of the world community.... The Allies seemed about to lose the war and the Central Powers about to win it. This, almost certainly, was a governing factor in Wilson's willingness to think in terms of war. Germany, he told Colonel House, was a madman who must be curbed. A German victory meant a peace of domination and conquest; it meant the end of all of Wilson's dreams of helping to build a secure future (Ref. 28).

In 1963, however, in the preface to the second edition of the same book, Link wrote:

I think that it is very doubtful that Wilson, as I said on page 88, was influenced by the fear that the Central Powers were about to win the war on account of the submarine campaign. There is no evidence that anyone in Washington knew the desperate nature of the Allied situation, or that Wilson was importantly motivated by considerations of national security in his own decision for war (Ref. 29).

Political scientist Edward H. Buehrig believed that "the Administration saw in Germany a menace to national safety and, beyond that, a sinister threat to the universal aspirations of democracy." Early in 1917 Wilson had said that it might be better if the war ended in a compromise

peace, and not with the destruction of German power. According to Buehrig, "Wilson, in suggesting that stability be found in an equilibrium of forces, was actually giving voice to the balance of power point of view" (Ref. 12). If Wilson did not think explicitly in terms of national security, his Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, did. On the day after the United States entered the war, Lansing wrote:

The decision is made. It is war. It was the only possible decision consistent with honor and reason. Even if Germany had not so flagrantly violated our rights we were bound to go to the aid of the Allies. I have trembled lest the supreme necessity...would not be manifest to Congress. Some of our Senators and Representatives seem to be blind to the danger to civilization even now. They only see the infringement of our rights, and compared with the great issue they seem so little. Why can they not see that we must never allow the German Emperor to become master of Europe since he could then dominate the world and this country would be the next victim of his rapacity. Some day they will see it however (Ref. 13).

Walter Lippmann for many years argued that the United States entered the first World War for the protection of its national security:

Yet it is the fact that we intervened in 1917 in order to defend America by aiding the Allies to defend the Atlantic Ocean against an untrustworthy and powerful conqueror.... But when [British sea power] was challenged again in 1917 and 1941, Wilson and Roosevelt responded with the same fundamental prediction of American interest as had Hamilton and Jefferson before them. For the security of the Atlantic Ocean is and always has been the most fundamental American interest, and those who think this idea was invented by propagandists simply do not know American history (Ref. 30).

Strategist Robert E. Osgood explicitly disagreed with Lippmann, contending that

...on numerous occasions [Wilson] specifically disavowed the existence of any German threat to the national security.... Woodrow Wilson led the United States into war with the same altruistic passion that had pervaded his policy of neutrality (Ref. 42).

Whatever Wilson's true motivation was, the United States eventually was

compelled to intervene in the European war and thus did not permit expansionist Germany to dominate Europe. With advances in the technology of warfare, it would become increasingly obvious in later years that the defense of Western Europe was vital to the defense and security of the United States.

The development of early US war plans indicates the importance of Europe to American security and was a precursor to the Atlantic-First strategy that guided the American conduct of World War II. The era of American war plans began in 1903 with the establishment of the Joint Board, set up to coordinate Army and Navy affairs. The several war plans that were made became known by the code name of the country that the plan envisioned the United States would be fighting. The ORANGE plan covered war with Japan; other plans were RED for Great Britain, BLACK for Germany, and GREEN for Mexico. Each plan was to meet the contingency of the United States at war with that country specified in the plan. The plan that got the most attention from 1907 to 1939 was ORANGE, as Japanese and US interests clashed repeatedly over such issues as China, naval disarmament, and Japanese immigration to the United States.

The US planners realized that wars might not be that manageable, with one enemy at a time. What if two or more possible enemies joined in a coalition against the United States? Thus, a possible scenario--a war between the United States and a coalition of Great Britain and Japan--was covered by the RED-ORANGE plan. Although Great Britain and Japan had been bilateral allies until 1922, such a coalition was subsequently considered unlikely, and by 1935 planning for RED-ORANGE had been greatly deemphasized.

But the problems of resolving RED-ORANGE had been complicated. The key issue was defending the continental United States in a two-ocean war against the two greatest naval powers (except for the United States itself). The United States lacked the naval strength to conduct simultaneous offensive operations in both the Atlantic and Pacific. Therefore, planners decided that the United States had to go either on the defensive on both fronts or assume the offensive in one ocean while maintaining a defensive position in the other. In the words of Louis Morton, official historian on this subject,

The recommended solution to this problem--and it was only a recommended solution, for no joint war plan was ever adopted--was "to concentrate on obtaining a favorable decision" in the Atlantic and to stand on the defensive in the Pacific with minimum forces. This solution was based on the assumption that since the Atlantic enemy was the stronger and since the vital areas of the United States were located in the northeast, the main effort of the hostile coalition would be made there. For this reason, the initial effort of the United States, the planners argued, should be in the Atlantic (Ref. 35).

This conclusion foreshadowed the emphasis in the RAINBOW plans, drawn up between 1939 and 1941, for the much more likely contingency of the United States fighting a war against a coalition of Japan and Germany.

We will see below why, when a decision had to be made, defense of the Atlantic took first place among US strategic interests, thus illuminating further the importance of Europe to American security as it was understood even in the interwar period of American isolationism.

Theodore Roosevelt's cousin Franklin came to understand this situation when he undertook his kinsman's old job. FDR's maneuvering to keep Britain from being defeated by Germany before actual US entry into World War II is well known and still controversial. One of his most explicit

statements about American interests in the European balance of power was made in January 1939, in a conference with key senators:

Though the group meeting with the President on January 31 included staunch isolationists like Gerald Nye, Bennett Clark of Missouri, and Ernest Lundeen of Minnesota, Roosevelt took them into his confidence and spoke candidly of his fears. Hitler was intent on dominating Europe, he explained, and should he accomplish this, it would imperil the peace and safety of the United States. "That is why the safety of the Rhine frontier does necessarily interest us," Roosevelt said. "Do you mean that our frontier is on the Rhine?" one Senator asked. "No, not that," the President replied. "But practically speaking, if the Rhine frontiers are threatened the rest of the world is, too. Once they have fallen before Hitler, the German sphere of action will be unlimited" (Ref. 15).

The significance of the Rhine continued until after the second World War.

After World War II, which saw the United States sending a large army to fight in Europe for the second time in one generation, the interconnectedness of American and European security was accepted almost universally. A Senate Foreign Relations Committee report of February 25, 1948, on the Marshall Plan stated, "World stability and European stability are inseparable; free institutions and genuine independence can not perish in Europe and be secure in the rest of the world" (Ref.17). Walter Lippmann, in his famous series of articles criticizing the "globalism" of the Truman Doctrine and the "Mr. X" article, nevertheless insisted on the importance of Western Europe to American security:

The natural allies of the United States are the nations of the Atlantic community: that is to say, the nations of western Europe and of the Americas. The Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, which is an arm of the Atlantic Ocean, unite them in a common strategic, economic and cultural system. The chief components of the Atlantic community are the British Commonwealth of nations, the Latin states on both sides of the Atlantic, the Low Countries and Switzerland, Scandinavia and the United States.

By concentrating our efforts on a diplomatic war in the borderlands of the Soviet Union, we have neglected--because we do

not have unlimited power, resources, influence, and diplomatic brain power--the vital interests of our natural allies in western Europe, notably in reconstructing their economic life and in promoting a German settlement on which they can agree (Ref. 31).

George F. Kennan, who was of course Mr. X, actually held a view of the primacy of certain key regions that was not too different from that of Lippmann, his critic. Kennan believed that some parts of the world were much more vital to American security than others. The important areas were:

- A. The nations and territories of the Atlantic community, which include Canada, Greenland and Iceland, Scandinavia, the British Isles, western Europe, the Iberian Peninsula, Morocco and the west coast of Africa down to the bulge, and the countries of South America from the bulge north;
- B. The countries of the Mediterranean and the Middle East as far east as, and including, Iran; and
- C. Japan and the Philippines (Ref. 21).

