

University of Missouri, St. Louis

IRL @ UMSL

UMSL Global

1-1-1980

Thinking the Unthinkable

Helmut Wagner

Follow this and additional works at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/cis>



Part of the [International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wagner, Helmut, "Thinking the Unthinkable" (1980). *UMSL Global*. 181.

Available at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/cis/181>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by IRL @ UMSL. It has been accepted for inclusion in UMSL Global by an authorized administrator of IRL @ UMSL. For more information, please contact marvinh@umsl.edu.

Thinking the Unthinkable

by

Helmut Wagner

THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE
ROUND THREE IN AMERICAN EUROPEAN RELATIONS

HELMUT WAGNER

Introduction

It is hard even to imagine that the United States, which has been firmly engaged in western Europe for more than thirty years will evacuate its garrisons and airbases from that continent. But to anticipate such a decision may prove to be more than just an intellectual exercise or a political provocation. Neither the Europeans nor the Russian leaders seem to like the idea of American withdrawal. No "Ami-go-home" campaign is in evidence in Europe. Quite the contrary, most Europeans sincerely hope that the Americans will stay for at least an indefinite period.

This attitude alone would be worth analyzing. But more is in question. Are the reasons for the presence of the United States military in Europe on territory far away from their own really self-evident? What binds American forces to an area which was conquered and liberated more than a generation ago? Is there in fact no substitute for the American army in Europe? Let us confess frankly that there might be reasons for stationing some American troops for some time outside of America. But, concerning Europe, are these reasons still strong and convincing enough that such an unnatural state of order should and could last? For how long? Our doubts are supported by the lessons of history. Foreign troops on foreign territories always have been symptoms of disorder and temporary arrangements. Either the territory occupied by foreign troops was bound to be incorporated or the troops occupying foreign territory were forced to leave sooner or later. Has that situation, valid since ancient times, become obsolete in our own age with respect to the United States?

Why have American troops been stationed in Europe at all? What are the gains and losses of America's military presence in today's Europe? And what are the risks of making Europe herself responsible for her own security and for her own shortcomings? -- To start thinking before a state of emergency exists can neither be forbidden nor untimely. It is the only way, indeed, not to be taken by surprise, but to master events which will happen anyway, whether one likes them or not.

II. The Forced Involvement

The engagement of the United States in Europe during and after the Second World War has been looked upon by Americans as a short term commitment. During the war, this opinion was shared by interventionist and universalist circles in the United States. President Roosevelt noted in a memo dated 21 February 1944, that he could see no chance of stationing American troops in Europe after the war: "I just cannot do it! I would have to bring them all back home. As I suggested before, I denounce in protest the paternity of Belgium, France and Italy..." At the Yalta Conference, on 5 February 1945, he explained to Stalin why he would be unable to retain American troops in Europe: Congress and the People would not permit that "American troops could remain in Europe for longer than two years." The opposition against such a formal and long-term commitment began to melt away only after it was recognized by Americans that although the war in Europe was won, peace was not secured. Five years after the American troops landed on the Continent in Normandy, four years after the end of the war, American soldiers were still stationed in Europe, no longer as liberators but as the guarantors of Western Europe. Withdrawal of these troops was no longer under consideration. On the contrary, they had become an integrated element of the Atlantic Alliance. They were the backbone, the convincing element of the West European Defense

Forces. The United States committed itself in Europe threefold and thereby determined the destiny of Western Europe for a generation.

The first commitment of the United States in Europe resulted from the decisions of the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945. The participating victorious powers, among them the United States, declared unanimously and formally that they intended to jointly administer their respective zones of Germany and sectors of Berlin. This intention, from the very beginning described as a "mockery" by George K. Kennan, proved to be unworkable. Consequently, the joint Peace Conference scheduled by President Truman for 2 August 1945 was indefinitely postponed. The American troops remained where the Second World War and the Allied wartime agreements had placed them: in the Western Sectors of Berlin and in the Western Zones of Germany. Today they were still there, together with the armed forces of Great Britain and France. In West Berlin their presence is based on original occupation rights. In the Federal Republic of Germany, created in 1949 out of Western Zones, they derive their legal status from the 1952 Treaty of Alliance.

The Marshall Plan was announced in the summer of 1947. The United States thereby initiated and supported the economic reconstruction of Western Europe. In addition to the Plan's economic objectives, it possessed an inherent political attraction for the United States. John Foster Dulles stated this in his address of 17 January 1947, which was properly described by Walter Lippmann as "a turning point of great significance in the development of U.S. foreign policy." For the first time in the post-war era the United States possessed a coherent plan for its future European policy, supported by Republican and Democratic leaders alike. The main features of this concept, which anticipated the economic union of Western Europe, including West Germany, joined three objectives. The economic union of Western Europe would,

first, eliminate fears of a resurrected Germany and make a new war between European states impossible. Second, a long range relief for the United States from its commitments would become possible. And third, Soviet expansion in Western Europe would be barred. The realization of this plan provided the initial impulse for the Western European nations in their economic and political revitalization and integration. At the same time, this development also carried with it the inescapable seed of the East-West division of Europe.

