AD NUMBER

ADB006297

LIMITATION CHANGES

TO:

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

FROM:

Distribution authorized to U.S. Gov't. agencies only; Proprietary Information; 03 SEP 1975. Other requests shall be referred to Army War College,Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013.

AUTHORITY

USAWC ltr, 19 Jan 1976

US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA. 17013

3 SEPTEMBER 1975

AD

ACN 75031

SOME EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE US WORLD POSITION AFTER VIETNAM

STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE

MILITARY ISSUES RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

SOME EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE US WORLD POSITION AFTER VIETNAM

by

Harold C. Deutsch

3 September 1975

DISCLAIMER

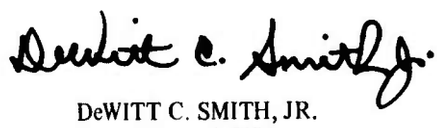
The findings in this memorandum are not to be construed as an official Department of the Army position unless so designated by other authorized documents.

FOREWORD

The Military Issues Research Memoranda program of the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, provides a means for timely dissemination of papers intended to stimulate thinking while not being constrained by considerations of format. These memoranda are prepared on subjects of current importance by individuals in areas related to their professional work or interests, or as adjuncts to studies and analyses assigned to the Institute.

This memorandum analyzes the impact of recent events in Southeast Asia on European perceptions of the United States. The paper is based on observations made while the author attended a conference in Belgium concerning attitudes of European elites toward the Atlantic Alliance, on embassy reports, and on conversations in London, Bonn, Brussels, and SHAPE. Among the subjects considered are presumed effects on US power and prestige; the American national poise; the Alliance and the role of Europe; confidence in the United States as an ally; Soviet attitudes and posture; the Middle East situation; and nuclear proliferation.

It was prepared by the Institute as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such it does not reflect the official view of the Department of the Army or Department of Defense.



DeWITT C. SMITH, JR.
Major General, USA
Commandant

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. HAROLD C. DEUTSCH joined the Strategic Studies Institute in 1974. During the two years previously, he was Director of European Studies at the National War College. Dr. Deutsch was on the faculty of the University of Minnesota as a professor of history, and served as department chairman from 1960 to 1966. During World War II he was chief of the Political Subdivision for Europe, Africa, and the Middle East of the Office of Strategic Services and then headed the Research and Analysis Branch of the OSS mission in Germany. His chief area of interest lies in the history of World War II and the period since, and his publications are largely in this field, though also dealing with the Napoleonic period. His most recent book (1974) deals with *Hitler and His Generals: The Hidden Crisis of January-June 1938.*

NOTE

The following analysis is based on information and impressions gained during nine days in Europe in June 1975. The specific occasion for the trip was to attend a conference held June 6-7 in Bruges, Belgium, dealing with attitudes of European elites toward the Atlantic Alliance. Fortunate coincidence permitted arrival in Europe a few days after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit meeting of May 29-30. This made the gauging of European reactions possible after the first shock effects of the cataclysmic ending in Vietnam had faded sufficiently to allow a measure of perspective.

Besides the papers and discussions of the Bruges conference, a one-day visit to London and two days each in Bonn, Brussels, and Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) provided additional insights. Except in London, where the principal conversations were with members of the International Institute of Strategic Studies and the Royal United Services Institute, efforts were concentrated on soliciting impressions of American military and diplomatic representatives on European response to the precipitate decline of US fortunes in Southeast Asia (SEA). Embassy reports on this topic were similarly scrutinized. However, only nonofficial sources were cited.

SOME EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE US WORLD POSITION AFTER VIETNAM

When Lyndon B. Johnson declined to run again for the presidency in 1968, it portended one of the major shifts in US policy during the twentieth century. In effect, it was recognition that the national will was no longer prepared to pursue, to the fullest extent, those aims which had dictated the political and military commitment in Southeast Asia (SEA). From this point, the basic issue for the United States was reduced to the course and terms by which to seek the liquidation of its obligations in the Vietnamese sector. In both Europe and the United States, opinions of course varied on whether, given such drastic limitation on the further allocation of resources to the affairs of SEA, Washington could now escape serious impairment of the American position as a Pacific and world power. It was commonly reckoned on both sides of the Atlantic that, if this should prove manageable, liberation from this absorbing concern would assure the restoration of Atlantic relationships to their former unchallenged primacy among US interests. Secretary Kissinger's proclamation of the "Year of Europe," in close conjunction with the conclusion of the Paris agreements with the North Vietnamese, was not only symbolic of this restoration but also implied a search for specific programs to rebuild Atlantic fences generally.