Also in 1948, Kennan said that there were "only five centers of industrial and military power in the world which are important to us from the standpoint of national security." They were the United States, Great Britain, Germany and Central Europe, the Soviet Union, and Japan. Only in these areas did there exist "the requisite conditions of climate, of industrial strength, of population and of tradition which would enable people there to develop and launch the type of amphibious power which would have to be launched if our national security were seriously affected." One of these centers was in hostile hands, and it was in the interest of the United States to see that no other key area fell under unfriendly control (Ref. 22).

Kennan also recognized the importance of the survival of European democratic civilization to the existence of the kind of world in which American values, as well as physical security, could exist and prosper.



He wrote in 1947:

Further deterioration might be disastrous to Europe. It might well bring such hardship, such bewilderment, such desperate struggle for control over inadequate resources as to lead to widespread repudiation of the principles on which modern European civilization has been founded and for which, in the minds of many, two world wars have been fought. The principles of law, of justice, and of restraint in the exercise of political power, already widely impugned and attacked, might then be finally swept away--and with them the vital recognition that the integrity of society as a whole must rest on respect for the dignity of the individual citizen. The implications of such a loss would far surpass the common apprehensions over the possibility of "communist control." There is involved in the continuation of the present conditions in Europe nothing less than the possibility of a renunciation by Europeans of the values of individual responsibility and political restraint which has become traditional to their continent. This would undo the work of centuries and would cause such damage as could only be overcome by the effort of further centuries.

United States interests in the broadest sense could not fail to be profoundly affected by such a trend of events.

In the first place, the United States people have a very real economic interest in Europe. This stems from Europe's role in the past as a market and as a major source of supply for a variety of products and services.

But beyond this, the traditional concept of U.S. security has been predicated on the sort of Europe now in jeopardy. The broad pattern of our recent foreign policy, including the confidence we have placed in the United Nations, has assumed the continuation in Europe of a considerable number of free states subservient to no great power, and recognizing their heritage of civil liberties and personal responsibility and determined to maintain this heritage. If this premise were to be invalidated, there would have to be a basic revision of the whole concept of our international position--a revision which might logically demand of us material sacrifices and restraints far exceeding the maximum implications of a program of aid to European reconstruction. But in addition, the United States, in common with most of the rest of the world, would suffer a cultural and spiritual loss incalculable in its long-term effects (Ref. 14).

Diplomats from various countries, namely Belgium, Luxembourg, France, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, in

their conference in September 1948 heralded the road to NATO:

The War, by weakening the Western European countries and by creating a vacuum in Germany has increased the strength of the Soviet Union relative to the strength of Western Europe. This has resulted in a situation in which the security of this area is immediately threatened and that of North America is seriously affected (Ref. 68).

The importance of Europe to the United States was reiterated again and again in the Senate Hearings on the NATO Treaty. Averell Harriman, US Special Representative in Europe for the Economic Cooperation Administration (Marshall Plan), pointed out the economic importance of NATO to American security:

From our standpoint, I feel that our security can be immeasurably increased as time goes on and as the military forces of the western European countries are strengthened. I think we should look at the productive capacity of the signatories of the Atlantic Pact. For example, between us we have four times the coal and four times the steel production of the Soviet Union and its satellites, and a labor substantially greater. The productivity of our mutual labor force is vastly greater than that of the backward countries of the East, on a man-by-man basis. The western European participants alone have greater industrial productive capacity than the countries behind the iron curtain. It does not seem unreasonable to me to have confidence that in time an effective defensive force can be developed which would provide a real sense of security (Ref. 66).

In the same Hearings, General Omar Bradley, Army Chief of Staff, testified regarding the NATO Treaty's military advantages:

Finally, after studied appraisal of the future security provisions for our country, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are in unanimous agreement that our strategy, in case we are attacked, must rely on sufficient integrated forces of land, sea, and air power to carry the war back to the aggressor, ultimately subjugating the sources of his military and industrial power. Plans for the common defense of the existing free world must provide for the security of western Europe without abandoning these countries to the terrors of another enemy occupation. Only upon that premise can nations closest to the frontiers be expected to stake their fortunes with ours in the common defense....

Before the last World War we had friends in Europe who were capable of certain amounts of defense by themselves, and in addition to what we had here at home, and we had a pretty wide ocean in between. The last World War pretty much destroyed that line of defense, or line of security, which was ours through friendship, you might say, in Europe. In the meantime, the ocean in between has been narrowed because of progress and science, in aircraft particularly, so that we now find ourselves in an entirely different situation from what we had in World War II.

As I see it, this whole program of aid to Europe, our friends, is an attempt to secure our security by establishing more security than we have on this side of the ocean. And the more security we could get for ourselves or our friends on the other side, the better off we are here (Ref. 69).

Officials can be more candid in executive session than in open testimony. Closed hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, published many years later, shed further light on the importance American policymakers attach to the links between American security and Western Europe. In testifying in May 1948 regarding the Vandenberg Resolution, one of the steps leading to NATO, Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett testified:

The so-called Atlantic Community, or it is called in some of the papers in World War I as well as World War II--the Western approaches or the North Atlantic approaches. There is an intimacy of relationship that is, for example, far more close than the relationship in a defense sense between this country and Chile and this country and the Argentine. They are at our front door. In fact, they are on the roadway into this country, both naval and air (Ref. 58).

Secretary of State Dean Acheson, testifying in February 1949, spoke about the importance of what has come to be known as the "Northern Flank":

...there are other things that you have to consider in connection with these countries, the Scandinavian countries. That is the great help that they can be in the defense of the United States and Canada. Greenland is an absolute necessity for the defense of Canada and the United States. If Denmark would come into this arrangement, then problems relating to getting necessary facilities in Greenland to defend the United States are very much eased....

if Denmark comes in and if we have a strong position in Greenland, and if that leads to Iceland making facilities available in Iceland, and if Norway comes in and gives us facilities in the Faroe Islands, when that thing is so strengthened, that the deterrent effect would make up for any possible increased danger that they might find themselves in, and we point out that there will be no increasing their danger. They are just as exposed whether they are in as whether they are out, but they have more protection in than they have out (Ref. 59).

Two months later, Acheson put the problem very succinctly: "The keystone of this whole attempt to maintain the sort of peace that I am talking about and the security of the United States is with Europe. Europe is the keystone" (Ref. 60).

The Foreign Relations Committee, in its report to the Senate unani-  
mously recommending ratification of the NATO Treaty, stated its under-  
standing of the link between European and American security:

The security of the North Atlantic area is vital to the national security of the United States and of key importance to world peace and security. The peoples of the North Atlantic area are linked together not only by the interdependence of their security but by a common heritage and civilization and devotion to their free institutions, based upon the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. It is this common heritage and civilization and these free institutions which the signatories are determined to defend....

Article 5 is the heart of the treaty. In it the parties establish the principle that an armed attack against one or more of them is to be considered an attack against them all. In accepting this principle, the committee believes that the United States is acting on the basis of a realization brought about by its experience in two world wars that an armed attack in the North Atlantic area is in effect an attack on itself. The solemn acceptance of this principle by all the parties should have a powerful deterring effect on any would-be aggressor by making clear to him in advance that his attack would be met by the combined resistance of all nations in the North Atlantic Pact (Ref. 67).