The third self-imposed commitment of the United States resulted from the conclusion of the North Atlantic Pact in April of 1949. This supplemented and expanded an earlier European initiative, the Brussels Pact of the Spring of 1948. In the Treaty of Brussels, five European states--Great Britain, France and the Benelux-states--joined together in a common defense policy and created a joint organization, the Western Defense Committee with its seat in Fontainbleau. The Atlantic Pact was subsequently signed by the 12 original parties in Washington. Thus the states committed to the integrated defense of Europe, the goal of the Brussels Pact, were joined by the United States, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Portugal and Italy. The number of states bound by the North Atlantic Treaty increased to 15 with the accession of Greece and Turkey in 1952 and of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955. Thereby, a collective security system was created in the North Atlantic region, north of the Tropic of Cancer, which made an attack on any of its member states automatically a hostile act against the whole alliance. The pact does not have any provisions as to the stationing of armed forces outside of the boundaries of the respective member states. However, it was understood and desired--at least in 1949-- by all member states that American troops would remain, and that Canadian units as well were to be stationed in Europe. This demonstrated convincingly the main purpose of the Alliance,

to meet jointly any armed aggression. The alliance was by no means concluded for an indefinite period. According to the text of the treaty it was to have been revised after ten years to adjust to new developments. After twenty years every member state was free to renounce its membership and to withdraw from the alliance after one year's notice.

This unprecedented but by no means irrevocable commitment of the United States in Europe had two immediate consequences. As the United States assumed the task of guaranteeing the economic reconstruction, military security, and political independence of Western Europe, it also assumed burdens and guarantees which were only calculable on a short-term basis. These commitments were forced upon it by the military and economic impotence of Western Europe, and by its own superiority in the period from 1945 to 1949. The situation of the United States at that time, in April 1949, was described by Joseph Alsop, who most certainly did not think only of Europe, as follows: "We are not just knee deep--we are up to our necks--in the cold waters of world responsibility." Was the United States not in the process of over-extending itself in Europe as well as in other areas of the world? With its threefold commitment, the United States promoted the reconstruction of Western Europe, the independence of its states, and their first steps towards political integration. All this could only have been instituted and achieved under the political protection of the United States. The failure of the Berlin Blockade in 1948 proves this. The West Europeans alone were unable to fill the power vacuum that existed in Western Europe after 1945. Under the protection and with the aid of the United States, the West European states were able to recuperate from the wounds of war and to regain international prestige, power, and influence. But their success and the inter-

national constellation, which likewise was not going to be justified on the status of 1949, requires that the continued engagement of the United States must be viewed today against the background of these changes in the last 30 years.

111 The Unequal Alliance

The fact that the formal alliance and informal ties between the United States and the West European nations resulted in an unequal partnership, was unavoidable in light of the post-war situation. That it has remained so to this day is the fault of the Europeans alone. They had it in their hands to give the alliance a different structure. Through their unification they, or at least a part of them, could have become an equal partner of the United States. Instead, they cemented the unequal partnership by their continuing disunity.

In the fifties, the road to equality was traveled with the assistance and the blessing of the United States. It was blocked, when the French National Assembly, or to be more exact a majority consisting of a coalition of Communists, Socialists and Gaullists, decided on 30 August 1954 not to ratify the treaty establishing a European Defense Community. Instead they returned the Treaty to the committees, without openly rejecting it; there the matter rests still today. As a result of this refusal to progress beyond the traditional concept of sovereignty, what has been done to foster a European Political Community has remained piecemeal. The European Economic Community, which was founded in 1958 based on the Treaties of Rome has for its supranational organ, the Brussels Commission. Created in 1959, the European Economic Free Trade Zone (EFTA), a reaction to the EEC, quietly has dissolved itself. With whom should the United States under these circumstances cooperate? With the formerly six, today nine-member states

of the EEC? With the formerly thirteen, today ten European NATO partners? Or even better, why not deal with each of the twenty West European states bilaterally? This structural defect in the European Community is the cause of the "troubled partnership" between the United States and the disunited states of Western Europe.

The birth defect of the alliance has had its consequences. It has made the United States the dominant power of this alliance and has condemned it to assume its leadership. But a hegemonial power, and that is what the United States nolens volens has become in respect to Western Europe, has never been welcome anywhere, at best it has been respected. Its de facto dominance causes displeasure and fosters suspicion whatever the United States may do. This is exactly what the United States has experienced, in Europe no less than in other parts of the world. Its prestige decreased in proportion, as the Western Europeans came to believe that they no longer needed its full protection, especially where the United States had become an obstacle to their own ambitions. This is only natural. It is evident that resentments based on feelings of inferiority cannot be eliminated by anything less than the creation of equality. Does the United States really deem it necessary to damage its prestige by accepting uncritically the role thrust upon it by a structural defect of the alliance, for which the West Europeans are solely responsible?

Whether the United States wanted it or not, whether or not it was prepared, after 1945 it had to accept the consequences of its primacy: a world-wide role of leadership which included its relations with Western Europe. But such a position cannot endure in an alliance of sovereign states. While it is desired and accepted in crisis situations; it is unacceptable in normal times. It has been mitigated by circumstances which have prevented complete

dissolution of the alliance. The time has passed when the Western Europeans were dependent on the economic aid, technological know-how, and industrial management of the United States. Even the disengagement of the European currencies from the U. S. Dollar has taken place. The still close ties in these fields are achieved on the bilateral and unilateral bargaining level and take place to the benefit of all participants through generally well-functioning intergovernmental and interorganizational channels. What remains, at least in the view of the West Europeans, is a remnant of joint interests which requires the formal guarantee of the United States. These interests consist primarily in maintaining the status quo in Berlin, and in guaranteeing the defensibility of Western Europe. Up to now West Europeans alone have not been able convincingly to secure these common interests. The first problem stems from the German question, hopelessly bungled in 1945 and thereafter unresolved. The other problem results from the impotence and incapability of Western Europe. Both seem to require the military presence of the United States in Europe still today. But do they really?

