

# DEPARTMENT OF STATE

APRIL 29, 1966

FOR THE PRESS

NO. 101

## CAUTION - FUTURE RELEASE

FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M., E.D.T., FRIDAY APRIL 29, 1966. NOT TO BE  
PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED, QUOTED FROM, OR USED IN ANY WAY.

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BALL,  
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,  
BEFORE THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW,  
WASHINGTON, D.C., STATLER HILTON HOTEL,  
APRIL 29, 1966

### The Larger Meaning of the NATO Crisis

#### I

Not long ago a whimsical friend, still under the spell of reading all dozen volumes of Mr. Toynbee's massive work on the life cycle of nations and civilization, said to me: "When America has run its course, I know what headnote will appear in the history books. It will be 'The United States--a nation that died of a surfeit of pragmatism'".

Like a highly seasoned salad this remark stayed with me for several days. I am afraid there is a grain of truth in my friend's irreverent observation. We are a pragmatic people and--especially in the area where I toil--pragmatism is the course of least resistance. It is easy--and tempting--to become absorbed in the operational aspects of foreign relations and to ignore the longer-term implications of policy. But, if America is to survive as a civilization, if in fact the world is to survive as a healthy environment for human beings, then we do have to remind ourselves of the larger framework of policy--something better than the habits, the improvisations, the expedients of years gone by--or we shall find ourselves repeating old mistakes in a world where mistakes by great nations can mean world destruction.

Today there is a special temptation to pragmatism in our relations with Western Europe, where we are faced once again with the re-appearance of an assertive nationalism that challenges the whole structure of our post-war arrangements.

Yet there is no area where it would be more dangerous for us to  
become

become absorbed merely in the operational aspects of policy, to make adjustments, accommodations, compromises, and concessions without regard to our great common objectives. For our relations with Western Europe carry a heavy freight of history. They form the longest and persistently the most important element of United States foreign policy. We have benefited greatly from events in Europe and we have suffered from them. And, at the end of the day, we cannot forget that jealousies, ambitions and aggressions in Western Europe were responsible for the two greatest wars of modern history--cataclysms that created many of the ills and troubles that harass us today. If we are to avoid new and even more terrible conflicts we must know where we are going and we must have some sense of how we are to get there.

## II

We have not always had a sure sense of direction in these matters. America spent the early years of this century in a state of innocence which, in retrospect, seems both attractive and surprising. World War I came upon us while we had our backs turned--preoccupied as we were in transforming a continent into a nation. It took us a long time to sort the issues in that struggle. But in 1917 we entered the fight, and the weight of our effort turned the tide of battle. Yet in retrospect it seems clear enough that we did not comprehend the full meaning either of the war or of our involvement. When we had brought the boys home again we had a frustrating try at international peace-making. Then we turned our backs on the world in the interests of what we awkwardly referred to as "normalcy".

We pretended, in other words, that we were not a great power and that we had been wrong in trying to act like one. The fount of our foreign policy remained the admonitory passages in Washington's Farewell Address--advice given more than a century before to a fledgling republic.

If staying

If staying clear of entangling alliances had been good enough for the Founding Fathers it was good enough for us.

America's policy, as we told the world, was isolationism--the early Twentieth Century version of what would be known today as neutralism or non-alignment--and we meant to stick by it.

The Second World War ended our adolescence. We fought valiantly and well in all four corners of the earth. When the conflict was over, America at long last had grown up--and we had learned certain hard lessons the hard way.

I shall not try to review all of those lessons here tonight but I think it essential to mention some of them.

The first was that the United States is indubitably a great power and, as such, cannot escape involvement in the world's main concerns. Moreover, the world has become so interdependent that our interests are necessarily engaged by any new aggression in any strategic area of the world -- and particularly in Europe.

Second, we admitted with nagging conscience that our own neutralism had served as an encouragement -- or at least had posed no discouragement -- to aggressors in Europe. We could deter aggression in the future only by making it crystal clear that American power would be committed instantly and automatically if any friendly European state were attacked.

Within months after the end of the war we began to learn another hard lesson -- that another nation, itself also organized on a continent-wide basis, was bent on extending its dominion, and the ideological system it represented, through force and subversion around the world. As one after another of the European states were caught within the encircling net of the Iron Curtain we awoke with a shock to this new and imminent peril.