In addition to the testimony of General Bradley, there was other evidence of military awareness of the importance of Atlantic defense. A JCS document of April 1947 attempted to rank countries as possible recipients of American aid in order of their importance to American national security. The first ten were Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Canada, Turkey, and Greece. Explaining the importance of the Atlantic community, the drafters explained:

In the case of an ideological war the most vulnerable side of our defense area will be in the Atlantic. Also, unless we can retain allies on the eastern side of the Atlantic strong enough, in the event of an ideological war, to hold the Soviets away from the eastern shores of the Atlantic, the shortest and most direct avenue of attack against our enemies will almost certainly be denied to us. Further, almost all potentially strong nations who can reasonably be expected to ally themselves with the United States in such a way are situated in western Europe. Moreover, two world wars in the past thirty years have demonstrated the interdependence of France, Great Britain and the United States in case of war with central or eastern European powers. In war these nations not only need one another but are in mortal peril if they do not combine their forces. In the past war it was demonstrated that France could not stand without Great Britain and that when France fell the British Isles were in mortal peril. If Britain had fallen, the Western Hemisphere would have been completely exposed, and the United States would have had to defend itself in the Atlantic before it could have thought of resisting the Japanese conquest of China, the East Indies, the Philippines and the Far Pacific. That the defense of the United States and Canada in North America and of Great Britain and France in western Europe is inseparable from the combined defense of them all is not a question of what men think now, but is something that has been demonstrated by what we have had to do, though tardily, and therefore at greater risk and cost, in actual warfare in the past.... The maintenance of [Britain and France] in a state of independence, friendly to the United States and with economies able to support the armed forces necessary for the continued maintenance of their independence, is still of first importance to the national security of the United States as well as to the security of the entire Western Hemisphere. This means that the entire area of western Europe is in first place as an area of strategic importance to the United States in the event of ideological warfare (Ref. 64).

Note that both General Bradley and the drafters of JCS 1769/1 spoke of the importance of holding Europe and fielding integrated forces to ensure the defeat of the Soviet enemy. Drafters of an actual war plan made the same point in 1949. War plan "Offtackle" had an "Over-All Strategic Concept" of "In collaboration with our Allies, to impose the war objectives of the United States upon the USSR by destroying the Soviet will and capability to resist, by conducting a strategic offensive in Western Eurasia, and a strategic defensive in the Far East." Important to this concept was holding Western Europe against attack. According to these military planners,

The security of the United States requires, with respect to continental Europe, the pursuance of a continuing policy to develop at the earliest possible moment, with the nations of western Europe, the capabilities of holding a line covering the western Europe complex preferably no farther to the west than the Rhine. The logical extension of this line involves the United Kingdom on the left flank and the Cairo-Suez area on the right flank. Realizing that the accomplishment of this purpose is infeasible with the forces which will be available in the period 1950-1951, this plan envisages as an alternative either (1) holding, if possible, of a substantial bridgehead in western Europe or, if this proves infeasible, (2) the earliest practicable return to western Europe in order to prevent the exploitation and communization of that area with long-term disastrous effects on the national interests of the United States and her allies (Ref. 26).

Note that these military writers of a detailed war plan seemed to agree with Franklin D. Roosevelt's belief of a decade earlier that the American defense frontier was on the Rhine.

These military opinions lead to a vital point--the importance of the Western European territory, even in an age of intercontinental missiles, in fighting and winning a war against the Soviet Union for rational national security objectives and not as a mindless competition in slaughtering civilians. The evidence provided by JCS 1844/46, comparable

to war plans of this period we have examined, includes a statement of US objectives in the event of war with the USSR taken directly from NSC 20/4, the 1948 official statement of American war objectives. Included in the NSC report were such goals as reducing the power and influence of the USSR so that it would no longer constitute a threat to world peace, eliminating Soviet control of satellite countries, and making sure that any successor regime lacked sufficient military power to wage aggressive war (Ref. 19.) To achieve victory in war, the Soviet Union must be defeated and at least partially occupied. A bridgehead in Europe is mandatory. Thus, as demonstrated above, to achieve a stalemate in war with the Soviet Union that does not jeopardize future American security, holding Western Europe as an allied area resistant to Soviet conquest is essential.

The importance of Western Europe was exemplified once again in 1950 with the outbreak of the Korean War. The US military budget was precipitately increased, but most of the funds were diverted to the security of Europe and not to the war in Korea. As Secretary Acheson had told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in May 1950:

We cannot scatter our shots equally all over the world. We just haven't got enough shots to do that....If anything happens in Western Europe the whole business goes to pieces, and therefore our principal effort must be on building up the defenses, building up the economic strength of Western Europe, and so far as Asia is concerned, treating that as a holding operation.... This is not satisfying to a great many people who would like us to take vigorous steps everywhere at the same time, but we just haven't got the power to do that (Ref. 23).

Although Gaddis criticizes the key document NSC 68 for its globalistic conceptualization of American national security interests, the implementation of NSC 68 was clearly carried out within a hierarchy of priorities, with Western Europe again the highest priority.

Often grouped with Kennan and Lippmann as a "realist" critic of American idealism and moralism in foreign affairs, Hans J. Morgenthau was also well aware of the economic, military, and political importance of Europe to American security:

In the first contingency, if there were no European conventional or nuclear counterweight to Soviet power, the geographic, material, and human resources of all of Europe would be at the service of the nuclear power of the Soviet Union. Three major consequences would follow. The Soviet Union would greatly increase, both quantitatively and qualitatively, its nuclear capability; the United States would lose bases from which to conduct nuclear war; and the United States would have to cover an increased number of targets. In sum, the relative position of the United States and the Soviet Union within the over-all strategic balance would be reversed; the relative advantage enjoyed by the United States today would accrue to the Soviet Union....

The American interest in the European balance of power transcends today the traditional concern with the preservation of the hegemony and security of the United States in the Western Hemisphere.... Even if a drastic change in the distribution of power in Europe in favor of the Soviet Union did not decisively affect the U.S. position in the Western Hemisphere, it could not help but drastically affect the position of the United States in the world....

Nobody can say what would happen to American civilization if it were suddenly cut off from its European source, the latter being destroyed by a blow that would also be a blow against the former. But one can and must say that America has a vital interest in the survival of Europe as a center of Western civilization (Ref. 37).

An important document, recently declassified in part, gives further evidence of the significance of Europe to American security--"A Review of North Atlantic Problems for the Future," better known as the Acheson Report, after the distinguished statesman who was its principal author. This document was prepared in March 1961 for the National Security Council (Ref. 47). The authors defined American interests very widely:



The purpose of American foreign policy...is to maintain an environment in which free societies can survive and flourish.... But the environment becomes inimical to freedom if the coercion of some societies by others makes wide inroads in the acceptance of consent [of the governed].

It is essential to this environment that it be spacious. It is essential, too, that within it there should exist the will and power to protect it against enemies, and the opportunity for all to develop and to pursue happiness as they see it, within the limits of their ability and willingness to work. We are trying to build a world system in which this will be possible.

The influence and power of the United States alone is not sufficient to maintain this spacious environment. The coalition of the peoples and nations of Western Europe and North America is indispensable to this end, because of:

- (a) Their geographical position.
- (b) Their power--the resultant of population, resources, technology, and will, equally indispensable to defense and development.
- (c) The common civilization and broad purposes which they share with us (Ref. 48).

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this statement is the relatively minor emphasis given to purely military considerations. Western Europe, the drafters of the report believed, is important to the United States not only, and not even primarily, for the military strength it can throw into the scales measuring the balance of power. The major importance lies elsewhere--in the political, cultural, and geographical support the nations of Western Europe provide to the American effort to "maintain an environment in which free societies can survive and flourish."

The theme of continuity in American policy toward European security has recently been noted by a British scholar. Studying American policy as it evolved between 1913 and 1963, Dr. David Reynolds concluded:

There is more continuity than we sometimes acknowledge and...the isolationist/interventionist polarity is often an imperfect classification for understanding the thinking of American leaders. Many of them span both camps. Indeed,

until mid-century even the interventionists were isolationists in the strict sense of the word, that of rejecting permanent US political and military commitments in Europe (Ref. 49).

An important point suggested by this summary of the high points of US concern with the security and defense of Western Europe in the 20th century is, as Reynolds suggested, the continuity of the American interest. It has survived and grown through two world wars, many smaller conflicts, and now a longer period of peace than any Europe has known in a century. The commitment has continued under Democratic and Republican presidents, and has been supported by Congresses controlled by both parties. In particular, it has not been dependent on any American capability to wreak mayhem upon an aggressor with impunity.