The reluctance of the United States to interfere directly in the internal affairs of the West European nations and to enforce uncompromisingly its interests even at a time when it was unquestionably able to do so is one of the extenuating circumstances which have given this uneven alliance such a long life. The United States was not compelled to use such methods to secure its own, limited European interests. The far-reaching congruity of interests between the United States and the West European states, their governments and peoples has neutralized to a certain extent the disparity between them. If the United States has assumed for a time the role of a preponderant power in Europe, it was not through the subjugation or patronage of its European Allies. The emancipation of the West European nations could

therefore take place without resistance. It need not be wrested from the United States which did not acquire it in a struggle for foreign domination. What stood and still stands in the way of West European political emancipation is not foreign domination, but the impotence stemming from its own disunity. The operative factors conducive to the long-sought union of the states of Western Europe lack a catalyst; this limits the unity of the continent to the mere facts of geography and to the bond among its people of a common spiritual and cultural identity; it cripples the unification process. This process will only regain momentum if the status of Western Europe is questioned from the outside.

There are other, less openly articulated, but no less valid reasons for West Europeans to be interested in the continued American presence on their continent. The historic fears of a Germany in 1945 has not silenced them, and they are constantly nourished by the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany as the strongest economic and military power in Western Europe. It is true that these old fears are allayed by new insights. A prosperous Federal Republic of Germany is necessary to the prosperity of the old continent. An armed Federal Republic of Germany is required for the defense of Western Europe as a whole. This inner conflict of many Europeans vis-a-vis the Federal Republic can be expressed as follows: they wish that the Federal Republic could at one and the same time be strong enough to stand up to the Soviet Union, but without frightening Luxembourg. The presence of the United States eases their sleep. But what would happen if the United States turned its back on the continent? Who could hamper the Federal Republic from becoming the dominant power of Western Europe? Who could stop the Federal Republic if it should decide to exercise its national option to seek and find a solution to its problems on Soviet terms? It

can be anticipated that such a development could best be barred by deeply and firmly committing the Federal Republic to the West European Community. By that the possibility of a Germany going it alone would be eliminated once and for all. But this seems to be beyond the comprehension of many. Instead of creating the conditions needed to eliminate old fears and to open the way to new insights that would benefit all Europeans, they seek their future in a substitute. The presence of the United States enables them to do so.

How fragile this substitute is becomes apparent whenever the United States turns to the Federal Republic, lacking another more competent and more representative European partner. This immediately causes the phantom vision of a Bonn-Washington axis to haunt the rest of Europe. Both suspects are immediately accused of making arrangements and reaching decisions over the heads of the others. Indeed, bilateral meetings and agreements do take place. This necessarily adds to the prestige of the Federal Republic, which has in its ties to Berlin another special reason to seek a close relationship with the United States. All this makes obtaining consensus in Western Europe that much more difficult. It fosters old and new rivalries and puts the emphasis on the disparities between the Western European states. The weaker of them feel neglected, refuse to accept their responsibilities. They react with annoyed, powerless expression of anti-Americanism and anti-German sentiments. In this manner the United States fosters, albeit unwittingly, West European differences. At the same time these differences make its negotiations with the governments of disunited Western Europe difficult and frustrating. This in turn is the reason why they usually do not take place, as for example demonstrated in the much-publicized "Year of Europe." It is unavoidable that this situation will not improve as long as Western Europe does not speak with one voice.

In addition to the neutralization of the German threat, the presence of the United States is desired still for another inner-European reason. There is grave concern over the existence of strong communist parties in some Western European countries, especially in Italy and France. In this respect the United States virtually plays the role of assuring that this incorporation into government would be tolerable and that the expressed sympathy for the Soviet Union would be meaningless. The presence of the United States in Europe is viewed as a hidden trump-card, which can be retained for an emergency. But what is the value of this guarantee? That American troops are not an adequate solution to the internal political problems of foreign nations should have become apparent. Their use in domestic affairs would be counterproductive. Whatever the United States would do in such a case, and they could if they wanted to employ other more effective means, recourse to the American guarantee would be tantamount to political bankruptcy of Western Europe, a default not covered by the capital represented by the American presence.

The alleged coercion by the United States functions as an alibi. The inability of West Europeans to cope with their own problems is thereby defused; their indifference is dismissed as a matter of no consequence. The high percentage of communist votes in countries such as Italy and France are without doubt to a large extent the expression of dissatisfaction with the existing, inflexible party system, one which makes a change of government almost impossible. This has not restrained Western Europe's political parties from dragging the United States into their domestic political squabbles. On the contrary, the heat and lack of forethought of election campaigning tend to make the United States a scapegoat likely to be blamed for anything imaginable. Its sins of omission are exaggerated, and entrenched governments

are depicted as its willing accomplices. Apparently, this appeal attracts votes; otherwise it would not be used. The involvement of the United States in European elections could well be ignored by the U. S., which seems to have grown accustomed to the ingratitude of Europeans. But it cannot ignore the fact that its involvement has long-term effects which could be eliminated quite easily. This anti-Americanism, which is kept alive by opposition circles, will, as time goes on, have potentially significant effects on societal forces, especially the intellectual elites. They will view the United States as their number one enemy, and they will no longer be willing to enter into a dialogue with it. The United States cannot be indifferent to this in the long run, especially since it is in its power to change it. As long as the United States is present in Europe and as long as the Western European States are not solely responsible for their internal stability and their external security, it will remain an attractive target. Only its physical separation from Western Europe will remove it from the domestic political firing line.