Along

Along with our European friends we began to rethink the mistakes of the past. Together with them we reached certain conclusions which we put in treaty or institutional form. One was the recognition -- not of the theory but the fact -- that an attack on one of the North Atlantic States was an attack on all. In the case of major aggression against Europe, the power of the new world would inevitably be called upon to redress the balance of the old. That, however, was not enough by itself. The nations of Europe that had been occupied -- and particularly the leaders of France -- were emphatic in telling us that Europeans could not endure another period of liberation. This time they must be protected, not liberated.

We concluded with them, therefore, that our Western Alliance must be more than an agreement for liberation. It must be made an effective deterrent so as to dissuade any aggressor from reckless adventures. To achieve this we must create an instrument for instant collective defense, by forces in being, acting under common command and common plans.

For this too we had the hard lessons of two world wars to guide us.

In World War I it had taken four years for the Allied Powers to pull themselves together and agree on a combined command under Marshal Foch. The obstinate insistence of the individual nation states on sovereign and separate national commands cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

In the Second World War the Western powers again reaped the tragic consequences of their unpreparedness and their blind rejection of common plans and a common command. Denmark fell, then Norway, then the Low Countries, then France. Almost five years elapsed before the Allies accumulated the military strength -- unified under the integrated command of SHAEF -- that made it possible to mount the Normandy invasion and win the war.

It

It was against this tragic background that the Atlantic powers -- inspired particularly by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman -- undertook in 1950 to transform the alliance from a classical mutual defense pact into a full-fledged collective security system. An integrated command was established under General Eisenhower. Common planning was undertaken. Forces were put in place for the defense of Europe that now total 2.5 million men. And over the years that followed the nuclear power of the United States was targeted against the Soviet rockets aimed at Europe.

For the first time in history the Western powers were acting together with little regard for special national advantage, not merely to meet but to deter a potential aggressor. In what otherwise would have been a time of grave peril, Europeans could go about their affairs without an overhanging fear of invasion. They did so, and they have prospered beyond their fondest dreams.

### III

The construction of the Western Alliance and even more the building of the collective security system known as NATO meant a great national decision for us as Americans, and a great common achievement for the West. Looking across the Atlantic we decided that we must work actively with our European friends in deterring aggression in Europe. But even more important, we and they concluded that peace could be permanently secured only if steps were taken to remove the underlying causes that had created so many disasters in the past.

Of all those causes one stood out above all others. That was the persistent rivalry among the individual nation states of Europe -- each striving in turn to gain dominance by force over its neighbors. From the time of the Treaty of Westphalia in the middle of the Seventeenth Century for more than a century and a half, the peace of the world was

periodically

periodically disturbed primarily by the efforts of European nations -- and particularly France, then the largest and strongest -- to achieve hegemony over the rest of the continent. Those efforts were thwarted by shifting coalitions of other European states aided by the astute diplomacy of Britain, which for centuries allied itself always on the side of the weaker group in order to maintain a balance. These European struggles were not always confined to the Continent. Throughout the whole of our colonial life they tended to spill over into the Western Hemisphere, until -- when we secured our independence -- we were able to insulate ourselves through a policy of isolation made possible by the Monroe Doctrine and the British Fleet.

We thus kept aloof from the European wars of the Nineteenth Century while the preponderance of power shifted in Europe. France, worn-out by the exertions of the Napoleonic era and outstripped by the other major European powers in population, was defeated by the Second Reich, which under Bismark's leadership had been created by Prussia out of twenty-five German kingdoms, principalities, duchies and free cities. Yet the Franco-Prussian War was but a prelude of things to come. For in the first half of the Twentieth Century the two world wars, which had their roots in European rivalries, brought all of us close to disaster.

Against this history it was clear that if there was to be peace in Europe and in the world the old national rivalries had to be replaced by something more constructive. Yet this was nothing America could bring about by itself. We could assist the Europeans to rehabilitate themselves through the Marshall Plan. We could encourage them to sublimate their national rivalries in a new unity. But the actual achievement of that unity was something that only the European peoples could create.

Still

Still the climate was ripe for action. The peoples of Europe were themselves thoroughly tired of wars that sprang from the competing ambitions of nation states. And so they began to work brilliantly, principally under French leadership, on a whole series of measures: the Schuman Plan which created the Coal and Steel Community; the proposal for a European Army within a European Defense Community (which, had it succeeded, would have avoided many of the problems that haunt us today); and the European Atomic Energy Community. Most important was the great breakthrough of the Treaty of Rome that changed the economic face of Europe by creating a vast Common Market.

This then was the prospect in the early part of the 1960's -- a Europe making massive strides toward unity with the strong prospect that its geographical boundaries would be expanded to include the United Kingdom and certain other European nations -- a Europe growing prosperous with its burgeoning common market under the protective umbrella of NATO.