Often stated, but erroneous, is the belief that the credibility of the American guarantee to the security of NATO was very high before the Soviet Union developed a large inventory of ICBMs, because the Soviet Union could not substantially damage the United States until the ICBMs were in place. Even at a time when the credibility of the American guarantee to defend Western Europe was virtually unchallenged--even before the first Sputnik was launched in 1957--the Soviet Union possessed the capability of mounting a catastrophically destructive attack against the continental United States. This capability was known to both American military planners and to the general public. If the American guarantee was credible and reassuring in the 1950s, it must have been so for reasons other than the nonexistence of an American sanctuary from Soviet military power.

The top American military authorities realized in the mid-1950s that the Soviet Union was rapidly developing the power to cause very severe

damage in a nuclear attack against the continental United States. As early as February 1950, a committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded that the Soviet Union would be able to place 200 atomic bombs on target over the United States by January 1955. Such an attack would, it was predicted, cause total US casualties of more than 10 million people, reduce US military industrial capacity by 30 to 50 percent, decrease US capability for an atomic offensive ("possibly to a critical degree"), and delay indefinitely the industrial and military mobilization in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada (Ref. 25).

Later in 1950, an Air Force study presented estimates of the air offensive that the Soviet Union was predicted, as of July 1, 1952, to be capable of conducting against the United States. This was only one of several studies at the time that estimated that the USSR would have from 45 to 90 atomic bombs and means of delivery with its 1200 TU-4s. Assessment of the damage such a Soviet stockpile might inflict on the United States is given below:

As has been shown, the estimated Soviet stockpile in Mid-1952 is from 45 to 90 atomic bombs. Fifty bombs on target in the United States could produce nearly 2 million American casualties. They could destroy our governmental machinery in Washington and very seriously disrupt our entire communications complex. Such destruction would, of itself, seriously hamper our efforts to mobilize our armed forces and industry. Yet the foregoing is but a small percentage of the damage that could be inflicted by 50 bombs on target for, in addition, these bombs could destroy a large percentage of the industrial capacity required to put arms into the hands of U.S. Armed Forces after they are mobilized. If selectively placed, 50 bombs could simultaneously destroy 70% of U.S. industry designated in our mobilization plan to produce tanks, artillery and small arms. They could completely destroy our atomic energy industry, 30% of our special steel forgings industry and 85% of facilities to produce marine boilers. Sea communications will determine whether we can sustain allies overseas, and deploy and maintain our own forces overseas. A-bomb attacks on our major ports, the Navy's mothball fleet and major Navy yards could

conceivably deny us this ability. The foregoing are but a few examples of the simultaneous destruction 50 bombs on selected targets could cause (Ref. 65).

On the last day of the Truman Administration (January 19, 1953), the National Security Council completed a new comprehensive study, "Reexamination of United States Programs for National Security." Although planned as an update of the well-known NSC 68 of April 1950, this document, NSC 141, was not accepted by the incoming Eisenhower Administration and, hence, never became official national policy. Nonetheless, it included a detailed estimate of Soviet development of the capability to attack the United States. Estimating that by the end of 1954 the Soviet Union would be capable of placing a hundred 50-kiloton atomic bombs on critical US targets, the authors concluded that

Casualties resulting from such an attack might total 22,000,000 killed and injured in a daytime attack without warning. With an adequate warning system, a prepared civil defense organization and a program of moderate shelter protection, we might still anticipate 11,000,000 casualties, of whom 7,300,000 would survive the first twenty-four hours. Under these conditions it is estimated that half of the total casualties would eventually recover (Ref. 40).

The Eisenhower National Security Council developed its own study, completed and approved on October 30, 1953. NSC 162/1, "Basic National Security Policy," contained this grim assessment:

The capability of the USSR to attack the United States with atomic weapons has been continuously growing and will be materially enhanced by hydrogen weapons. The USSR has sufficient bombs and aircraft, using one-way missions, to inflict serious damage on the United States, especially by surprise attack. The USSR soon may have the capability of dealing a crippling blow to our industrial base and our continued ability to prosecute a war. Effective defense could reduce the likelihood and intensity of a hostile attack but not eliminate the chance of a crippling blow (Ref. 41).

We could cite other studies of the era but they would only confirm the information already given. Even if the United States was moderately overestimating Soviet capabilities at this time, the Soviet Union apparently possessed the strength to cause massive damage to the United States in either a first- or second-strike in the mid-1950s (Ref. 45). Yet this was the time of great confidence within NATO that the United States would use nuclear weapons to deter and, if necessary, to repel a Soviet attack on Western Europe. Was US vulnerability known only to top decision makers at this time? Was the guarantee credible because the public had no inkling of US vulnerability to Soviet atomic devastation? The answer is no. Public awareness of the Soviet capacity to attack the United States was widespread in the 1950s.

For example, in his book The Arms Race, the late Philip Noel-Baker presented a series of statements by Val Peterson, director of U.S. Civil Defense in the 1950s. These statements, compiled from the New York Times, illustrate the publicly available information on the levels of damage that could be inflicted on the United States at that time:

1953: Mr. Peterson refused to recommend a project costing \$15m. to use part of the New York subway as a shelter; he said that, in the event of an atomic attack in the canyons of New York, there would be from 75 to 100 feet of rubble piled up in the streets; "It may be that you would suffocate those people down in those proposed shelters simply by the rubble and debris that would be piled on top of them."

1954: Mr. Peterson said one study "showed that we could have 22,000,000 casualties, of which I think 7,000,000 would be dead."

1955: Mr. Peterson said "the studies would be aimed at developing plans for evacuating, feeding and sheltering 100 million persons living in ninety-two critical target areas."

1956: Mr. Peterson said that "if thermo-nuclear bombs ever fell on the United States no one in the world would be able to meet the situation. The casualties of last year's exercises were put

at 23 million. This year, one-third of the population (i.e., 56 million people) are expected to become casualties."

1957: Mr. Peterson proposed a shelter programme that would have cost nearly 12,000 million pounds--Britain's defense budget for eight years. And then he said:

"If the whole 170 million Americans had air-raid shelters, at least 50 percent of them would die in a surprise enemy attack. In the final analysis," he said, "there is no such thing as a nation being prepared for a thermo-nuclear war" (Ref. 1).

Thus, the credibility of the American guarantee in the 1950s did not depend on informed observers believing erroneously that the United States constituted a sanctuary from Soviet nuclear weapons. Although the United States probably possessed strategic nuclear superiority at that time, it would be of little consolation if up to half of the American population became immediate casualties in a Soviet attack. Part of the reason for the perceived security of NATO before Sputnik may have been the recognition that the United States understood the importance of Western Europe to American security. At that time, it was only a decade since the last time the United States had sent an expeditionary force to Europe in wartime. That memory has faded by 40 years now. Yet, as we have seen, the history of the US security interests in Western Europe extends over the entire 20th century. It was not a recent discovery during and after World War II, and certainly it was not dependent on the brief period of overwhelming nuclear superiority over any potential adversary enjoyed by the United States in the 1950s. If the United States needed Europe then, we need Europe no less now.

There is no question that isolationism is an important part of the American foreign policy tradition. Enshrined in the farewell address of George Washington, the desire to steer away from entanglement with

European wars has always been an important aspect of American political culture. But the United States has sent large armies to fight in Europe twice in this century, and since 1949 has been an integral member of NATO, the very model of an "entangling alliance." In what follows, we will explore some of the forces bearing on the importance of isolationism, and in so doing will show why isolationism is less important now and likely to be of decreasing significance in the future.

One observer has defined isolationism as "an attitude of opposition to binding commitments by the United States government that would create new, or expand existing, obligations to foreign nations" (Ref. 53).

Another writer has found eight components of the isolationist doctrine as developed in American history. They are:

1. Entangling alliances with none.
2. Non-intervention.
3. Non-interference and non-participation in European politics.
4. Avoidance of joint action.
5. No entangling commitments.
6. Non-limitation of "essential" rights of sovereignty.
7. Independence of any political "super-authority."
8. Insulation against entanglement (Ref. 70).

Essentially, American isolationism has meant both making no commitments that might limit America's freedom of action, and staying out of war unless American territory is directly attacked. One of the bitter lessons that Americans learned from two world wars was that joint action with other countries might be the best way of protecting American territory from direct attack.