The engagement of the United States in Europe was necessary immediately after 1945 to fill a power vacuum. It could only have been filled from the outside at that time. And indeed, it has been filled by non-European powers, by the United States and the Soviet Union. Contrary to the Soviet Union, the United States did not in the past stand in the way of the European Emancipation and integration process. It was not afraid of this process, nor did it have to be; it promoted it, and it should continue to do so in the future. If the function of the military presence of the United States has changed over the years, then it is time to accept the consequences. It is no longer the necessary requirement for the emancipation and integration of Western Europe, but only an alibi not to complete them, even though this

has become possible, then the American presence has lost its intended purpose. Then it has digressed from an instrument of change to an obstacle of change. The removal of this obstacle would destroy an artificial idyllic setting in which the West European nations have established themselves in a manner that limits costs and avoids responsibility. Deprived of their alibi they must be thrown in the stormy arena of world politics. They must be forced to do whatever is in their power and to cope with the necessities. The United States would once again serve the Europeans well if it would force them to act by withdrawing its military forces from Western Europe. By doing that, they would serve, last but not least, their own interests.

IV. The Changed Balance

In the more than 30 years that have passed since the end of World War II, the international scene, and with it the political status of Western Europe, has significantly changed. It is no secret, nevertheless, that foreign policy conceptions of the present proceed in their accustomed path, ignoring the developments which have evolved since the immediate post-war era, where their line of thinking remains rooted. One example of this development is the changed international status of Western Europe. In Western Europe alone, approximately 380 million people live close together in an area of only 4.3 million square kilometers; of this total, approximately 260 million people on 1.5 million square kilometers comprise the EEC. In comparison, 255 million people live on 22 million square kilometers in the Soviet Union and 220 million people live on 9.4 million square kilometers in the United States.

Long past are the times when Paul Henri Spaak was able to say (in 1951) that this Europe lived in the fear of 190 million Russians and from the charity of 150 million Americans. In 1973, Johan Galtung talked about the EEC

a superpower which among the superpowers was exceeded in population only by China; which had dollar reserves double those of the Americans; which had a share of the total world trade ten times that of the Soviet Union; and whose central attraction for the other twelve West European countries, together with its association with 54 African, Caribbean and Pacific states would enable it to interfere on almost every continent. The picture painted by the Cantonist Galtung, of the factual and potential power of Western Europe, is so threatening that it should create anxiety the whole world over. But this vision is as fictitious as that of Europe's incurable impotence.

Its self-consciousness and prosperity is secured by a bare thread. Only 320,000 American soldiers, concentrated on strategic points and deployable on a moment's notice, protect it from a harsh awakening. This is the concept of a widely accepted West European fable. Western Europe has advanced to become the second largest industrial power of the world. It does not neglect to articulate its opinion, although often with many voices, in all international matters. Reserved seats are awaiting its representatives at all summits, including those of communist countries. It has 1.4 million soldiers under arms and even a modest nuclear potential up its sleeve. But if only one battalion of American troops are to be withdrawn it panics. Why? Because it becomes aware then and only then of its negligence. This excitement is usually only of short duration. The immediate assurance of the United States that it will stand by its commitments and that its troops will remain in Europe puts the artificial world of the Western Europeans right back into an acceptable state of being. As long as they can be sure of the voluntary hostages provided for them, they are not compelled to ensure their own security.

What are the reasons that this economically recuperated, culturally extravagant, and militarily well equipped Western Europe hides like a mouse when the question of its security arises? Why are the West Europeans, otherwise not at all shy, so reluctant to rely on their own power? Because they know only too well that they are weak in their present political condition. The European Community is politically weak and insecure because it is disunited. It is disunited because it does not constitute a political union, one which is able to speak with one voice and to form one common intent. Its organizational form is that of a Confederation, each one of its members with the veto, which produces disunity. Movement toward the goal of political integration for Western Europe, demanded time and time again, has come virtually to a standstill. It has not progressed for 20 years, from 1958 to 1978. The expected spill-over effect which was to result from the creation of the Economic Union has not taken place. The extension of the Union has not lead to an intensification. Agreement was reached on the European Political Cooperation of the Foreign Ministers in 1970. The creation of a European Council of Chiefs of State and Government followed in 1974. But these are institutions of a federation of states, totally unfit to serve as building blocks for a federally organized Political Community, for a Union with only one common supranational policy and decision-making center.