The organization of Europe is, of course, primarily a matter for Europeans. But it is a matter that deeply affects the United States as well. The thousands of Americans who gave their lives in the Argonne Forest -- or, a quarter of a century later, in the Battle of the Bulge-- have established our right and indeed our obligation to speak frankly on issues that so critically involve both our safety and our future. Our fate and the fate of Western Europe are tied inextricably together. We recognized that on two occasions when we sent our young men overseas -- and Europe recognized that on two occasions when it called for our  
help

help in an extreme hour. And -- whatever words may be uttered in the current discussion -- Europeans know today that American men and American might will be there when they need us. So we are not very much impressed by specious homilies about doctrine that obscure the point of America's demonstrated reliability in times of crisis.

We have seen in European progress toward unity the chance for a new and fruitful relationship. As President Kennedy said in June, 1963, in his speech at the Paulskirche in Frankfurt, we "look forward to a unified Europe in an Atlantic Partnership -- an entity of independent parts sharing equally both burdens and decisions, and linked together in the tasks of defense as well as the arts of peace."

#### IV.

The idea of a united Europe linked in equal partnership across the Atlantic had great resonance on both sides of the ocean. But already there were forces working against it--in particular the decision of the government of one European nation state to separate itself from the others and to seek a special position of primacy in Western Europe. The purposes of that government should not be a matter for polemics; they are on the public record, fully expressed or implied in any number of official statements.

That



That government has sought to halt the drive toward European unity in the name of uniting Europe; to transform the European Common Market into a mere commercial arrangement by hobbling the powers of the executive; to prevent other Western European nations from achieving any participation in the management of nuclear power so as to preserve its own exclusive position as the sole nation with nuclear weapons on the Western European continent; to reduce the influence and ultimately the presence of the United States in Europe; and, finally, to free itself from obligations to the great postwar system of European and Atlantic institutions in order to achieve freedom of political and diplomatic maneuver that could permit it to deal, to its own advantage, with what it has described with a curious impartiality as "the two great hegemonies."

The attack that has been launched against NATO deeply concerns all Western nations. Let us make no mistake about the fact that the withdrawal of an important power from participation in the arrangements that give reality to the Western Alliance will weaken the common defense. More than that, it will weaken the western deterrent. Finally, it is likely to delay and confuse the possibilities of moving toward an ultimate settlement of the great unfinished business of Europe. For it is clear to anyone who has closely followed the events of the past decade that the gradual changes taking place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have been hastened, not delayed, by the firm and common purpose of the West. And it is clear also that if the West ceases to stand firm and unified, if each individual Western nation seeks to make a separate deal for itself, the gains we have achieved will be quickly lost and the hope for an ultimate European settlement long deferred.

Obviously

Obviously the Communist world has undergone major transformations since the death of Stalin. But the change has not been without its perils for the West. The Khrushchev who preached peaceful co-existence punctuated his message with attempted blackmail in Berlin, nuclear threats at the Parthenon, and missiles in Cuba. Yet, it is plainly right to build bridges to the Communist countries, bridges of trade and travel across barriers that cruelly divide a continent. It is right to welcome the citizens of East Europe to see for themselves that capitalism can yield economic progress and social justice side by side. These things are right, and they should be continued.

But those bridges to the East must be anchored in the solid foundation of a strong and cohesive Western alliance. For it is only when the security issue is beyond dispute that lasting progress can be made towards permanently improved relations with the Communist states. This is the basis on which there can be secure movement towards a political settlement in Europe, leading to the reunification of Germany in conditions of peace and freedom, and to real progress towards international arms control--goals that we and Europe share.

Over and above the attack on NATO there is, therefore, grave cause for uneasiness in the resurgence of a self-centered nationalism. For each country's nationalism is a force that--particularly in Europe tends to create equal and opposite forces in neighboring countries. Ever since the war we Americans have known that the peace of the world depended to a great extent on the gamble that Europe would transform itself--that  
the

the nations of Western Europe would, after all these centuries, put aside those corrosive national rivalries that have been the cause of past disasters and sublimate their energies in a common purpose and a new unity. At the same time we have always recognized the danger that the European people, with reflexes conditioned by history, might from time to time be tempted to lapse into the old bad habits of the past, to unfurl the dusty banners of other centuries, and to recreate the conditions in which Europe might again become the cockpit of the world.

V

There are, to be sure, voices even in this country that tell us almost with satisfaction that the latter development is inevitable, and knowledgeable men should accept it. After all, they say, haven't the European nations regularly, twelve or thirteen years after each war, dissolved their alliances and returned to their old rivalries?