If freedom of action and freedom from war represent the core of the isolationist concept, what factors account for the persisting support of this idea? Obviously important has been the undeniable fact that the United States is separated from Europe by the Atlantic Ocean. For a long

time the United States was in fact physically isolated from European affairs and from the attacking range of European military power. For a long time Americans tended to forget that one reason for our immunity from attack was the weight of the British Navy in the European and world balance of power. A second, and closely related, factor is the size of the American land mass, which further insulates many interior parts of the United States from even that contact with world affairs and commerce found in American coastal sections. Diplomatic historian Thomas A. Bailey has addressed this issue:

The logic of the American land mass has in many ways been a more potent creator of isolationists than the encircling oceans. Most Americans do not travel on the high seas, but they all travel to some extent in the United States, and the vastness of our expanse lends unreality to the faraway embroilments of Europe. Lord Bryce felt this keenly after scaling a mountain in one of our Eastern states. From such an eminence in Scotland he could have seen the North Sea on the east and the Atlantic on the west, but in America he could gaze only sixty miles west and then try to reckon how many equally wide stretches there were to the Mississippi, which is only a third of the way across the continent....

In the spring of 1940, the present writer left Washington, D.C., by automobile for California. Hitler had just launched his Blitzkrieg into the Netherlands, and the Washington bus riders were hunched anxiously over the headlines. But in the vastness of Utah, with the blue ramparts of the Rockies towering through the distant haze, with contented cattle grazing between far-flung farmhouses, it seemed incredible that the world was falling to pieces. The collapse of France was like something in a vaguely remembered dream. The United States seemed secure simply because it was so big and so wide (Ref. 2).

The region most closely associated with isolationism is the Middle West. Physical isolation has played a part in sustaining the noninterventionist tendencies in this region, but a larger role is that of ethnicity, which we will examine below.



Several other influences on isolationism should be mentioned. Many Americans came here to escape Europe's religious and secular wars, upheavals, and conscription, and passed these remembrances of their misery on to subsequent generations. As it happened, Democratic presidents were in office when each world war broke out, and Republican opponents of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt seized the opportunity to build support by mobilizing opposition to the interventionist policies of these two leaders. Concentration on domestic affairs seemed mandatory during the economically depressed 1930s, leaving little attention and few resources for participation in world affairs. Finally, the great disillusionment in the outcome of World War I led to a revival of fears of entanglement with Europe, and a national mood of "never again" that was only broken by the many aggressions of the Axis Powers in the late 1930s (Ref. 9).

Notwithstanding, isolationism would not have been as potent a force in American politics as it was from 1914 to 1945 without the important influence of the ethnic factor. Many German-Americans, Italian-Americans (in World War II), and Swedish-Americans (in World War I) tended to oppose US involvement in the world wars because of the identity of our expected opponents, while Irish-Americans protested American participation because of the identity of our principal ally England. In the words of Samuel Lubell, a pioneering student of the ethnic influence on 20th-century political isolationism, "By far the strongest common characteristic of the isolationist-voting counties is the residence there of ethnic groups with a pro-German or anti-British bias. Far from being indifferent to Europe's wars, the evidence argues that the isolationists actually were

over-sensitive to them" (Ref. 32).

Lubell's evidence is extremely impressive. From the 1936 election, in which foreign policy played a minor role, to the 1940 election, where one of the major issues was whether Roosevelt would lead the country into war with Britain against Germany, Roosevelt's percentage of the popular vote fell by 7 percent. In only 20 counties (out of approximately 3000 in the United States) did his loss from one election to the next exceed 35 percent, or five times the national average. Nineteen of these 20 counties are predominantly German-speaking in background. In 35 other counties, the Roosevelt percentage dropped between 25 and 34 percent from 1936 to 1940. In 31 of these 35, German was the first- or second-ranking nationality. This German predominance was also true in at least 83 of the 101 counties where Roosevelt's 1940 vote fell by between 20 and 24 percent (Ref. 33). Despite the national trend, however, there were a few areas where Roosevelt actually did better in 1940 than he had in 1936. These were districts overwhelmingly populated by Americans of British origins. To quote Lubell again:

In 1940, despite his loss in the country as a whole, Roosevelt increased his vote 7 percent in Maine, more than 3 percent in New Hampshire and Rhode Island, almost 2 percent in Vermont and Massachusetts. Boston's Brahmin stronghold of Beacon Hill gave Roosevelt 3 percent more of its vote than in 1936 (Ref. 34).

Indeed, diplomatic difficulties between the United States and Germany had played a part in American presidential elections as far back as the 1880s. In 1884, German-Americans in such key cities as New York, St. Louis, and Milwaukee voted strongly for Grover Cleveland. During Cleveland's first term, the United States and Germany suffered strained relations in administering a tripartite (Germany, US, UK) agreement to govern

the Pacific island of Samoa. These developments turned German-American voters away from Cleveland and contributed to his defeat in 1888 (Ref. 4). A similar pattern of German-American repudiation of interventionist leadership, when the intervention was directed against the country of their ancestors, can also be found in the 1916 and 1920 votes (Ref. 5). Opposition to Wilson's policies was strong in German-American areas even before the United States entered World War I. Two English-language newspapers, the Milwaukee Free Press and the St. Louis Times, actually defended the German sinking of the Lusitania. Both newspapers were located in areas with a large German-American population (Ref. 10). The German-language press in the United States was almost unanimously supportive of the German torpedoing of the Lusitania, blaming England for the loss of life (Ref. 71).

Other ethnic groups certainly were affected by the momentous upheavals of World War II, and this was reflected in American politics. Lubell summarizes the effects:

Contrast the drastically altered line-up in 1940. Some lingerings of pro-German and anti-British feeling showed up in Swedish and Irish sections. Many Italo-Americans resented Roosevelt's criticism of Mussolini's attack upon France. But in the main the German-Americans were left as the hard isolationist core.

Offsetting their influence was the strength Roosevelt drew from voters of Polish, Norwegian and Jewish extraction because of Hitler's anti-Semitism and his invasion of Poland and Norway. Roosevelt's 1940 vote held up so much better in the cities than in the rural areas partly because the "new" immigrants, drawn so heavily from the Central European countries which Hitler ravaged, were concentrated in the urban centers (Ref. 35).

In studying the 1940 vote, Louis Bean found an interesting pattern in New York City. Richmond County showed a 16-point Democratic loss compared with 1936, while Queens showed about the same results. Richmond was less

than 10 percent of German stock, while Queens had 17-percent German-American voters. The discrepancy, Bean discovered, was that Richmond contained many more Italian-Americans than Queens, and the overall ethnic character caused both areas to turn against Roosevelt for similar foreign policy reasons (Ref. 6).

For those readers who are statistically minded, correlation coefficients have been calculated for the relationship between ethnic groups and presidential voting in the era of World War II. These measurements (Pearsonian correlation coefficient) have shown a generally strong relationship between the size of German and Italian groups in various states and the shift away from Roosevelt in the election of 1940. Conversely, the negative correlations found for French-Canadian, Norwegian, Swedish, and English populations showed that these groups had reacted to European events by counteracting the national trend and supporting Roosevelt more strongly than they had in 1936 (Ref. 7).

The results of these data have not been lost on politicians. For a long time, politicians and other office seekers realized that isolationism was good politics in areas with a certain ethnic composition. Naturally, the center of gravity of American politics moved closer to isolationism and away from the type of involvement in European affairs that suited the most logical US security interest, that is, alliance with Great Britain and other democratic countries to prevent Europe from being dominated by an aggressive, antidemocratic power. In the opinion of one close student of the subject:

The persistence of chronic German- and Irish-American Anglophobia during the past eighty years has been an important internal factor in the making of American foreign policy. Its total effect has been to stall presidents and secretaries of state in their efforts

to implement what they perceived to be a harmony of English and American interests (Ref. 20).