Except for those who may have had some share in the making of the Paris agreements, it is now difficult to locate observers of the world scene who will confess to having placed much faith in their durable quality. Few had much confidence in the vitality of the Saigon regime and there was little argument about the superior dynamic of Hanoi. A poll conducted among better-informed circles would almost certainly have resulted in a large majority which envisioned erosion of the will to resist in the South, climaxing, perhaps after a series of transitional phases, with domination by the North. Even now, few will claim to have foreseen anything approaching the sudden collapse in the spring of 1975. When this did happen, it was bound to have some percussive effect on an Alliance whose cohesion had already suffered from the disruptive influence of the October 1973 War and the disputes arising out of the world energy crisis.

The shock effect of the termination of the American role in Vietnam led to wide-ranging debate on how to assess the consequences in terms of US power, national poise, and international posture. Most specifically, interest centers on any changed outlook for American commitments elsewhere than in SEA, notably, of course, in Western Europe. The purpose of this paper is to reflect European perceptions on these matters insofar as it was possible to identify them within the limits of the survey.

US PRESTIGE, POWER, AND WORLD ROLE

Reactions on these basic topics are probably as mixed as on any topics concerning ways in which the turn of events in SEA may have impacted on world affairs. They follow two years of speculation on how winding down the American commitment in Vietnam, in a manner that involved some elements of defeat, would affect the global scene. Failure to achieve stated purposes and accepting what militarily was at best a draw made a certain loss of face unavoidable. The United States was further judged to have lost its standing as a power with a claimed capacity to employ force effectively, wherever in the world its interests appeared engaged.

To balance such negative prognostications, it was widely argued that, largely through the diplomatic magic of Secretary Kissinger, Washington had come out somewhat better in the end than had been thought likely a year or two earlier. There was also much agreement that, when accounts were tallied, it would be found that the United

States had rid itself of a costly incubus that had handicapped it in acting purposefully in areas of more vital interest such as Europe and the Middle East. Finally, it was maintained that the substance of American power had remained unimpaired, that the failure in Vietnam had been one of will, and that the "Year of Europe" which had been preempted by the Arabs in 1973, might now lie just ahead. In short, the US retreat in SEA now was seen less as a sign of weakness than as a casting out of illusions.

Up to this point, of course, no one had reckoned with so calamitous an ending. When the lightning did strike in such unheralded fashion, it produced a shock in many European quarters that was perhaps most profound where the more favorable interpretations of the results of the Vietnamese experience had prevailed. Thus Christoph Bertram, Director of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, who had adhered to this view of affairs, was now quoted to believe that so catastrophic a culmination of the American presence forced one to view matters in a more serious light. For a time European press comment found it difficult to regain perspective. A disturbing proportion reflected the gloom of the *Daily Telegraph* (London) of April 30: "America has received a fearful jab from which it will take years to recover." Developments were characterized as "Communism's greatest victory and the free world's biggest defeat."[1]

Such overly dark forebodings did not survive the shock which had brought them on for long. The following month witnessed many signs of recovering balance, climaxing in the positive response to President Ford's appearance at the NATO summit at the end of May. Though Europe is less confident than before the sharp negative turn of affairs, the mood of the earlier period seems to have been largely regained. Perhaps partly caused by a craving for reassurance, the very rush of the American exit is now seen to have some positive aspects.

As the eventual liquidation of the American foothold in Vietnam appeared to have been in the cards since 1968, it is considered a gain that it came early in 1975 rather than one to three years later. The form of departure was unquestionably more costly in prestige, but a more extended process would have signified a heavier drain on American resources and, in effect, would have meant throwing more good money after bad. From an economic standpoint, at least, the United States is thus judged to be somewhat ahead of the game.

Another way in which the ill winds are calculated to have blown some good is an assumed greater American reluctance to get entangled

in the affairs of other distant areas of borderline importance. The policeman, for those addicted to the use of that misleading term, is described as less inclined to use his club or actually disposed to throwing it away. Even those who believe that the United States will now be inclined to hold onto existing positions more grimly, to demonstrate its spirit of determination, are convinced that Washington will not easily permit itself to become involved in noncompelling situations elsewhere. All this is considered a plus in terms of fuller concentration on US (and thus general Western) interests in Europe.

