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Today and Tomorrow . . . *By Walter Lippmann*

The Vision of Europe

LET US consider the talk which can be heard in Washington today that, if the stubborn old man doesn't give way, we can organize an integrated military alliance, with France left out of it. Talk like this is an index of the confusion which has resulted from the confrontation between General de



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Gaule's initiative and the State Department's determination to stand pat.

It is hard to take the idea seriously, but if we try to imagine such a thing as the Western alliance without France, we must assume that France would at best be neutral in the event of war with Russia and perhaps even allied with Russia. The whole thing would be a strategic absurdity. For it would mean that if we respected the rules of international law, the NATO army, including the United States divisions, would be caught in the narrow territory between the Eastern frontiers of France and the Soviet military frontier on the Elbe River.

Instead of having all of France and Spain and American sea power behind the NATO army, NATO would have to choose between holding on to the death in Western Germany and falling back and being

interned in neutral France. To entertain the idea of NATO without France, which is the geographic heart of NATO, is to offer proof that we have been flabbergasted by the demand that NATO be modernized.

THE CHIEF block in official circles to thinking freshly about NATO is a preconception which is quite unfounded. The preconception is that General de Gaulle is trying to restore the past as it was in 1914 and that he is not moving into the future, as it presents itself in Europe at the end of the European phase of the cold war. Yet the key to an understanding of what is going on about the problem of NATO is to realize that—for good or evil—the issue is between the little Europe of the cold war era of the 1950's and the greater Europe—"from the Atlantic to the Urals"—which is struggling to be born.

This is the central issue about which the whole confusion and complexity of Europe today are turning. The issue is not whether to stand fast on the NATO that was organized in 1949. That NATO belongs to a past which we have now outlived. The issue is certainly not whether Europe shall abandon the idea of union and whether it retreats, as some of our officials are saying off the record, to the situation of 1914, when Europe was di-

vided into two hostile military coalitions. The actual issue is whether in this nuclear age the Europeans can end the cold war among them and construct for themselves a greater European community.

WE ARE doing ourselves no good by creating the general impression that we are drifting into opposition and obstruction to this greater Europe. Among other benefits if it can be brought into being, the unification of Europe will carry along with it a reunification of Germany. There is no other peaceable road to reunification. Such a Europe will provide a bastion of security against the turbulence of Asia and Africa. Instead of Western Europe being a protectorate of the United States—as it was in the 1950's—a settlement of the East-West conflict in Europe will mean that we have powerful friends, perhaps partners, instead of living as we do today in lonely isolation from the great powers of the earth.

It would be well also if the Germans could come to grips with their own future. Now, as one reads their official declarations, as for example their note last week, they seem to be touching the future with their finger tips and shrinking away from it.

What is lacking in the Federal Republic is the courage to recognize and embrace the vision of a general European settlement.

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