A few far-sighted European politicians such as Robert Schumann, Konrad Adenauer and Alcide de Gasperi, who perceived it, transformed it immediately into a policy concentered for continental unification. Post Stalinist Russia, concerned to an ever-increasing extent with itself and the consolidation of the sphere of influence acquired in 1945, lost its role - perhaps only temporarily - as a primary catalyzing agent. Its military superiority

compared to Western Europe, which has not diminished over the years, has been, in the view of the Europeans, neutralized and offset by American guarantees. On the economic level, however, the balance has drastically shifted. Both halves of Europe has recuperated from the effects of the Second World War. But the reconstruction, which took place under incomparable conditions and prerequisites, has led to a productivity advantage and a higher standard of living in Western Europe. This advantage will be a factor for some time to come. The countries of Eastern Europe are deeply in debt to the West. The government debts of Poland alone, which are guarded as state secrets, amounted to almost 30 billion dollars by 1979. In their relationship to Western Europe, the East Block states, including the Soviet Union, remain what they were in the past: markets for industrial products; potential customers for West European capital, technological know-how, and industrial management; and suppliers of raw materials and basic foodstuffs. As far as the ideology of the Soviet Union is concerned, once one of its most desired exports, it has decreased considerably in value. It is traded in intellectual circles of Western Europe below value, just as the Soviet currency is in Western banking circles. Both the ruble and the ideology are not convertible. What would the Soviet Union be if the Red Army were not stationed along the Luebeck-Pilsen-Szeged-Plovdiv line in Central Europe and if the nations of Western Europe were united? The Soviet Union would be nothing more than a power on Europe's flank forced into the defensive. This loss of attraction and international influence has its causes in domestic as well as in foreign policy. The Soviet economy suffers from partial paralysis even though it possesses large reserves of raw materials and a sufficient pool of qualified labor. The anachronistic economic system does not seem to be able to eliminate chronic bottlenecks in agricul-

tural production and the housing industry. The whole economic infrastructure is in a hopelessly backward condition despite and because of the high degree of regimentation and financial investment. The formerly high growth rates belong to the past. Since the beginning of the seventies it amounts to barely five per cent. This is less than the growth rate of Portugal's economy in the final phase of its authoritarian regime. The Soviet leadership is totally engulfed in the internal management of monster bureaucracies and the control of autonomous forces. Therefore it is extremely reluctant to institute any form of change. This in turn limits its flexibility in foreign policy, even in its relations with its client states in Eastern Europe.

The post-Stalinist Soviet leadership has always asserted itself in foreign policy when it was absolutely necessary to maintain Soviet power and when it could do so without risk. It did not hesitate to intervene militarily in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Nor did it fail to actively support requests for financial aid and foreign policy support wherever it was asked, as in Cuba, Angola, Ethiopia, Afganistan and Vietnam. But especially this primary interest in preserving Soviet power and its economic emphasis have allowed the Soviet client states to expand step by step their internal flexibility. They did not all use fully this area of development. But at least the governments of Romania, Hungary, and Poland have realized that limited emancipation is possible and that to attain it is profitable. Egypt, Somali, North Korea and Albania have demonstrated that, under special conditions, even a change of ideological camps is possible.

Fixed, but nonetheless flexible limits of emancipation exist too for the states located within the Soviet sphere of influence. The strict observance of these limits is guaranteed by a number of mechanisms at the top of which

stands the Red Army, which is present in all Eastern European countries except Romania. It is understandable that the Soviet Union is by no means interested in dismantling this imperialistic instrument of power. This is also the reason why they not only welcome the presence of American troops in Western Europe, but actually even fear their withdrawal. The only valid alibi for the stationing of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe would be eliminated. What the American President could do, but so far has not done, the Soviet Union can hardly dare to risk. Without foreseeable disadvantages to the domestic policies of the West European nations, the American troops could be withdrawn at any given time. The withdrawal of the Soviet military from Eastern Europe on the other hand would amount to nothing less than a game of Russian roulette for the Soviet leadership.

At present the Soviet leadership finds itself confronted with a new type of foreign policy problem. The Communist world movement, formerly a reliable and willing instrument of Stalin's policies, is divided and can provide either very limited or no support at all to the Soviet Union. China has left the Soviet sphere of influence. The latent conflict within China seems to be based on different objectives; it seems to be pre-programmed, based on these different objectives and intensified by ideological rivalries. The unavoidable emancipation of the most populous communist country from the Moscow center has left deep wounds. If, within the Soviet leadership, there were still hopes that a communist Western Europe may one day be digested under Soviet leadership, then they have abandoned this idea quite certainly after the open break with Peking. What the leadership of the Soviet Union secretly fears, that an independent power of equal or even superior strength may establish itself on its Western flank, just as China is on its Eastern border, is the declared objective of the Chinese leadership. If the Chinese did not

criticize the stationing of American troops in Western Europe in the past, it was only because they were afraid that the power vacuum resulting from the eventual withdrawal of American troops in Western Europe would be filled not from within, but by the Soviet Union. This danger would lose its credibility if it could be ensured that Western Europe, no longer at the mercy of the United States, would unite and form an additional center of world power. Peking would probably have no objections to such a development which would accord well with its intermediate-zone-theory and with Chinese interests.

At present the communist parties of Western Europe are only of marginal value to the Soviet Union. In the Western European countries where they are strong and able to attract voters, such as Italy, Spain and France, they have increased their distance in their relations to the Soviet Union. This is most certainly not in the interest of the Soviets, but it does not hurt them either. The Soviet leadership has accepted this development, which it could not have prevented in any case, without letting it come to an open break between them. The interest in a closer cooperation seems to be limited on both sides. If the Soviet leadership has good reasons not to actively seek a Sovietization of Western Europe, it is nevertheless in its interest to maintain even a loose relationship with the ideologically close parties of Western Europe. The Soviet Union finds itself in a situation similar to other world powers. It can no longer select its friends under conditions that assure that they will be willing to readily subordinate their interests to those of the super power. It must accept those forces which seem to guarantee the greatest political advantage. But these are the great political parties of Western Europe, whether they be communist or not. They alone are able to offer the economic potential of Western Europe to the Soviet Union, through state-guaranteed loans for example, and to assure that the poli-

tical status of Western Europe will not change to the disadvantage of the Soviet Union.