Inevitably all US moves and pronouncements are observed closely for signs of advance, retreat, or maintenance of established positions. Naturally the focus centers on Europe, the Middle East, and relations with the USSR, although it is recognized that what happens in the Pacific may prove the clearest indicator of US dispositions. Attention, therefore, is not denied to teetering dominoes in SEA or reappraisal, whether agonizing or otherwise, in the Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, or South Korea. Any inclination of powers, great or small, to bait the American eagle or to test his resolution is anxiously watched and American reactions noted. As will be developed later, the Mayaguez affair is, on the whole, recorded as a plus in this regard.

During the months ahead, and assuming that unanticipated developments somewhere on the globe do not claim the lion's share of attention, our European allies, in estimating the consequences of the Vietnam collapse, may be expected to be most fully preoccupied with two aspects of US foreign policy. On the one hand, they will look closely at everything which throws light on American concerns about Atlantic affairs. On the other, they will watch American efforts to repair the damages of the SEA debacle and especially whether this nation and its leaders can pull together in restructuring a coherent world-embracing policy. In the one case as in the other, we may count on repeated European estimates of the effect of the national trauma on the ability of the executive, the Congress, and the public at large to unite in a rejuvenated bipartisan foreign policy.

THE US NATIONAL POISE AND POSTURE

Perhaps the principal initial worry of Western European friends of the United States was that the blow in SEA might upset the nation's poise and cause a descent into isolationism. It could be taken for granted that the shock effect would cause a much more emphatic

emotional response than a mere fading out of the American role in that part of the world would have done. There was every reason to fear an even wider split than the then prevailing one between the executive and legislative branches of government over the conduct of foreign relations; in that event either paralysis or a measure of chaos seemed distinct possibilities. More specifically, there was speculation about how seriously these events, joined with the apparent failure of the step-by-step approach to dealing with the problems of the Middle East, would undermine the supposedly shaky position of Secretary Kissinger. It is often maintained that Dr. Kissinger's prestige in Europe has been less impaired than it is presumed to be in the United States. Many Europeans feel that in Washington one expects too much of a man who, once he had gained a reputation for diplomatic wizardry, was called upon to turn out new wonders in assembly-line fashion. Genuine anxiety about the Secretary's fate has not yet been completely allayed. The fears of many Europeans about his possible departure from office were accentuated by their uncertainties concerning the position and capacities of President Ford, particularly in the direction of foreign policy.

Such solicitudes gradually diminished during the course of May. An American repute for elasticity of spirit once more seemed to find vindication. Even prior to the Mayaguez affair, it was becoming evident that the shock effect of events in SEA on the national mood was bearing fruit opposite to that which had been feared. Not only was the switch in public sentiment reflected in the reactions of the Congress—the members of Congress themselves seemed to be swept by similar impulses. Perhaps to their own surprise, even some of the sharper critics of the administration's foreign policy were unable to remain immune.

The explanations advanced in Europe for the change in the national mood, though varied, are not really contradictory. Whether judged to have guilt feelings or merely anxiety to inhibit recriminations, Congress' members are presumed eager to avoid charges of promoting a wholesale demolition of US world positions. The closing of the Vietnam spigot, through which the nation's wealth had been draining away at a disturbing rate, is believed to have made many Congressmen less set on reducing other military commitments. In addition, the economic crisis with its concommitant unemployment, particularly of youth, is believed to make political leaders chary about reducing either the size of the armed forces or the production of armaments.

Whatever the extent and reality of such factors, Europe certainly is the immediate and probably also the major long-range beneficiary of the current reluctance to impair the US military presence wherever it is an established fact. The old continent is witnessing the most substantial translation of the prevailing American mood into specific action. The attitude of the Congress with respect to the military budget and the abandonment of any attempt to revive the Mansfield Resolution during 1975 are facts too solid to be classed as mere straws in the wind. Significance is also attached to the Mayaguez affair and to the dispatch of an additional combat brigade to Europe.

The key question, which many ask but on which few venture to speculate, is whether the current American mood is more than a temporary effervescence, a surge of feeling that is only one of the shockwaves of the Vietnam calamity. Can it be relied upon, Europeans ask, to set the nation on a course whose direction will be maintained through further shifts in the international currents or is it just the swing of the pendulum that reverses itself when the propelling impulse has been exhausted?