The onset of the Cold War drastically changed the ethnic lineup behind American foreign policy. The United States, as a member of NATO, became allied with Italy and with most of Germany. Irish-American antipathy to US alignment with Britain faded, helped along by the continuation of the Anglo-American "special relationship" supported and deepened by an Irish-American president. There were now no significant voting blocs opposed to an activist foreign policy. Wrote one scholar:

The Cold War produced a consensus among the majority of hyphenated and non-hyphenated Americans. Leaders of both parties dedicated themselves to a policy of cooperation with and aid for all nations threatened by Communist expansion; isolationism was not going to be an issue weakening American unity. The trend toward bipartisanship in foreign policy which had begun even before the San Francisco Conference and culminated in the Vandenberg Resolution was not welcomed by all ethnic leaders. True bipartisanship would make bargaining with one or the other party difficult, if not impossible. More than that, it promised to take issues which affected the fate of East Central Europe and Asia, such as the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements, out of the political campaigns (Ref. 24).

Ethnic considerations have not been absent from American politics in recent decades, sometimes complicating American foreign policy in such areas as the Middle East and Latin America. American relations with Europe, however, seem to have been relatively free of pressures brought by the tensions of ethnic politics. This situation is likely to continue as long as the Soviet Union is the principal adversary and a threat to both the United States and Western Europe.

In addition to ethnic background, other attributes have been found by researchers to be related to isolationism, as measured by congressional voting. In probably the most comprehensive such study, political scientist Leroy N. Rieselbach found that political factors, especially

Republican opposition to initiatives of Democratic presidents, were an important determinant in explaining isolationist voting patterns. However, Republican isolationism declined rapidly in the 1940s and 1950s. Other important conclusions were that Eastern, "high-ethnic," high-education, urban, and high-socioeconomic status districts tended to support internationalist congressional representatives, while Southern, "low-ethnic," low-education, rural, and low-socioeconomic status constituencies sent more isolationist representatives (Ref. 54).

Some of the variables found by Rieselbach's analysis that correlated with isolationism are of declining importance. The general level of education in American society, as in other countries, has increased over the years, and there will be fewer people and fewer congressional districts with low education levels. One would thus assume that there will be less support for isolationism. Similarly, economic changes will reduce the political weight of rural and low socioeconomic constituencies, which should also reduce isolationism. Finally, as has been discussed above, whereas high ethnicity was related to isolationism before World War II, the Cold War and the "hyphenate consensus" have led to a significant decline in ethnically based isolationism. We could hypothesize that the increase in ethnic salience in recent years and the relatively high immigration levels of the past decade will result in a further reduction in isolationist sentiment.

Although isolationism seems to be on the decline from its great influence over American foreign policy in the 1930s, it is not always remembered that the United States was not strictly isolationist continuously before World War II. Observers have noted patterns of

alternating moods in American diplomacy. At times the United States has been comparatively withdrawn and isolated, while there have also been long periods of relatively high US activity and even belligerence in foreign affairs. These alternations of the American relationship to the great world outside were first quantified by Frank L. Klingberg more than 30 years ago. Klingberg's study of alternating periods of "extroversion" and "introversion" was based on both general diplomatic history and such statistical indicators as the percentage of annual presidential messages devoted to foreign policy, fractions of major party platforms devoted to "positive action" in foreign affairs, and annual naval appropriations. All his data supported a generational alternation of moods, summarized as follows:

Introvert and Extrovert Phases

Introvert Dates

1776-1798  
1824-1844  
1871-1891  
1919-1940

Extrovert Dates

1798-1824  
1844-1871  
1891-1919  
1940-

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SOURCE: Frank L. Klingberg, "The Historical Alternation of Moods in American Foreign Policy," World Politics, Vol. IV, No. 2, January 1952, pp. 239-273; table from p. 250.

In a later work, Klingberg found that the fourth extrovert phase had ended in 1966 or 1967, with the fifth introvert period beginning at that time (Ref. 27). Bruce Russett extended Klingberg's analysis to 1974, and found that the percentage of annual presidential messages devoted to foreign affairs continued to be a good indicator of the foreign policy mood (Ref. 56).

A somewhat different classification of trends in the American foreign policy mood has been compiled by diplomatic historian Dexter Perkins. Perkins' data are roughly comparable with Klingberg's. The major difference is that Perkins finds a cycle that includes a third mood, which he calls "postwar nationalism." His classification of the periods in the 20th century is as follows (Ref. 43):

1898-1909.	Postwar nationalism
1909-1915.	A period of relatively pacific feeling
1915-1919.	Rising bellicosity and war
1919-1927.	Postwar nationalism
1927-1937.	A period of relatively pacific feeling
1937-1945.	Rising bellicosity and war
Since 1945.	Postwar nationalism

It will be seen that Perkins' "periods of relatively pacific feeling" are roughly equivalent to Klingberg's "periods of introversion." Perkins was writing while the Cold War was still ongoing, but he surmised that "Any alteration in Russian policy today, in the direction of peace and conciliation, would be likely to be met by a similar reaction in the United States" (Ref. 44). Perkins, too, saw the end of an extrovert phase on the horizon in the 1960s.

There was indeed a period of relative introversion in US foreign policy in the 1970s, no doubt largely related to disillusionment with the American intervention in the Vietnam war. However, both the world and the United States have changed since the 1930s, and this period of relative quiescence in American foreign and military policy was hardly an example of isolationism as it was known before World War II. For this paper, the most relevant public attitude was that relating to American military defense of Western Europe. The opinions of the 1970s can be seen in better perspective if the trend is traced back to the early days of NATO, as given below:



Percentage Favoring Military Action in Case of Soviet Attack  
on American Allies in Europe\*

<u>1949-1955</u>				
<u>Oct. 49</u>	<u>Jan. 50</u>	<u>Apr. 54</u>	<u>Jan. 55</u>	<u>Nov. 55</u>
50	52	51	44	44
<u>1970-1974</u>				
	<u>Sept. 70</u>	<u>June 72</u>	<u>Dec. 74</u>	
	51	52	39	

SOURCE: Bruce Russett and Miroslav Nincic, "American Opinion on the Use of Military Force Abroad," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 91, No. 3, Fall 1976, p. 414.

\*The question was not worded the same in each case. The December 1974 question asked about US military involvement "if Western Europe were invaded," not specifying "invaded by the Communists," or "by Soviet Russia." This may partially account for the lower figure for 1974.

A different survey showed a roughly similar pattern during the early 1970s, with an increase in the percentage willing to use force by 1975:

The United States Should Come to the Defense of its Major  
European Allies with Military Force if Any of Them  
Are Attacked by Soviet Russia\*

<u>Opinion</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
Agree	52	48	48	56
Disagree	32	34	34	37
Don't know	16	18	18	17

SOURCE: William Watts and Lloyd A. Free, "Nationalism, Not Isolationism," Foreign Policy, No. 24, Fall 1976, p. 17; extraneous columns deleted.

\*Responses in percentages.

By the late 1970s, polling detected a further increase in support of the American military guarantee to NATO. A 1978 poll found 54 percent of a national sample, but fully 92 percent of a cross-section of foreign policy leaders, supporting the use of US troops if the Soviets invaded Western Europe (Ref. 50). Aside from this specific contingency, there was a definite shift in support for NATO as compared with the results of a previous survey four years earlier. Within the national sample, there was a 5-percent increase in the number who wanted to "increase the NATO commitment," an 8-percent increase in those who wanted to keep it the same, and a 4-percent drop in the number of those who wanted a reduction. Among the leaders, the shift in favor of NATO was even stronger. In 1974, only 5 percent had wanted to increase the commitment to NATO, but by 1978 this figure was 21 percent. Those who wished to reduce the commitment dropped from 29 percent in 1974 to 12 percent in 1978. The subgroup among the leaders most favorable to increasing the commitment to NATO were members of the Congress, with 38 percent in favor (Ref. 51).

