

Intervention of Altiero Spinelli

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A reappraisal of the group of democratic countries known as the Atlantic Community has been due for a long time.

Undoubtedly, it would have been useful to already have done so, since in that case, the West would find itself better prepared today to face the serious challenge with which history confronts it.

A first occasion occurred during the lengthy crisis over Stalin's succession. A second was the almost simultaneous explosion of the European colonial system in Africa and of the dictatorial system in Latin America. Neither occasion was made use of. The Western democracies experienced these events, limiting themselves to haphazard reactions with no long-term outlook, now capitulating, now braving it alone or seeking a line of defense without checking if it could be held, if it was worthy of being held, persuaded, as has been very well pointed out by Professor Morgenthau, that the basic problem lay in each instance in military security.

The result of this sluggish attitude has been disastrous in many ways. The Communist camp has overcome its crisis without having had to restore any of its subjugated possessions, and is again on the offensive on all fronts. The reemerging nations give us a picture of the balkanisation of Africa, and of an irritation, of an often growing hostility toward the Western democracies.

It is not too late, however, to undertake today what has been left undone in previous years. The occasion this time is the change of leadership in the most important nation in the West. The new American administration and its advisors seem to possess an acute sense of the need to break away from the political and intellectual apathy of preceding years, as well as a very strong desire to define the "new frontier" of democracy. The importance of the United States in the

Western system is so great that this concern has crossed the ocean in binding Europe also to reflexion and quest.

It cannot be said, however, that the basic decisions have been made either in America or in Europe. Even as Descartes, at the moment that he was undertaking a profound revision of his manner of thinking, adhered to what he called a provisional code of ethics, The West at the present moment has a provisional policy that it cannot yet abandon, not yet having arrived at seeing clearly what it must think of reality and how it consequently must act. So long as this provisional policy does not last too long and doesn't cause any major damages, it is perhaps well that the quest for determining ideas for future action continues and deepens. For, when the choices shall have been made and the present political fluidity shall have been stabilized, it shall no longer be so simple either to turn back or to change direction for quite a while, and we shall then have to accept the outcome of our decisions, good or bad.

I share the point of view of Professor Morgenthau, who sees the crisis of the Atlantic Alliance to be due to a continued belief in the concept that its solidarity essentially takes the form of a military alliance.

To consider NATO as the product of a simple military design and particularly to consider the United States simply as the strongest military force in the coalition would be to do the organization a great injustice.

The Atlantic Pact was desired, was made possible and had a great significance because it translated into terms of military defense a non-military but ethico-political need: the affirmation of the will to defend and preserve liberty on the face of the earth. During World War II,

this ambitious and difficult task of the humane spirit of democracy was restricted to North America, to England and to some neutral elements that had somehow escaped being submerged under the Nazi alluvium. The hope of restoring freedom in all of Europe after the war proved illusory. Since 1945, only those countries freed by America, restored to their peoples, saved from socio-economic collapse and protected against the menace of Stalin have been able to follow the road to democratic reconstruction. NATO has been the military expression of a fortunate moment of American policy in which the moral need to promote and safeguard the liberty of men has completely coincided with the needs of power of the United States. The peoples of Western Europe have not felt crushed by the enormous presence of the United States in their countries because they have understood that the enterprise was not the beginning of a new empire but the construction of a free world in which the strongest assumed the greatest responsibilities only to allow the weakest to get back on their feet. All that has remained of this initial impulse, however, is only a military alliance.

The United States, by uniting its political destiny with that of Western Europe, brought not only the conviction or the need to safeguard democracy, by material aid and military protection, but also two other attitudes differing from those holding sway in the European political world: its disdain for the system of European Nation-States, and its aversion to the European states' colonialism. The United States, nevertheless, has forgone enlisting all the authority in its command to make these two attitudes prevail in Europe. Of course it stands in favor of European unity, but listlessly and incoherently, using none of the aces at its disposal, allowing the British government to bungle the efforts for European unity, passively listening to the altogether insufficient French proposals and progressively rebuilding German sovereignty. It has not understood that in the years immediately following

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Western Europe was for all practical purposes united under its protectorate and that its duty should not have been restricted to merely sympathizing with the European idea, but should have been a systematic promotion of the construction of federal democratic institutions in Europe. It came to its senses too late, staking everything on the European army, which by its nature couldn't instigate any wave of antinational substance in Europe. And, when the enterprise failed, the American government announced an "agonizing reappraisal" which consisted essentially in accepting the rule of national sovereignties in Europe without question.