A degree of reassurance is found in the impressions left by President Ford at the NATO Summit, which could not have been better timed from the standpoint of our allies having regained perspective since the period of discouragement in April and early May. It is now felt that at least a tentative answer has been gained for the pressing question of exactly who speaks for the United States. Bleak visions of the American ship of state drifting as a rudderless bark or one on whose deck rival steersmen are fighting for control of the tiller were largely banished. In effect, the impression conveyed by the President was not merely the anticipated one of a pleasant, unpretentious man but of one on top of the issues under discussion. Not only did he seem well briefed and letter perfect in speaking his piece, but he appeared to have a thorough comprehension of the problems. There was also a relieved feeling that Europe had been upgraded in the American scheme of things under the new administration.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE AND EUROPE'S ROLE

Fear was the original cement of the Atlantic Alliance. Every excuse for self-reassurance, such as exaggerated estimates of detente has had the opposite effect. The flurry of dismay and confusion associated with the collapse in Vietnam was accompanied by efforts to give the

appearance of a closing of ranks. Such staunch allies as the British and Germans hastened to affirm their solidarity with the United States and their confidence in its unfailing appreciation of the importance of Europe. The desire to allay the apprehension of their own public no doubt was a major factor in this, but there was also much sincerity in the ceaselessly reiterated dictum: "Vietnam is not Europe!"

Therefore, though US prestige had suffered and the American world position was considered somewhat damaged, the anticipated greater concentration of Washington on its European knitting was taken to be a plus. Here and there muted voices also ventured to express the hope that a chastened United States would henceforth be more considerate of its allies, more inclined to observe the forms of consultation, less disposed to insist on its own way.

There are also signs of growing encouragement about the indefinite continuance of the American military presence. In fact, the outlook is considered more promising than at any time in the last half decade. Though public comment has been cautious, insiders now think it conceivable that from three to five American divisions could be added to those already designated for the NATO reserve. To do so, however, would create a number of new problems. There is the troublesome prospect that such welcome evidence of greater US military commitment, far from stirring up laggards to greater efforts, would provide an excuse for relaxing them instead. There is also the logistical problem of a vastly expanded airlift requirement. Here only European resources could fill the breech. This issue could well prove a test case on how much, in the post-Vietnam phase of Alliance affairs, its European members can be counted upon to assist in the process of rebuilding.

At the season of greatest discouragement, as April became May, there was a momentary flurry of speculation on whether the times did not call for a major effort to achieve a more significant European military identity. Such talk was notably prevalent in Paris, one suspects as part of the "European" argument for selling the Mirage to the Dutch, Danes, Belgians, and Norwegians. The suggestions then put forward included the familiar notion of a fusion of the French and British nuclear forces and a new and considerably less realistic one of putting French tactical nuclear weapons under a dual Franco-German control.

Such tentatives no doubt testify to lapses of faith in the Atlantic umbrella. The choice of alternatives, as always, is between dependence on Moscow or building a European defense community which can stand by itself. The fact that the idea was raised, only to be dropped without

having been given attention in any official quarters, demonstrates again the little confidence in it bearing any fruit that prevails at present. For good or ill, it is clear to Europeans that the Atlantic defense system remains the only resort for the West. The core issue for the members of the Alliance is still what they can do to strengthen its sinews.

In accord with this fact, a rather novel proposition was advanced at the June meeting of the Western European Union (WEU) parliamentarians at Bonn by a French Gaullist deputy, Pierre-Charles Krieg. The supreme lesson of Vietnam, his argument ran, was that if America's European allies did not do more to defend themselves than had the South Vietnamese, they could expect correspondingly weak support from the United States:

> The question is whether the defense of Europe is an American affair to which the Europeans are simply required to make a contribution or whether it is first and foremost a European affair. European defense efforts often seem to be aimed more at convincing the United States that it must maintain its forces in Europe than at preparing an effective participation in the defense of Europe.[2]

The formulation fails to make entirely clear whether the goal sought is a greater European effort on behalf of the Atlantic defense system or a more genuinely European integrative program. In either case, it gains in force in proportion to doubts about the firmness of the American intention to adhere steadfastly to existing ties.