The Chicago Council organization has recently conducted another survey. In late 1982, those in the national sample who favored using US troops if Soviet troops invaded Western Europe were no fewer than 65 percent, while 92 percent of the leaders again favored this action. The same survey showed that support for NATO was about the same as in 1978. The fraction of the leaders who wished to increase the commitment to NATO fell from 21 percent in 1978 to 7 percent in 1982. However, that does not necessarily indicate a reduction in enthusiasm for the Alliance, because 74 percent in 1982 wished to keep the commitment at its existing level, and there may have been a perceived increase in the actual level of the

American commitment to NATO between 1978 and 1982 (Ref. 52).

All things considered, a revival of isolationism does not seem to be a current danger for either the American people or for those who rely on the United States to guarantee their military security. A different problem seems to be worrying more and more people in Western Europe: whether or not American zeal, belligerence, or "trigger-happy" tendencies might not cause the very crisis and threat of war that the American guarantee to Western Europe is designed to prevent.

There is some basis for the unease felt by many Europeans. Leaving aside the sometimes controversial history of American military initiatives and foreign policy pronouncements since World War II ("from Greece to Grenada"), there are some tendencies in American domestic politics to encourage and reward the bellicosity that seems to alternate with introversion. Note the following public opinion finding:

The United States Should Maintain Its Dominant Position as the  
World's Most Powerful Nation at All Costs, Even Going to  
the Very Brink of War If Necessary\*

<u>Opinion</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1976</u>
Agree	56	50	39	42	52
Disagree	31	40	50	43	41
Don't know	13	10	11	15	7

SOURCE: Watts and Free, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

\*Responses in percentages.

One may indeed wonder how many citizens of countries allied to the United States would support being taken to the very brink of war to ensure the US position as the world's most powerful nation.

Another factor that may be somewhat disquieting is the relationship, demonstrated again and again, between "acting tough" abroad and the president's popularity at home. Simply put, it is good domestic politics for an American president to be confronted with a crisis in foreign affairs, and even better, at least in the short run, for him to respond with decisive and assertive action. This impressionistic observation has been statistically tested and found to be supported by the evidence (Ref. 38).

The unease felt by many Europeans can be documented fairly easily. A public opinion sampling in eight countries in the fall of 1982 asked "Which of the following things do you feel are most responsible for current international tensions?" Fractions in European countries ranging from 14 percent (France) to 39 percent (West Germany) thought that it was the US military buildup. (However, a greater number cited the Soviet military buildup as responsible in every country except Spain.) Percentages ranging from 14 to 30 in each country pointed to "U.S. aggressive policies toward U.S.S.R." as being very responsible for international tensions (Ref. 57).

Further, there is not much confidence in the ability of the United States to deal with important issues, and the trend in European opinion on this issue is not reassuring, as the following responses show:

In general how much confidence do you have in the ability of the US to handle world problems--a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?\*

<u>Survey Date</u>	<u>Great Britain</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>West Germany</u>	<u>Italy</u>
1972	65	41	57	58
1982	4	33	49	42

SOURCE: Bruce Russett and Donald R. Deluca, "Theater Nuclear Forces: Public Opinion in Western Europe," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 98, No. 2, Summer 1983, p. 184.

\*Percentages are the sum of "a great deal" and "a fair amount."

In Europe and in other areas, people are not too confident that American military strength will bring peace. For example:

Overall, do you think a strong American military presence around the world tends to increase the chance of peace or tends to increase the chance of war?\*

<u>Opinion</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>West Germany</u>	<u>Great Britain</u>	<u>Brazil</u>	<u>Mexico</u>
Increase the chance of peace	32	27	39	39	19	18
Increase the chance of war	46	52	25	43	62	74
Neither (volunteered)	7	17	13	7	6	3

SOURCE: "What the World Thinks of America," Newsweek, July 11, 1983, p. 47.

\*Responses in percentages.

Once again, our newly found German friends seem to have more confidence in us than our allies of longer standing.

Finally, a fair number of NATO citizens fear that the United States might be more likely than the Soviet Union to initiate a nuclear attack in Europe: In France, 11 percent believe the United States might do so, against 49 percent who feel the Soviet Union is more likely; in West Germany, 20 percent the United States, 45 percent the Soviet Union; in The Netherlands, 20 percent the United States, 31 percent the Soviet Union; and in Britain, as usual showing less confidence in her former colony, 28 percent the United States, 48 percent the Soviet Union. Even in the United States, 12 percent think the United States is more likely to initiate nuclear attack, and 65 percent the USSR (Ref. 39).

There does not seem to be any magic formula whereby the United States can quickly regain the level of trust it once knew in Western Europe. Both speaking and acting responsibly yet firmly would no doubt help. A recent conference of European and American leaders developed a consensus

that the U.S. must clarify very soon whether it is seeking to regain the nuclear superiority it enjoyed through the 1960s, as Washington's rhetoric occasionally suggests, or whether the U.S. is committed to the concept of parity with the Soviets.

There was also wide agreement that what [Former West German Chancellor Helmut] Schmidt called the U.S. Administration's "loose talk" and confrontational approach of Moscow should be curbed, if only to ease the anxieties of Europeans, who are already tempted by a widespread pacifist movement that sees the U.S. as at least as great a threat to peace as the Soviet Union (Ref. 61).

Some difficulties between the United States and NATO-Europe are grounded in history and geography, and so seem to be permanent stresses that the Alliance will have to face. Being on the same land mass with the Soviet Union, the European members of NATO must fear a conventional Soviet attack, while the United States is virtually immune to any but the nuclear Soviet threat to its home territory. This helps to explain why Europeans

have always been less enthusiastic than Americans about "raising the nuclear threshold" and beefing up NATO's capability to fight a limited conventional war on the European continent. Additionally, Europe but not the US has been the scene of large-scale conventional warfare in living memory. This is often pointed out as one additional reason why the US is less fearful than Europe about renewed conventional warfare. The US has global interests that are greater than those of any European country. From time to time the US will thus ask for NATO's support on matters that do not seem to concern Western Europe directly. The internal politics of the two areas also differ. Generally speaking, there is less resistance to defense spending in the US, which has a domestic consensus on maintaining military superpower status, than there is in most countries of NATO-Europe. For these and other reasons, some disagreement between America and her NATO partners is probably endemic, a situation to be managed and ameliorated, but not solved once and for all.

In spite of continuing problems, the United States appears to be staying on the road of commitment to NATO to protect its own security, without veering off to the ditches of brinkmanship on one side or isolationism on the other. This paper has considered the long history of the American interests in preventing the conquest of Europe by an aggressive power. Our purpose has been to show how the security of Western Europe is vital to the security of the United States, and how this link has been perceived for more than 75 years. We have also described and explained the rise and fall of political isolationism. Nevertheless, there remains an argument for American isolationism, in the sense of political disengagement from European security affairs. We will examine some of the

recent statements of this position in this final section.

Not surprisingly, current advocates of a modified isolationist position for the United States in relation to Europe base their argument on the momentous issue of avoiding nuclear war. Robert W. Tucker, writing in 1972, contended that the advent of nuclear weapons had made alliances unnecessary for national security:

Provided that America maintains the strategic forces necessary to deter attack, alliances cannot enhance a physical security that is no longer dependent on what transpires outside the North American continent. If anything, the reverse is now the case. Although the loss of allies, even the most important allies, would not significantly alter the prospects of an adversary surviving an attack upon the United States, the risks that might have to be run on behalf of allies could lead to a nuclear confrontation that would escape the control of the great protagonists....

A Soviet Union wholly in control of Western Europe would still not be a Soviet Union posing a markedly greater threat to America's physical security than the Soviet Union of today. However undesirable the other consequences of so extreme, and improbable, a situation, its consequences for security would not be comparable today with what they would have been a generation ago when security was calculated primarily in terms of geographic position, manpower, industrial concentration, etc.--that is, in terms of conventional balance-of-power calculations (Ref. 62).

Tucker goes on to criticize George Ball, George Kennan, Hans Morgenthau, and Walter Lippmann for holding the opposite view, namely, that the European balance of power is a vital interest of US security and that the Soviet Union cannot be permitted to conquer Western Europe if the United States is to be physically safe in the world.