If the United States has at least some desire of renewing interest in European affairs, it has not even proposed any suggestions regarding colonial matters. It should have demanded the transformation of colonial empires into long-term mandates. What was thought to be possible for Italian Somaliland should have been the general rule for all European capitals. The United States, on the contrary, accepted the full load of European colonialism without the slightest question, taking upon itself crimes that were not of its own doing.

Having forgone making the most of the principles that were suitable to its own traditions and to the needs of a European democratic structure in line with the present world, the United States has certainly upheld the democratic rights of Western Europe, but democracy no longer seems the way of life now attained by part of mankind but ultimately destined to become the way of life of all humanity. It has appeared increasingly as the soft and philistine way of life of the privileged classes of North America and of Western Europe.

Hostility with the U.S.S.R. which had been an antagonism of powers and ideals has become more and more a sheer antagonism of power for the West. At the beginning of this era, one saw the ostracism of Franco. It didn't then

matter that the "Caudillo" was anticommunist, since he was fascist. Since then, no matter what regime, what party or what group that called itself anticommunist, whether the most rotten or the most reactionary on earth, has been able to count on American protection, including Franco, Salazar, Chiang-Kai-shek, Menderes, etc.

In Western Europe, Americans have been able to count on the friendship of national ^{bureaucratic} ~~reforming~~ machines so long as those were weak, but within each country in Europe, their friends have become increasingly the conservative element, for whom the United States represents a guarantee of conservatism and rehabilitation. For men of progress, a great effort of good will was necessary to continue ^(having friendly feelings toward) ~~cooperation with~~ America.

Under these circumstances there is nothing surprising in the fact that the Atlantic Alliance has obeyed only the reflex of military defense, and that it entered the crisis from the moment that the problem was no longer primarily military.

In order to emerge from this crisis, it is precisely the general concept of the struggle for democracy that must be changed.

I share the opinion of Mr. Morgenthau concerning a policy for the Communist world and for the emerging nations. I should like to add only that in the first instance, if one wanted to try to increase the chances for success of ^{the} liberalizing current at work in the Communist world, it would be suitable (this being equally applicable to the organization of an effective defense) to end as rapidly as possible such false conditions as the non-recognition of the German Democratic Republic, the Oder-Neisse frontier and of Communist China. The West must maintain the military protection of West Berlin and be ready to defend its liberty, but it must forget the idea that Berlin could yet be the capital of a non-existent reunified German state. Formosa, finally, is morally defensible

only if it ceases to be a military fief of Chiang-Kai-shek's and a starting point for an impossible reconquest of China. Formosa must either quickly seek a form of democratic political life that can prove effectively that the population does not wish to be absorbed into Communist China, or else ^{is} not ~~be~~ worthy of being supported.

In the case of the emerging nations, it is not enough to accelerate decolonization, to give economic aid and to recognize the rights to neutrality of these countries. It is still necessary to end the traditional solidarity that links the governments of the former capitals to groups of big colonial capitalists and to tribal or feudal forces of the former colonies, for neocolonialism is composed precisely of such bonds.

The question arises of how the West must be reorganized to be able to confront such tasks:

If the burden of responsibility of Western policy was almost entirely that of the United States from 1945 to 1955, because the European states could only concern themselves with getting back on their feet today, on the other hand, Western Europe has once again become capable of assuming its part of the responsibility. It cannot do so, however, so long as it hasn't overcome the principle of the Nation-State.

There is considerable talk of transforming the Atlantic Pact into an Atlantic Community to keep all these countries together, and, because this term is very ambiguous, the idea has been specified in the recent American electoral campaign in saying that an Atlantic Federation must be established.

