

Nixon Bars Troop Cut To Prod Allies

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President Nixon last night disavowed any intention to cut American troop levels in Europe in order to force greater European cooperation on politics and economics inside the Atlantic alliance.

His remarks amounted to a major clarification and softening of his stern warning last Friday that "the Europeans cannot have it both ways" with American defense support plus "confrontation" or "even hostility on the economic and political fronts . . ."

While repeating some of his cautioning language last night, the President said he thinks that now the Europeans "understand it" and now "I believe we are going to make progress . . ."

Mr. Nixon explicitly rejected last night any support for the long-standing drive led by Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield to reduce considerably the more than 300,000 troops based in Western Europe.

"I would not go along," he said, with the effort by Mansfield and others "to unilaterally reduce our forces . . . I would not go

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along with that regardless of what happens in terms of the economic and political arrangements . . ."

The President said, "It is in the vital interest of peace in the world, and in the interests of the security of America, as well as Europe, that the alliance be continued and that there be no reduction of American forces in Europe unless it is mutually agreed with the Warsaw Pact, and of course with the Soviet Union."

Mr. Nixon noted that in his planned trip to the Soviet Union he plans to press for mutual East-West talks with Soviet Communist Party leader Leonid I. Brezhnev.

The explanation given by President Nixon last night removed much of the cutting edge of his original warning. His first remarks were greeted with outrage by many Europeans, who charged that the United States was trying to "blackmail" Western Europe by raising the spectre of American troop cuts.

Mr. Nixon last night agreed with a questioner at his Houston news confer-

ence, that the reaction to his remarks by French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert, and by the French Ambassador to Washington, Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet, was "proper" and friendly.

Both French diplomats stressed the need for conciliation. But both diplomatically, but firmly, rejected the President's central premise, "linking" North Atlantic Alliance security with political and diplomatic issues between the United States and the nine-nation West European Common Market.

The President last night avoided referring to that important French distinction. Instead, he said that before his administration came to office, U.S.-French relations were poor, "much of the fault was ours," and that relations were subsequently improved.

Mr. Nixon again noted that good progress has been made in drafting a new pledge of cooperation for the NATO alliance, but that the obstacle centers on a companion second declaration with the Common Market.

Both declarations were to be signed in Brussels. Mr.

Nixon said he postponed that trip because "you should never go to the summit unless you know what is on the other side," and differences should not be papered-over "with diplomatic double-talk."

The President said he made his original "rather direct statement" because "there is growing in America a new sense of isolation, after Korea, after Vietnam."

Many Americans, he said, say, "Let's bring everybody home . . . we've carried the burden long enough."

"That's good short-range politics," said the President, but "it's disastrous long-term statesmanship."

The United States, he said, "will continue to work with our European friends, even though we at times disagree." But they must understand, he said, if "their policies in the political and economic fields appear hostile to us, it's going to be hard for any President, including this President, strong as I am for the Alliance, to get through Congress the necessary appropriations" to maintain "their security and ours."