RELIABILITY OF THE UNITED STATES AS AN ALLY

It was inevitable that the perennial foes of extensive Atlantic links should seize upon the debacle in SEA to denounce the United States as a faithless ally. "Perceive how the Americans leave their friends in the lurch," has been the refrain in such quarters. The obvious contradition between such slurs and the previous vociferous demands by much the same elements for the United States to get out of Vietnam needs no stress. It is more serious, of course, when doubts and anxieties about American steadfastness are raised by persons who are not moved by prejudice or malice. "Today Saigon, tomorrow Goisfeld?" was the worried query of one pro-American German about his own village. The pro-American wife of a Scandinavian military attache in one NATO capital was similarly shaken. In Britain, related questions were raised on many editorial pages. Though no categorial judgments were passed

about American dependability, many comments came too close to this for comfort. The vast difference in the weight of American security interests in SEA and Europe was stressed and any true shift in US policy declared highly doubtful. At the same time, there were frank expressions of anxiety that the retreat in Vietnam presaged a loss of American self-confidence that could carry over to other areas. An article on "The Fading of America" which appeared in *The Economist*, a journal friendly to the United States, wondered whether the US definition of interests would be altered as the price of defense rose higher. Though any claim that "the Indo-China rout will now make every ally doubt whether it can believe in promises of American support" was labelled an oversimplification, it was declared legitimate to ask how far the Americans were ready to go "when things are harder."[3]

Insofar as such questions reflect on the loyalty of the United States to its allies, indignant voices have been raised on every side to repudiate them. Such protests gained in vehemence as more balanced views made headway, with staunch Atlanticists as Jean Rey leading the way in ringing denunciation of "such indecencies."[4] Looking at the entire picture leads to the conclusion that, sofar as they were not the fulminations of carping critics, expressions of apprehension about American "reliability" reflect less the shock of the sudden end in Vietnam than quite legitimate fears about splits on foreign policy between the American executive and legislative branches, and the consequent uncertainty about the ability of the former to follow through on its decisions and promises.

OBSERVATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF SOVIET REACTIONS

As the American foothold in Vietnam disintegrated, some Europeans scrutinized reactions from Moscow almost as painstakingly as those from Washington. Ordinarily any setback encountered by one of the superpowers is automatically recorded an advantage to the other. This appeared so obvious in the present case that the fortitude of the Kremlin to resist the temptation of wholesale exploitation was described as the most formidable test of detente since the October 1973 War. It is also noted that, with perhaps one exception, Soviet policy during these weeks shied from any appearance of taking advantage of the American setback in areas of traditional political confrontation.

Though these signs were widely accepted in Europe as proof of a strong continued Soviet interest in detente, a line that Moscow has been especially eager to emphasize after the contretemps of the collapsed trade treaty, some of the more sophisticated observers range more widely in their analysis. It is suggested that the USSR, for the present, wishes to avoid any impression of pushing into whatever soft spots appear in American positions. This interpretation assumes that it is sensitive about appearing to take over the American image of an overexpanded power, thrusting in wherever the Americans retreat and taking their place as the universal whipping boy for anti-imperialists. It is not regarded as probable, however, that in the months ahead the Kremlin will deliberately forego solid advantages that may be gained from situations arising out of American embarrassments.

Most Europeans consulted considered it likely that the Soviets will raise their sights somewhat in their hopes from such negotiations as those for the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, Mutual Balanced Force Reduction, and Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In relation to Middle East problems, one view foresees that they will seek to preempt leadership in the matter of working out ultimate guarantees and, indeed, some sign of this has been evident. Certainly Europeans will closely observe all that belongs to the convocation and course of negotiations at Geneva and hope that the United States will bring forward proposals of its own on the guarantee issue.

The one set of problems where a harder Soviet line does coincide time-wise with the final rapid decline of US fortunes in SEA has to do with Berlin and with East German-West German relations. However, almost everyone talked to in the Federal Republic seems to think that this is essentially coincidental. Insofar as there has been a change for the worse here it is ascribed mainly to differences within the Politburo.

THE IMPACT ON ISRAEL, THE ARABS, AND MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS

From the standpoint of the average European observer, the Middle East, after his own continent and perhaps the Western Pacific, is the primary area for discerning both short and longer-range aspects of the post-Vietnam world scene. Questions are raised about the outlook and disposition of the United States and the anticipations of ruling circles in the Middle East itself with respect to them. Most of the pessimistic estimates of the period when affairs seemed at their worst found application also to American prospects in the Middle East.

Thus much of the speculation on the degree to which the collapse of the 1973 SEA interim settlement had lessened the international prestige and weakened the domestic position of Secretary Kissinger had to do with what injury had been done to his capacity to deal effectively with Middle East problems. American influence is believed to have declined in such vital centers as Cairo and Jerusalem and perhaps even more in Arab lands of less sophistication in international politics. Egyptian reports were quoted to the effect that Sadat's hold on affairs had suffered through the damage done to the reputation of Dr. Kissinger.