For the leaders of the openly or secretly sympathetic parties of Western Europe relations with the Soviet Union have become a question of political opportunity, too. They have no reason to praise the Soviet Union as their ideal; this would only reduce their chances of getting elected. They also have no reason to make the Soviet Union the final arbiter of their personnel decisions; this would be against their own interests. Likewise, they cannot wish for a time when they would have to take orders in a Soviet dominated Western Europe; here the experience of history frightens them away. But to support their internal political status, to demonstrate that they are not a lost and lonely group, but part of a worldwide movement of the future, for that the Soviet Union is still good enough. What could make their internal political radicalism and foreign policy anti-Americanism more believable than an occasional flirtation with the Soviet Union, or a participation in a communist world conference? This enables them to shock those who are afraid of them and keep the sympathizers for whom a break with the Soviet Union would be against their ideological faith. They flirt with the Soviet Union and hope that a marriage with the Kafkaesque Moscow headquarters will never come about. They believe that geography and the United States are between them and this undesirable future. They can afford this flirtation without fear of consequences only as long as the political geography of Europe remains unchanged and the forces of the United States stay where they are.

The international balance of power established in 1945 has not shifted in the last 30 years in favor of the Soviet Union. At that time the Soviet leadership could entertain the justifiable hope that East Asia, through the

defeat of Japan turned into a power vacuum, would fall into the Soviet orbit. And for a time it looked as if that might occur. But today China has not only gained equality, but has also assumed the leadership in East Asia. The smaller states in this area now at least have an alternative. They are no longer totally dependent on the Soviet Union. In the past the future of Europe was also uncertain. The Soviet leadership could have dreamed of the possibility that the whole of Europe would become a cordon sanitaire. East Europe, occupied by the Red Army, would be sovietized and thereby constitute the first protective circle around the Soviet Union. Western Europe, militarily impotent, disunited and neutralized, would form the second protective circle. The power vacuum in Western Europe expected to come about after the defeat of Germany and the withdrawal of the United States, made the possibility of the organization of such a buffer and exploitation zone seem a reality. Today, Soviet influence is restricted to Eastern Europe alone. Western Europe has been excluded from the Soviet sphere of influence, but still does not depend on its own power; it requires the protection of the United States. But only when this borrowed existence has been replaced, when an accepted West European power has become reality, only then will the post-war period be over. The transformation of the European Economic Community into a Political Community is the condition sine qua non of equality with the Soviet Union and with the United States open to the other European states, in Western Europe as well as in Eastern Europe, an alternative to the petrified status quo of the post-war era.

V. The Calculated Risk

The thought that the borrowed political existence of Western Europe seems destined to become anachronistic is not original. Seven years ago George F. Kennan wrote, "We are already approaching a point where Western Europe

could, if it so wished, effectively defend itself, by its own means and without American assistance, against pressures or efforts from the Soviet side to exert undue influence. But this point has not yet been reached, particularly not in the consciousness of the Western Europeans themselves, conditioned as they are to seeing their security as resting in the American nuclear umbrella." Much the same thought occurred to Raymond Aron in 1973, "What is unreasonable and ultimately unacceptable is that 250 million Europeans with a per capita income far higher than the Eastern European countries should confess themselves incapable of defending themselves and rush to Uncle Sam like scared children to beg him not to withdraw a few thousands or a few tens of thousands of GIs - GIs who, according to Roosevelt, were not going to stay in Europe anyway after hostilities ended. I must confess to some sympathy for this line of argument. I even happen to think that if the American diplomats followed . . . (this) advice, they might perhaps render political Europe a service similar to that which they rendered economic Europe a quarter of a century ago. If the Europeans were confronted not with vague apprehensions about a possible withdrawal, but with the certainty that the last GIs will have recrossed the Atlantic by a stated date, could they not find in themselves and in the smell of danger the initiative they need to rise above their status as protected states?" What are the risks to part with the status which has turned from advantage to disadvantage?

The matter in question is the continued presence of American troops on the European continent, not the close cultural, economic, military, and political relations between the United States and Western Europe. Can one be separated from the other? It has already been pointed out that the unlimited presence of American troops, by necessity, encourages a policy of non-concern. The West Europeans evade their responsibilities, and treat their obligations lightly;

they neglect to do what is in their power and tend to believe that they know and do everything better. If this were ended by the withdrawal of American troops from Europe, then it is difficult to conceive how this could add tension to the relations between America and Europe. These relations in effect would be normalized through the elimination of this protectionist relationship. They could become as normal as relations can be between truly equal partners, both of whom have a wide spectrum of common interests. There is, indeed, no lack of such common interests and no doubt as to their continuation.

