

A Plea for Partnership

*Kissinger, Like Marshall 26 Years Ago,
Asks Mutual Efforts on Mutual Issues*

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By JAMES RESTON APR 24 1973

Henry A. Kissinger, in a policy statement obviously approved by President Nixon, has sent a message to Europe that can be compared historically only to the famous Marshall Plan speech of Secretary of State George C. Marshall at Harvard almost 26 years ago.

The differences are greater than the similarities, but Mr. Kissinger, like General Marshall, News Analysis recognized that the United States and Europe had reached another critical point in their relationships, and in his address to The Associated Press, Mr. Kissinger asked Europe the same philosophic questions.

Is there not something beyond material and national interests to hold America, Europe and Japan together? Should we not try to define the common political interests and ideals of the old and the new world, rather than leaving things to the experts on money, trade, and tariffs?

Plea for European Accord

Like General Marshall, Mr. Kissinger suggested a common discussion of common problems among the major trading nations, not an American data for solving everything. He made some suggestions to Europe and Japan, but he did not try to impose them.

The Marshall speech, looking back on it now, was very thin and almost superficial, but Mr. Marshall hit the same point as Mr. Kissinger: The United States recognizes that all the Western nations are getting into trouble, and it wants to help, but it cannot solve things in Washington.

"It is already evident," Secretary of State Marshall said

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Plea for Partnership Recalls an Appeal by Marshall

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in June, 1947, "that, before the United States Government can proceed much further... there must be some agreement among the countries of Europe as to the requirements of the situation and the part those countries themselves will take in order to give proper effect to whatever action might be taken by this government.

"It would be neither fitting nor efficacious," General Marshall added, "for this Government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program. . . . The role of this country should consist of friendly aid. . . . The program should be a joint one, agreed to by a number, if not all European nations."

Mr. Kissinger talked here in the same vein. The days of the Marshall-Plan approach to American-European relations are over, he suggested. The successes of the past have created new contemporary problems. Europe is no longer a weak beneficiary of American aid, but a powerful new competitor, and while Mr. Kissinger recognized all the commercial problems involved, he stuck to General Marshall's principle that there has to be a new Atlantic partnership or there is going to be great trouble for everybody in the world.

Stress on Difficulty

Mr. Kissinger never mentioned General Marshall to his Associated Press audience. In fact, while he was asking Europe to recognize that it had reached another historic point in its relations with the United States, and was asking Europe to come back with suggestions for a new Atlantic charter or partnership, he emphasized how much harder it would now be to get together.

The United States and Europe cooperated a generation ago through fear: can they now

get together by common ideals? Mr. Kissinger conceded that this would be much more difficult. A generation ago, the United States was offering to help a Europe devastated by World War II; now it is suggesting cooperation or partnership with a recovered, powerful Europe.

Also, Mr. Kissinger noted, the United States has to think of worldwide interests, while Europe tends to think of "regional interests." "The Atlantic nations," he said, "must find a solution for the management of their diversity, to serve the common objectives which underlie their unity. We can no longer afford to pursue national or regional self-interest without a unifying framework. We cannot hold together if each country or region asserts its autonomy whenever it is to its benefit and invokes unity to curtail the independence of others."

Unmistakable Warnings

Also, there were some diplomatic but unmistakable warnings in this Kissinger speech. He reminded the European allies that after Vietnam, there was a spirit of retrenchment, nationalism and protectionism in the United States, that the American Government would not desert its allies, but expected them to share the burden of a common defense.

This was, in the best sense of the expression, a "Presidential speech," defining the problems of the coming years and asking Europe to respond to the offer of "partnership," shared burdens and fair economic competition, or face the consequences of American nationalism and protectionism.

In this sense, the probably only in this sense, Mr. Kissinger's address could be compared to General Marshall's at Harvard. He was tell-

ing the European governments that within a few weeks, Mr. Nixon would put before them formal proposals for a new partnership of the non-Communist industrial nations, and that these proposals would confront them with very hard choices about money, trade and defense.

But before these practical questions are handed over to the technicians, he insisted, and they begin squabbling about dollars, interest rates, tariffs and all the other things that divide the nations, maybe somebody ought to think about the political and philosophic questions that America, Europe and Japan have in common.

At the end of his speech, Mr. Kissinger dealt with the editors' questions about Watergate and its effect on foreign policy. He ducked most of them, but asked for perspective and compassion: This is a hard time both at home and abroad; it is easy to divide over practical economic or personal problems, but after Watergate, the nation has to go on.

Also, after the present squabbles between the nations over money and trade, he said, there is still the problem of trying to create a new order in the world, and this is what the Administration is trying to do in the midst of all its troubles.

Mr. Kissinger's was a solemn speech, not the sort of thing that delights most newspaper gatherings. But there was a sense in the Waldorf dining room that this was not merely a luncheon address but a basic statement of national policy at a difficult time at home and a critical period in the relations between the United States, Europe and Japan.

It was quite an occasion. Mr. Kissinger knew that everybody in his audience was thinking about Watergate—and some-

how he managed to deal with it with compassion for its culprits and victims—but mainly he managed to bring the great questions of the nation to the fore, and demonstrate what a serious man can do when he thinks, and speaks about the fundamental questions before the nation.

A Harder Question

Mr. Kissinger has put a much harder question to Europe than General Marshall did. The general merely asked the European nations whether they wanted to get together to take something from America at a time when they were weak and afraid. Mr. Kissinger is asking them, when they are strong, whether they want to give something to create a new and equal partnership in defense of an old civilization and a new direction in the world.

Even in General Marshall's case, Western Europe did not respond quickly to that offer until the British Ambassador, Sir Oliver Franks, and the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, grasped the meaning of the Harvard address. And the Communists in Moscow and Eastern Europe never did realize what General Marshall was saying.

But Mr. Kissinger has now defined an approach to the future that has the full backing of the President and is intended officially as the basis of the negotiations between Mr. Nixon and the European leaders.

It will be interesting to see whether Prime Minister Heath, President Pompidou, Chancellor Willy Brandt, Prime Minister Kakeni Tanaka of Japan and the other leaders of the industrial world recognize the importance of Mr. Kissinger's speech.

For it was intended, not as a diversion for the editors of The Associated Press, but as a definitive statement of American policy to the world.

NYTimes clipping, same date, filed Watergate.