One question raised is whether the United States has not lost leverage with Israel and thereby also with the Arabs. The Israelis are described as suffering from new jitters and, encouraged by the support of three-fourths of the Senate, less inclined to defer to American counsels. As for Washington's disposition to take risks in Middle East situations, opinions appear much divided. Original reactions in Europe again underlined the negative side, the inclination being to expect less vigor in support of Israel and of Western oil interests. As it became more evident that the United States was deeply concerned with restoring its image as a superpower whose commitments had lost nothing in firmness, the view gained headway that this could eventuate in a posture of greater resolution in Middle East as in other matters.

Insofar as European speculation has dealt with Arab reactions in the post-Vietnam phases, it has tended to envision a more forward, at times perhaps a more challenging, attitude. The likelihood of direct US military intervention, always regarded as scant, is certainly further discounted. Nothing approaches a European consensus on a greater or lesser probability of a fifth round of war between the Arabs and Israelis. But the assumed reduction of US influence with both parties is in this sense regarded as unfortunate. From Washington's standpoint, it is judged, the situation is somewhat less manageable than before.

INFLUENCE ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

One area of greatest agreement in Western Europe holds that everywhere in the world where nations have heavily replied for their security on some form of association with the United States, there is a feeling of need to review their own resources. More serious consideration for developing national nuclear forces is one aspect of this tendency. It has been noted above that in Europe itself there was a brief flurry of revived speculation on possible Franco-British and even

Franco-German nuclear consortia. Elsewhere in the world there have not only been more continuing discussions about developing nuclear weapons but reports of specific plans and activities. In the aggregate such trends, as they gain in scope and momentum, seem bound to have repercussions in Europe and to advance pressures there for a more formidable nuclear capacity whether on the part of individual states or on some integrated basis.

THOUGHTS ON THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR

Though European views on the conduct of the United States in this affair differ on detail, friends of the Atlantic relationship agree that it would have been far worse to have taken no positive steps whatever. Certainly the voiced doubts and criticism were no greater than in the United States itself, even after it was learned that part of the action took place after the Cambodians had agreed to release the vessel's crew. It is appreciated that American nerves had been rubbed raw by events in Vietnam and the tonic effect of making a decisive move somewhere is on the whole rated favorably.

Opinions differ most whether the action demonstrated a firm national posture that would hold good in more serious situations. Queries are raised on whether the United States would have acted with similar vigor against a tougher opponent; in this connection there are occasional allusions to the Pueblo incident. Not much fault is found with the technical execution of the action whose defects are recognized to have been due to its improvised nature.

In other respects, criticism, though usually muted, follows much the same lines as in the United States with principal emphasis on a claim of overreaction to pinpricks or a lack of sense of proportion.

THE RESPONSE OF FRANCE AND GERMANY

Interest in and response to the course of events in Vietnam during the spring of 1975 were nowhere more pronounced than in France and Germany.[5] It was in the nature of affairs that the French should feel a strong emotional involvement. It derived from their memories of long association with the area, a painful separation after prolonged conflict, and a prominent place among the sharper critics of US policies. The French shared both in the uneasiness engendered in Western Europe by the sudden turn of affairs and in the feeling of relief that the long

agony was over. Insofar as their sentiment was one of satisfaction, this was accentuated by the comforting thought that one of the world's top powers, which, to all intents and purposes, had picked up in SEA the mantle France had dropped, had failed in its turn. There was gratification, too, that the predictions of French Casandras from De Gaulle to Giscard d'Estaing had proven accurate.

Comments by Giscard in a newspaper interview spelled out a number of these thoughts.[6] US policy in SEA had "never made sense" as it could not attain its objectives, which indeed could hardly be "stated with precision." The end of this drama would now give the United States more liberty to devote itself to urgent domestic and foreign policy matters. Evidently the French President accepted as natural the thought that the Vietnam debacle should be an occasion for review of the notion of a European defense system. Though he thought the time not ripe and though this, in any event, would have to wait on "political independence," Europe already "may have the industrial means to assure a significant portion of our defense," [possibly a ploy for the Mirage].

The vast difference in American relations between France and the Federal Republic of Germany is nowhere better illustrated than in reactions to the US exit from SEA. One is immediately reminded of the basics of the German scene since the mid-fifties. The Germans neither had then nor do they have now any realistic choice but close association with the United States. The three other conceivable options in the quadruple fork of their political road are for various reasons not really available to them. The route to European unity is a long and much encumbered one. It is, in fact, scarcely a separate option for, both by German preference and the nature of Atlantic affairs, it is intimately linked with close ties to America. The other two forks of the road represent ways to national extinction, one leading directly into the Soviet orbit and the other indirectly there over the sterile path of neutralism.