It is inconceivable that, under changed conditions, a new modus vivendi mutually beneficial to all participants could not be found, if both sides are equally interested. Assuming this common interest, the form of Western Europe's military independence becomes relevant. The initiative can only come from the American President. This is due to the difficulties of the political situation in Western Europe. His announcement that the United States and its European allies are willing to enter into negotiations with the Soviet Union and other directly interested countries, over the withdrawal of all foreign military forces presently stationed in sovereign European states within a period of five years, is the first step. This would exclude the withdrawal of troops by the former Allies, including the Soviet Union, from Berlin. Berlin is the only place in the whole of Europe where Allied occupation law is still in effect, where the formerly Allied Powers jointly exercise sovereignty. To hold on to this relic from the post-war era is warranted by the commitments of the Western Powers, and by the common interest - however diverse the motives for it - in maintaining the status quo in West Berlin, which is only possible through the military presence there of the victorious Powers of 1945. The Soviet Union would have the

option of reactivating the occupational status in East Berlin and thereby maintaining - just as do the other three powers in their respective sectors - a troop contingent of 5,000 soldiers. This would amount to approximately 20,000 soldiers, the only foreign troops remaining on European territory.

Such a bargaining offer directed primarily at the Soviet Union is only meaningful if it is intended seriously. To test the willingness of the Soviet Union to negotiate and to determine its flexibility in the course of an international conference in Berlin is one thing; the determination of the United States to lead by example, if need be without Soviet compliance, is another. But only if both are put together do they become convincing. The United States has no reason to let anybody dictate to it its presence in Europe, neither the frightened Western Europeans nor the frightened Soviets. They would become virtually collaborators of the Soviet Union by pampering the anxieties of the Soviet Union, by refraining from doing the possible merely because the Soviet Union is presently unable to do the same. The United States would not serve Western European interests either if it listened to European governments and refrained from confronting them with a clear and unmistakable alternative.

For 25 years the unwillingness of the Western European nations to organize their own defense, and to constitute themselves as one political union has been notorious. Yet their inability has never been put to the test. They have never felt American protection to be burdensome. It was primarily advantageous. What should motivate them to move closer together and to provide for their own defense after they have deemed this unnecessary for 25 years? Only a challenge which endangers everything they have achieved may be able to do so. The announcement of the American President that the American troops would be withdrawn from Western Europe would have such an effect.

Either the West Europeans will find the energy to reorganize or the Finlandization will be their self-elected destiny. The announcement of the American President would give them a period of five years, no more. What the American presence in Europe was unable to achieve, the American withdrawal from Europe may well accomplish.

To confront the West Europeans with the alternative of gaining political stature or relinquishing their political existence is no doubt a form of shock treatment with uncertain outcome. If their sense of self-preservation is dead, then the American presence will not help either in the long run. Then they are beyond saving. If they accept the challenge, then they will have to develop the European Economic Community into a Political Community. This could be taken up by immediately summoning a European Constitutional Assembly to meet in Paris or in London. This assembly could consist of an equal number of delegates from the European Parliament and from the nine national Parliaments. The assembly could be asked to work out a Constitution within a period of one year; it would take effect as soon as it had been ratified by at least six of the nine national Parliaments and by the European Parliament. This would ensure that a visible European Government could exist even before the last American soldier had left the European continent. If the United States were determined to support the European Union, then they would surely have no interest in preventing the withdrawal of American troops.

One of the first tasks of the newly-elected European Parliament certainly would be to adjust the military arrangements to the new political status quo. A bilateral Treaty of Defense could be concluded with the United States and possibly a multi-lateral Treaty of Defense with those interested West European states which do not belong to the West European Union. These agreements would replace the NATO Pact and would be, like it, in accordance with

the Charter of the United Nations. They would provide for a common defense, the stability and prosperity of the Atlantic region, and secure peace in this area. Such a new collective security system which would effectively cover the North Atlantic region, would permit, indeed necessitate, the reorganization of the West European Armed Forces. This would include the creation of a joint European High Command for all combat arms as well as provide for their equipment with the most modern conventional weapons. The necessary rearmament of West Europe could take place on the initiative of the European Government within the realm of a new comprehensive international disarmament agreement or it could at least lead to one.

The European Community would also be automatically a nuclear power. It did not necessarily have to become one under the present international power alignment in order to defend its territory. This it could do in close cooperation with other atomic powers, even with conventional weapons. But only as a nuclear power, for which purpose it would possess the nuclear potential of France and Great Britain, would it be able to work for a moratorium which would limit the number of nuclear weapons and make sure the number of nuclear powers is decreased. The creation of the political European Community would replace the bi-polarity of the post-war era and relieve the superpowers from their respective commitments. It would enable them to withdraw their forces to their own borders and would immediately change the conditions for the now ineffectual situation of disarmament efforts. Only under a changed international power constellation can one hope that they will succeed.

The dependence of the European integration on foreign policy stimuli is apparent not only through the thrust of the Stalinist Soviet Union of the 1940s and 1950s. One month after the creation of the Warsaw Pact in May 1955

the founding of a European Economic Community was decided at the Conference of Messina. Six months after the Soviet invasion in Hungary the Treaties of Rome were signed. One year after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had taken place, in August of 1968, an extension of the European Economic Community was decided on. Four and one half years later, on 1 January 1973, Great Britain, Denmark and Ireland became members. Thereafter, following the oil crisis of 1973, which had a rather disintegrative effect on the community, there was only one event which actually added to the development of the West European unification process: the 1978 agreement which on 1 March 1979 led to the adoption of the European Currency System.