This sounds strangely like the contention of the early 1920's that we should return to "normalcy". For the kind of Europe envisaged by these critics is a Europe no more suitable to the needs of today than would "normalcy" be for today's America.

What exactly would these men have us do? The realistic hope for peace in the world, they contend, is not for a unified Western Europe but for a Europe of nation states extending from the Atlantic to the Urals-- or, in other words, a Europe in which each of the middle-sized states would seek to make its own deal with one or the other of the "great hegemonies" in the hope of establishing for itself a first-class power position while keeping the others in an inferior role.

Such a Europe--a continent of shifting coalitions and changing alliances--is not the hope of the future; it is a nostalgic evocation. It would mean not progress but a reversion to the tragic and discredited pattern of the past--a return to 1914, as though that were good enough, and with the same guarantee of instability--yet made more dangerous, not less,

not less, by the ideological drive of the Soviet Union and the existence of nuclear weapons.

To move toward such a Europe is not the way to reach a settlement of the unfinished business of the last war. It is not a way to remove the Iron Curtain except on terms that would preserve and exacerbate discrimination and inequality and thus lay the groundwork for new disasters in the future.

Such a Europe would not secure a lasting peace nor would it bring fulfillment to the European peoples. For there is a new requirement of size in the world which makes it imperative that, if the peoples of Europe are to make their full contribution to world affairs, they must organize themselves on a scale commensurate with the requirements of the modern age. Let us not deceive ourselves; no matter how adroit diplomacy may be, it cannot achieve first-power status for a nation of limited size and resources.

The true course of Western Europe lies not in fragmentation but in unity--a solid unity that will bring, not varying degrees of status and citizenship, but equality for all. A united Europe will not need to seek first-power status; it will have it. And unity moreover will enable the gifted European peoples to play their major role in the large affairs of this turbulent world and make their rich and proper contribution to civilization.

If Europe

If Europe unites, the world will no longer be faced with the dangers of middle-sized states trying to play a game of maneuver with one another and with the "hegemonies", after the pattern of the past. There will be a third large center of power and purpose -- capable, because it is strong, of bringing about a European settlement, competent to come to terms with the East on a basis that will dismantle the Iron Curtain and reunify the German people as equal members of a great community.

As this develops -- and only as it develops -- will we Atlantic peoples be able to give full meaning to the concept of equal partnership. For no longer will the European nations have to fear, as some apparently do, the preponderance of American weight in our common political councils or the preponderance of American industrial strength in our economic affairs. There will be equality in a realistic sense -- not something enacted by international law, not something the United States has conferred. It will be an equality founded on unassailable fact, since a united Europe will command vast resources of technology and production, brain power and material.

VI.

Americans join with Europeans in wanting this kind of Europe. We want a Europe strong, not enfeebled. We want a Europe independent in spirit as it is interdependent in fact. As President Kennedy once said, "It is not in our interest to try to dominate the European councils of decision. If that were our objective, we would prefer to see Europe divided and weak, enabling the United States to deal with each fragment individually." But what we look forward to, he said, is "a Europe united and strong -- speaking with a common voice --acting with a common will -- a world power capable of meeting world problems as a full and equal partner." Perhaps there are some Americans who would like to see a fragmented Europe but they have not read history

carefully --

carefully -- or if they have, they have not understood it. Certainly, it is not the policy of this Administration any more than it was the policy of the Kennedy, or the Eisenhower, or the Truman Administration to see Europe disunited.

For we are prepared to take our chances on a Western Europe united on principles of equality -- a Europe with a common voice. To be sure, it will be an independent voice, not always agreeing with us -- but then the United States has no monopoly of wisdom. What we can be sure of is that we and our Western European partners will agree on the broad outlines of the kind of world we want -- a world of peace and freedom. For we draw from the deep well of Western civilization, cherish the same ideals of liberty, seek together the dignity of the individual and not the tyranny of the mass.

A Europe so united was the bright hope and the high accomplishment of the '50s. It remains the real hope of Europeans and Americans today. For, as President Johnson said more than a year ago:

"The unknown tide of future change is already beating about the rock of the West. These fruitful lands washed by the Atlantic, this half-billion people unmatched in arms and industry, this measureless storehouse of wisdom and genius can be a fortress against any foe, a force that will enrich the life of an entire planet. It is not a question of arms or wealth alone. It is a question of moving ahead with the times, and it is a question of vision and persistence and the willingness to surmount the barriers of national rivalry against which our ancestors have always collided."

\* \* \*