All this is reflected in the response of Bonn to events in SEA. There is no question here of an agonizing reappraisal but only of the best adjustment to circumstances. Inevitably there was painful anxiety. No one in Western Europe looked for signs of neo-isolationism with greater apprehension. And no one welcomed more heartily or with a greater surge of relief every portent of a lift in the American national spirit or of genuine solicitude in Washington to repair the damage to the Alliance.

In every public pronouncement Bonn made an effort to reaffirm its solidarity with America. Prevailing anxieties were soft-pedalled and the thesis that the United States had been liberated to perform its full role in Atlantic affairs stressed at every turn. Statements in connection with the visit of Secretary Kissinger on May 20-21 excelled in cordiality and expressions of confidence in the ties between the two countries. Foreign Minister Genscher declared them "in full agreement on all important world questions" and his deputy, State Secretary Karl Moersch, said events in SEA had made the United States realize the need to strengthen the Alliance and confirm its "obligations to Europe." When Secretary Kissinger affirmed that relations between the two states "couldn't be better," he seemed to say no more than the obvious.

In brief, the scare which the Germans, along with other Europeans, had suffered and their relief when the United States, far from drifting into isolationism, showed in solid ways its eagerness to rebuild Atlantic ties have had a salutory effect. They have forcefully reminded the Federal Republic of the essential nature of the links with America. The degree to which the attitude expressed in official quarters reflects that of the public at large is particularly noteworthy. It is demonstrated by the recently announced results of a poll on the importance of the American military presence. Not only was the positive response greater than in the case of a similar inquiry ten years ago, but the willingness to contribute financially was emphatically reaffirmed.[7]

All in all, in the case of the Germans, the unfortunate turn of events in SEA has served to enhance and deepen the commitment to existing ties and to improve the prospect of cooperation in such matters as energy and Middle East affairs in the months that lie ahead.

SUMMARY

As the shock effects of the South Vietnamese collapse wear off and perspective is regained among the European members of the Alliance, early overestimates of the extent and range of the military and political results have been much revised. On the whole, it can be said, more balanced judgments now prevail. There is a growing unanimity that, painful as the post-Vietnam situation may be, its seriousness for the Alliance is probably exceeded by the economic troubles of the United States and, greatly so, by the problems raised by US relations with Turkey and by the other soft spots on NATO's southern flank. In sum total, also, the effects of being forced out of Vietnam are judged actually to enhance American capacities to exert weight elsewhere.

When weighing in the balance European expressions of sentiment on the importance of the two problems for the Alliance, it should be kept in mind that there is not the same degree of candor in allusions to them. Tact prohibits much allusion to Americans by European comrades about the misfortune in SEA. On the other hand, the place of Turkey in relation to the Alliance is obviously the business of all its members and entitles them to speak out with greater candor and force. Therefore there is a danger of overestimating European concern in the latter case and underestimating it with reference to events in SEA. At the same time, it should be noted that one frequently hears statements which specifically subordinate the importance of the Vietnam debacle to worries about Turkey.

Both anxieties most trouble Europeans as symptoms of an American malaise—a badly divided nation. The aspect of this reflected in the rift with Turkey appears to them more grave because it reveals a picture of a Congress intervening in delicate matters of foreign relations as a result of minority pressures. Thus there is the case of Dutch friends wondering to an American officer whether their country would be in serious trouble with the United States if it bought the Mirage, offended another American minority by its policy in Middle East affairs, or incorporated Communist ministers in its cabinet.

There is no agreement in Europe on whether future US policies in general will be more or less firm or forceful because of the way things climaxed in Vietnam. The strong American statements on standing by commitments in Europe and, even more, the concrete steps which back this up have done much to allay anxieties. Here and there one discerns a feeling that the United States is protesting too much, revealing too freely a state of nerves about its weakened world position. The Mayaguez affair is interpreted by some as a sign of this and of a tendency to look too eagerly for opportunities to repair a supposedly mangled national prestige. But, when all is considered, insofar as one can speak of a verdict on how the United States up to this point has maintained its balance, the judgment is more favorable than would have been anticipated in April or early May. It must be stressed, however, that such positive responses, especially insofar as they may be self-induced, are subject to considerable fragility. A return of feeling to an earlier pessimism is a distinct possibility if weaknesses in US positions manifest themselves in any of the areas that are kept under anxious observation, or if some of the more critical questions which continue to be raised meet with disturbing answers.