Whether called community or confederation, the problem still deals with an association of states, establishing common duties, creating certain common advisory bodies but allowing each state the right of decision and execution, in other words, of sovereignty.

Such a formula is not a solution but another way of expressing what already exists. The Atlantic Alliance has been from its birth an association of sovereign states, having as purpose the creation of a common defense in Europe, differing from traditional alliances in that it does not become active only in the instance of war, but that it tries to coordinate mutual defense in establishing common military service in peacetime. Like all associations of states throughout human history, it has functioned so long as the common purpose was asserted absolutely and the association was ruled unquestionably by one power alone. From the moment that these two conditions ceased to exist, the Atlantic Association began to disintegrate because of the centrifugal tendencies characteristic of the entire group of sovereign states.

To continue thinking along these lines would signify wanting to maintain the present impotence. The United States uses much of its energy in trying to keep up its function of leader in Europe, while the European states get used to believing that the major responsibilities belong to their strongest partner, and try to each ^{to} establish a special association with the leader, at the same time using each favorable occasion to ^{evading} ~~avoid answer-~~ing the requests of the guiding country and to pursue their particular interests.

It is a fact that today, the West consists of two political, military and economic centers: the United States and Western Europe. They share certain duties: of primary importance, a policy ^{toward} ~~for~~ the Communist world aiming to hold its own against ^{the USSR} ~~it~~ militarily, but also capable of inspiring liberalizing tendencies within; secondly, aid to emerging nations in the hope of increasing chances for their development towards democracy.

America and Europe do, nevertheless, have different tasks.

The United States has grave but marginal internal democratic problems such as that of the equality of the Negro; The European States must rise above the idea of the Nation-State which, even today, prevents democracy at the European level. The United States has the problem of good-neighborliness with Latin America, the European states, with Africa. The United States must hold its own against the danger of a possible war of rockets and atomic bombs, Europe, against possible conventional war. The United States has a continental structure for governmental reforms that it has no reason to modify; Europe is divided and restless because of the need to overcome this division.

The list of differences could be enlarged, but it is already sufficient to demonstrate that the West must logically be organized in two political centers having very strong but independent bonds of solidarity between them.

If we wish to state the whole truth concerning the military presence of the United States in Europe, we must first establish that it is diminishingly necessary for reasons of military strategy, but continues still and increasingly to be necessary because it constitutes the only unifying force actually present in Europe.

The effects of this external force are contradictory, however. On the one hand, it gives Europe confidence, but on the other, it creates a continual feeling of frustration and irresponsibility. It keeps the various countries united but still encourages each to follow its particular national ways. Paradoxically, it is America's padded protectorate that allows England to consider itself apart from Europe, France to pretend a return to national grandeur and Germany to dream of national reunification which is its idea of grandeur.

If the European pole of the West wishes to cease being a dead weight and become a positive factor, it must overcome its present structure

of sovereign national states and quickly attain the form of true federal ⁹ unity.

The European governments know this, but try as hard as they can to avoid accomplishing this step which would be the salvation of Europe but also their own reduction to the level of regional powers. Public opinion in Europe also realizes this necessity but finds difficulty in translating this feeling into political action because political life is locked up in the vice of national forms of government, in parties no less than in institutions calling to the state for necessary reforms.

The aspiration to unity, however, exists today in Europe. It has recently been manifested again in a motion submitted not long ago to the Italian Parliament by a group of deputies who invite the government to propose the convocation of a European Constituent.

This aspiration exists. It can have few or many chances, but it is Europe's only chance. Unless it is realized, I see only an irreversible process of downfall for democracy which shall in the long run include America.

The United States no longer has the authority it had ten years ago in Europe. It still has enough to offer so that the future of Western Europe would be turned to federal unity rather than back to outdated nationalism.

The United States can explain that it would intervene if Europe were the victim of aggression, but that it no longer assumes the duty of its defense. It can help end the legend of German reunification, it can cease supporting Franco and it can declare itself for an independent Algeria.

Europe would then be obliged to abandon its present state of irresponsibility, and in its own interest to undertake the creation of this unity that alone can reestablish a deep solidarity between Europe and America.