When in November 1977, Roy Jenkins, the President of the European Commission, had advocated it, he found no support. No European Government believed that it was time to enter into such a risky venture. It was put aside as unrealistic. The Commission it was assumed, totally miscalculating its powers, returned it in order to motivate a reluctant Western Europe to return to the path of unification. Six months later, in April 1978, this subject was the primary topic of discussion at the European summit in Copenhagen, and within nine months it had been agreed upon. What has happened? What motivated the stubborn governments of France and Germany to act so quickly?

The initiative for the realization of the European Currency System was unintentionally provided by the American administration. The inactive, if not openly pleased attitude to the decreasing value of the U.S. dollar in relationship to other currencies, was viewed as an attack against the economic stability of Western Europe, one which could be countered only by unified action. Especially affected was the German economy. Chancellor Schmidt was afraid that the export-oriented German economy would take heavy

losses through the price increases, causing higher unemployment, and would force the Federal Bank to intervene to increase the money supply, in short, causing a rising inflation rate. In fact, the creation of a new "Zone of monetary stability" captured a wide constituency. The European Commission and the smaller European countries viewed this as a step towards a single European currency. Even Italy and France were motivated to integrate their currency reserves with those committed by the financially stronger countries. The European Currency System thus served a number of different interests, but it also proved to be an appropriate tool to protect the European currencies from the uncontrollable and negative consequences of the dollar fluctuations. Only the government of Great Britain did not join this concerted action. In justification of its domestic reasons for its reservations, two foreign policy considerations were cited: the European Currency System would affect national sovereignty and the System was basically anti-American. If this is its effect, apart from other motives, then the history of the origin of the European Currency System proves that the United States was unquestionably able to exert pressure on Western Europe. Pressures, and not insight, have motivated the majority of the European governments to accept limitations on their sovereignty. They realize that they are only strong enough to thwart dangerous pressure if they are united. If this impetus stems from an aimless American policy, how much more effective a determined policy by the American President could be.

To be sure, the main obstacles which according to David Watt block the European integration at the very moment are not easily overcome; the fierce nationalism of France, the national neuroses of Germany, the post-imperial insularity of the British and their stubbornly broken down economy, the depressing and ominous picture Italy shows, the distrust and rivalry of all

the European nations. It is evident, however, that this state of disorder and disunity is not going to be cured by the presence of American troops. It is a luxury they can afford only because of this presence. The experience of thirty years demonstrates that this remedy does not work, even if it were to be prescribed to the patients for a hundred years and more. The progress West Europe has made so far in the direction of its political union results without exception from pressures launched from the outside not from within. The announcement of the heads of all the EC countries, solemnly proclaimed at the Paris summit in 1972, that up to the end of the decade, in 1980, the political Union of Western Europe would be realized, was forgotten and suppressed by them until the fluctuation of the dollar frightened them. Only then did they start and succeed in working out a commonly supported arrangement in less than eight months. The West Europeans have gotten accustomed to the fact, their instincts have been narcotized by the fact, that the United States has honored their omissions and has guarded their existence. This unworthy state is not to be preserved forever. To prolong it runs against the interests of both sides. To quit it would open new horizons and could--eventually--muster an up-to-now non-existent willingness and mobilize an up-to-now inadequate strength.

Conclusion

It is not known whether the Europeans themselves will master their future. If their response will not match the challenge, their fate is determined. The United States is neither willing nor prepared to solve the domestic problems of Western Europe. Instead, Americans would do better to remind themselves what David Hume has written more than two centuries ago: "We are so declared in our opposition to . . . (a single) power and so alert in

defense of our allies that they always reckon upon our forces as upon their own and, expecting to carry on . . . (their quarrels) at our expense, refuse all reasonable terms of accommodation. Habent subjectos tanquam suos; viles ut alienos." *) And one should keep in mind, too, what Hume has advised: "To mortgage our revenues at so deep a rate in . . . (troubles) where we are only accessories was surely the most fatal delusion that a nation which had any pretension to politics and prudence has ever yet been guilty of. That remedy of . . . (holding out), if it be a remedy and not rather a poison, ought, in all reason, to be reserved to the last extremity; and no evil but the greatest and most urgent should ever induce us to embrace so dangerous an expedient."

Twice in this century, already, the United States has determined Europe's history in a memorable and decisive way. First, in the course and aftermath of the First World War, by President Wilson's decision to intervene directly and militarily in European affairs and by the decision forced upon him to leave Europe's population from starvation. Second, in the events and consequences of the Second World War, by liberating half of Europe, by fostering its recovery, and by making it safe for peace. There are two audacious and prudent actions, unparalleled in all history, which made it possible for Europe to survive and to recover: the launching of the Marshall Plan and of the North Atlantic Treaty. What turned out to be an undeserved windfall for the Europeans has proved to be a tolerable burden for the United States. Now, after thirty years of strong and steady involvement, when there is no doubt that the Europeans are strong enough, although not yet willing, to determine their own future, the time has come to start a third round of American-European relations. This time, based on the effective cooperation of two equal and competent partners stigmatized neither by an isolationism, deep-rooted in

American history, nor by an overcommitment resulting from a missionary foreign policy. The conditions of such a relationship are known, its contours can be anticipated, its necessity is obvious. What is lacking once again is action. The United States is confronted, for a third time in only one century, with a situation in which it has the chance, and indeed the privilege to determine Europe's destiny, for better or worse.

*They keep us in submission as if we were their slaves; they consider us cheap because we belong to someone else. - Tacitus, Hist. Lib., vol.1,p.113.