ENDNOTES

1. "Western Europeans See Fall of Saigon as Chastening Lesson for U.S.," *The New York Times*, May 1, 1975, p. 15.
2. *International Herald Tribune*, June 12, 1975, p. 2.
3. *The Economist*, April 5, 1975, pp. 12-13.
4. In a speech at the College of Europe, June 6, 1975.
5. Though France was not on the itinerary, views were exchanged with French acquaintances in Bruges and Brussels and embassy reports extensively utilized.
6. *Le Figaro*, May 21, 1975.
7. *Army Times*, June 25, 1975.

OTHER RECENTLY PUBLISHED RESEARCH MEMORANDA

Oil and US Policy	AD A006473
Lessons of Strategic Surprise: Pearl Harbor, Cuba and the 1973 Middle East Crisis	AD A004262
Materials and the New Dimensions of Conflict	AD A004263
A New Look at Suez	AD A007211
Soviet Prospects in the Middle East	AD A006472
The Evolving Domestic Forum for National Security Debates	AD A006440
Public Opinion in a Time of Troubles	AD A007210
Economic Interdependence and Strategy	AD A007212
The United States in Northeast Asia	AD A004260
Ocean Space and National Security	AD A006457
Observations on US-USSR Detente	AD A006441
Western Europe and Atlantic Relations	AD A006442
Precision Weaponry in Defense of Europe	AD A006357
The United States and the Indian Ocean Area	AD A006443
Detente and South Asia	AD A012227
The Spaceship and the Lifeboat: Metaphors for the 1990's	AD A012228
Detente: The Historical Dimension	AD A013012

Copies of any of these memoranda may be obtained from the Defense Documentation Center. The request, indicating title and AD number, should be sent to the following address:

Defense Documentation Center
Cameron Station
Alexandria, VA 22314

DISTRIBUTION

Comdt, National War College	1
National War College, Strategic Research Group	1
National War College, Director of Instruction	1
Pres, Naval War College	1
Naval War College, Dir of Acad Affairs	1
Comdt, Air War College	1
Air War College, Dir of Curriculum Planning	1
Comdt, Industrial College of Armed Forces	1
Industrial College of Armed Forces, Dir of Academic Plan and Research	1
Comdt, Command and General Staff College	1
Comdt, Concepts Analysis Agency	1
Air University Library	1
432nd Military Intelligence Detachment	1
434th Military Intelligence Detachment	1
467th Military Intelligence Detachment	1
USMA, Office, Dean of Academic Board	1
ODCSOPS, DA	12
Defense Documentation Center	12
Army Library	1
USAWC Library	2
AWCI	5
AWCA	1
AWCAA	1
AWCAB	1
AWCAC	1
AWCAE	1

UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER ACN 75031	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) SOME EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE US WORLD POSITION AFTER VIETNAM		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Military Issues Research Memorandum 6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) Dr. Harold C. Deutach		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Strategic Studies Institute US Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS		12. REPORT DATE 3 September 1975 13. NUMBER OF PAGES 16
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS(if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) UNCLASSIFIED 15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE

16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)

Distribution limited to US Gov't Agencies only; Proprietary info, 3 Sept 1975. Other requests for this document must be referred to Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)

18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

Post-Vietnam US world position; Atlantic Alliance; US national poise; US reliability as an ally; Middle East in post-Vietnam period; United States and Western Europe; Soviet reaction to post-Vietnam, nuclear proliferation; Mayaguez affair.

20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

The study reflects observations made during a nine-day trip to Europe in June 1975. It involved attendance at a conference on contemporary elite attitudes toward the Atlantic Alliance and conversations with knowledgeable Americans and Europeans in London, Bonn, Brussels, and SHAPE. The major concern is the presumed impact of events in Southeast Asia on the US world position, detente, the American national poise, Middle East affairs, US interests and policies in Europe, confidence in the United States as an ally, nuclear

DD FORM 1 JAN 73 1473 EDITION OF 1 NOV 65 IS OBSOLETE

UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

proliferation, and particular reactions in France and Germany. Included is a consideration of the European response to the Mayaguez affair. Attitudes have changed profoundly since the original shock of the US expulsion from Vietnam has worn off. Though the effect is still reckoned to be serious, the return of perspective is shown by the greater anxiety over the American economic situation and, especially, the weakening of NATO's southern flanks, notably through the negative shift in American relations with Turkey.