Tucker's argument is open to two serious criticisms. First, as he is aware, simple physical security is not all of national security. Tucker writes:

Neither US intervention in World War II nor the subsequent pursuit of containment was undertaken solely for reasons of



physical security, however. On both occasions, US policy expressed both a conventional security interest and a broader interest in which America's security and well-being were equated generally with an international environment receptive to the nation's institutions and interests. This receptive world evidently presupposed a world in which America would be the preponderant power, able to impose, if necessary, its vision of order and stability on those who might seek to challenge that vision (Ref. 63).

The Acheson Report, as described above (see pp. 20-21), recognized this larger dimension of security as an important goal of US foreign policy: "The purpose of American foreign policy...is to maintain an environment in which free societies can survive and flourish...."

Second, it is not as clear, as Tucker seems to believe, that Western Europe has nothing to add to the physical security of the United States. The Acheson Report held that Western Europe was essential to the United States for three reasons. One was "common civilization and broad purposes which they share with us," but the other two contributed to physical security--their geographical position and their power. Beyond this, in an era when the use of strategic nuclear weapons seems to be more and more unlikely, traditional balance-of-power and military considerations become more prominent again. The population and economic strength of Western Europe once again assume the importance that Tucker concedes they had in the 1930s and 1940s but believes they had lost in an era of strategic thermonuclear capabilities.

Another recent criticism of the assumption that Western Europe is essential to American security and defense comes from two prominent Americans--Laurence W. Beilenson, a lawyer, historian, and friend of President Reagan, and Samuel T. Cohen, a nuclear scientist and "father of the neutron bomb." The following quotations summarize their argument:

We have spoken of the likelihood that any war pitting this country against the Soviet Union will become nuclear, probably from the outset, with a massive Soviet strike against our military forces--particularly our nuclear bombers and missiles--within the United States. This could come about because of our proclaimed commitments to our European allies....

We have been told how lucky we are that our allies contribute as much as they do, especially in manpower, but the congratulations miss the point: Who is defending whom? We are in no danger of invasion; they are, by reason of their geographical proximity to the Soviet Union. Our allies have grown rich, partly on their own merits, but in no small measure on the backs of the American taxpayer. In all fairness, the Europeans, and especially the Germans, should pay not only as much as but much more, per capita, than we do....

Granted, to embark on a program of providing nuclear weapons to European nations, especially Germany, would blow sky-high all currently accepted notions of arms control. But whatever the dangers of such drastic change, they are far smaller than the danger we face by having our troops in Europe and maintaining our pledges of nuclear retaliation against Soviet attack in that theater. To remain so entangled is to invite a Soviet nuclear strike against the United States in any war that starts in Europe--to risk our national survival. We can survive without the Western alliance, even if the Europeans elect to accommodate to the Soviet Union rather than provide for their own defense. But nuclear war can kill us (Ref. 8).

Several comments are in order. Providing nuclear weapons to other countries would indeed "blow sky-high" much of the accepted wisdom on how to reduce the risk of war. Analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, but it would seem that such a risk should be run only if the argument for doing so is compelling. Beilenson and Cohen have fallen short of this standard by several of their contentions. They are convinced that Western Europe is not essential to US security; we have seen how doubtful this opinion is in the light of previous history and analysis. Furthermore, they believe that security and stability can be the outcome of one of the greatest imaginable instabilities in world politics--Soviet dominance over the entire European continent. The consequences of such an eventuality are as incalculable and potentially catastrophic for world peace as

Beilenson and Cohen find them unimportant and irrelevant to American security. It is from just such a sudden change in international relations that nuclear war might become more probable than it has ever been.

A third argument to avoid nuclear war by severing the security connection between the United States and NATO Europe is made by Earl C. Ravenal. He argues that a first-strike, counterforce strategic posture is destabilizing because it pushes the other side, in this case the USSR, toward a preemptive strike. The United States needs to adopt a counterforce strategy only for the extended deterrence of allies, especially NATO. If the United States were not committed to the nuclear defense of NATO, counterforce would not be a reasonable goal and could be abandoned, thereby reducing the threat of nuclear war from either crisis instability or the escalation of a conventional conflict in Europe. Ravenal states:

Instead of the paradigm of deterrence and alliance, an alternative nuclear position would support and implement a policy of non-intervention, consisting of war-avoidance and self-reliance. Our security would depend on staying out of regional quarrels and, in the strategic nuclear dimension, on what I call "finite essential deterrence." This strategy implies delegating defensive tasks to our regional allies, and accepting the results, win or lose. Over time, the policy would lead to the dissolution of commitments that obligate us to military intervention abroad--and to possible resort to our strategic nuclear weapons.

My proposal would not require the use or threat of nuclear weapons or expose the United States to the danger of nuclear destruction. The difference between it and others that have been made is that I accept the consequence: progressive disengagement from our defensive guarantee of Europe over, say, a decade. In short, I would risk the loss of Europe rather than the destruction of the United States (Ref. 46).

Like the other authors discussed above, Ravenal seems to understate both the importance of the security of Western Europe to that of the United States and the instabilities and increased risk of war, including

nuclear war, that would result from the upheaval in world politics with the end of American membership in NATO. And specifically, Ravenal is factually incorrect about the necessary relationship between counterforce and the deterrence of threats against American allies. Logically, the relationship is not all that close. In case of war, it would make sense for the United States to try to destroy Soviet means of attacking our country, that is, follow a counterforce strategy--whether or not we had any allies at all.

Evidence is now available that the United States has contemplated counterforce strikes in the event of war without consideration of alliance requirements. One example is war plan DROPSHOT drawn up in 1948--before there was a NATO--by the Joint Chiefs for planning in the event of war between the United States and the USSR in 1957. The planners decided that "Soviet capabilities which pose serious initial threats to the Allied war effort include attacks with weapons of mass destruction on the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom." They stated:

Protection of Allied war potential against the Soviet air-offensive threat will require an immediate Allied offensive effort to destroy or neutralize the bases and facilities from which the Soviet air-offensive with weapons of mass destruction would be launched. This task should be given first priority, providing sufficiently accurate intelligence is available to enable our immediate attack and destruction of these targets (Ref. 11).

A second example is from a 1955 briefing of a Weapons Systems Evaluation Group report on current US plans for atomic offensives against the Soviet Union in the event of war. This report, WSEG 12, was entitled "Evaluation of an Atomic Offensive in Support of the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan." Although not an actual war plan, it provides insight into the US war plans of the era. Objective A of the plan, neutralization of Soviet capabilities

to conduct atomic operations, was to be accomplished by an initial attack with 25 weapons against Soviet atomic energy industry plants, and against some 645 Soviet Bloc airfields. According to the briefer,

In general, the destruction of Soviet aircraft and air fields has an important degrading effect on Soviet atomic capabilities, but even under the improbable assumption that only 5 per cent of the aircraft survived, seventy-five weapons could be lifted against the U.S., and 85 per cent of the remainder of the stockpile could be lifted against U.S. overseas bases and Allies in a single strike as soon as a few bases are recuperated....

We were asked to analyze the importance of timing in the accomplishment of each of the objectives. With respect to neutralization the Soviets can, in a single strike against the United States, launch more than sufficient one-way sorties to lift all of their atomic weapons. Thus, if the Soviets launch such a strike before our offensive is begun, or before our bombs fall on targets, the U.S. offensive may not materially reduce the Soviet atomic capabilities. Therefore, the factor of timing is of vital importance (Ref. 55).

Evidently the link between extended deterrence and counterforce is not as strong as Ravenal believes. Therefore, the dangers of counterforce, whatever they may be, are not a reason for reducing the American guarantee to NATO.

The lessons that the United States was bitterly taught by the two world wars are still vital and inescapable. Twice the United States stood aside at the beginning while war raged in Europe between aggressive and defensive coalitions; twice the United States found that the logic of power and circumstances made neutrality unworkable and undesirable, despite the fearful costs of intervention. Arguments and events of recent decades have not undermined the importance of the security link between Western Europe and the United States, nor driven the American people back to isolationism, which is a source of concern even though it is unlikely to regain its strength in a shrinking, nuclear world.

SECTION 2

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