US Policy in Europe

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About a half century ago Theodore Roosevelt remarked that there was no longer any question that the United States must assume the role and responsibility of a world power. What he meant was not Weltmacht (world power) as understood by some in those days but cooperation on a world-wide basis of equal partnership.

Today the world situation is an interesting commentary on Roosevelt’s statement. The United States finds itself deeply involved in world affairs, in the problems and doings of many peoples at many points on the globe. This involvement, often undertaken reluctantly, has nothing in common with colonial or imperialist aspiration. It has come about because our nation, in its own interests, has found that these interests have become inextricably interwoven with those of other peoples.

There has developed a realization of the solidarity, the identity of interest of all peoples who aspire to peace, to security and to freedom. It is this identification of American destiny with the fate of other peoples that gives meaning to our foreign policy and its objectives today.

Let me be more specific. The United States has taken a foremost position in the endeavors of the United Nations to establish the institutions of an international life based on law and order. It is fighting in Korea against an unprovoked act of aggression which threatens the existence of all free peoples. It has taken the initiative in setting up an organization for the common security of the North Atlantic nations. It is involved in a vast program of economic assistance to needy nations and undeveloped areas.

In these days it is difficult to look back to the time when Mr. Roosevelt made his statement and when the world seemed quiet and secure. Peace in those days, as we now realize, was maintained only by a precarious equilibrium among the six or seven major European powers or by their occasional cooperation in the concert of Europe. The United States lived its own life apart from the turmoil of European politics.

Since 1914, however, the world situation has undergone a profound change. Today, in consequence of two global wars, in the place of the former concert of European powers, are two groups confronting each other over an exhausted Europe and a confused Asia, one the associated free nations of the West and the other the Soviet Union and its satellites. These two dominate the world picture.

It is true there exists today a world organization which was not present in 1914 and which tempers to some extent the strains and tensions between these two blocs. But the very survival of the United Nations may yet depend upon the relaxation of these tensions before a breaking point is reached.

The experiences of two world wars and the rapid advance of technology have resulted in a revolution in the methods of warfare unmatched even by the introduction of gunpowder in the 15th century. The enormous complexity and cost of modern armaments have made it almost prohibitive for small nations to rely on their own resources for defense. Only great industrial powers working in concert can shoulder the burden of national defense without courting bankruptcy. This fact has required a pooling of national resources on the part of states seeking even the minimum of security against aggression. The advance of science has reduced war as an instrument of national policy to a sheer absurdity.

In this new world the United States found its old luxury of isolationism completely outmoded. No longer could it hold the world at arm’s length, resting secure in its aloofness. Distances have shrunk or been obliterated. Oceans are no longer barriers or Maginot Lines of defense.

Germany needs Europe just as Europe needs Germany, warned Mr. Reber in his Munich address on US policy in Europe. Germany can not remain aloof, under any circumstances, he added, saying failure to integrate Germany with Europe would only mean its eventual absorption into the Soviet orbit and its subservience to the dictates of a foreign oppressor. (Photo by Jacoby, PRD HICOG)

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Europe, with its large and industrious population and its highly developed resources, was once the continent from which more than half the world was ruled. We no longer think of it, however, as the theater on which half a dozen great states maneuver for position and power, but shaken and weakened by two great wars it has nevertheless not lost its importance.

The Soviet intention is clear—to bring the entire continent or as much of it as possible within the orbit of Communist power.

The purpose of the United States is equally clear. It is to restore a war-ravaged continent to health and strength, to bind up the wounds of its peoples, to aid in strengthening their faith in the reality of democratic freedoms. We wish to see Europe a bulwark of democratic force and a bastion of peace. We hope, along with all good Europeans, that its ancient hatreds and traditional antagonism will be submerged in a unity which will transcend frontiers and join its peoples in one indissoluble community.

At the heart and in the heart of Europe is Germany. Not in the sense that the pan-Germans or the Nazis meant it and tried to realize it, but because of the sheer facts of geography, manpower and resources. We are here today because we were forced to fight a war against a Germany that challenged Europe and the free nations of the world. Yet we are not here with vindictive intent. We are here because there is a job to be done that is of crucial significance for the consolidation of a free Europe and for a peaceful world.

There can be no consolidation of Europe without Germany. It is clear that either of two possible developments would be disastrous. Either Germany’s absorption into the Soviet sphere or its emergence once again as a chauvinistic aggressive military power would be fatal to our hopes for a peaceful Europe. Our objective must be the building of a democratic Germany as an integral part of the united community of free Europe.

Our policy, broadly viewed, is then to make Europe an area of strength, stability and freedom. First priority has necessarily been given to the economic reconstruction of a continent, including of course Great Britain, whose very means of existence were fearfully disrupted by war. Europe’s great potential of productive capacities and technical skills must be restored to their fullest utilization for peace.

That, because of the all too obvious threat, some of this capacity must now be diverted to military purposes must not obscure the fact that our purpose is not war but the prevention of war. And we believe that living standards can and must be maintained and improved. While all must share in the privations and sacrifices of the present hour I do not believe that Europe is faced with a grim choice between guns or butter.

The establishment of a sound economic structure is essential not only to military strength but to political stability. It is not necessary for me to do more than refer to the ECA and other programs of assistance which have achieved a miracle of economic rebirth in
Europe. This was not mere philanthropy. It was calculated realism. We have recognized the necessity of overcoming the mass starvation and unrest upon which Communism thrives, and of creating the conditions essential for a democratic life. Too many Europeans have come to associate democracy with governmental impotence and economic sickness. We are determined to do all within our power to associate democracy with economic health and political competence.

Germany has shared in this economic revival and indeed has contributed to it. Only recently, the third anniversary of ECA assistance was marked by the attainment of a level of production far surpassing that of the most prosperous prewar years. It is true there exist serious unemployment and grave economic problems which challenge the statesmanship of the Federal Republic to the utmost. But the progress achieved gives promise that these obstacles will be overcome as have even more serious ones in the past. The apathy of the postwar years is melting before these signs of progress.

Mr. McCloy stated about a year ago, however, that we are not here exclusively to feed the German people and promote economic recovery. Our main purpose, he emphasized, is to help the German people establish a political democracy in which they can live as free men and enjoy the benefits of their freedom. Now I should like to project this idea to the whole of Europe.

Our American Tradition, it might be said, is one of unqualified democracy. We believe in democracy; as the noblest idea that ever swelled a human heart with pride we have built our national life upon it. But we are not cultural imperialists. We do not seek to impose the pattern of our institutions upon the peoples of Europe. Although we believe that every people must work out its own political salvation, we are also convinced the democratic ideal is large enough to embrace cultural diversity and in fact encourages it.

We believe, nevertheless, that the peace of Europe will never be secure until the governments respond to the will of their peoples and safeguard those basic human freedoms which are universally recognized as the foundation of civilized life. The United States accordingly has used its influence and its means to foster the growth of democratic institutions and ideas throughout Europe.

It has repeatedly protested against the subversion of democracy and the denial of human rights by the Communist-controlled governments of Eastern Europe.

It has countered the Communist offensive against Europe with a strategy of freedom which seeks to enlarge the international community of free peoples and to bulwark that community against its enemies both within and without.

It is a cardinal purpose of our policy that Germany should be enabled to establish its democratic life upon a lasting basis. For Germany we feel a special responsibility because it was here that a perverted regime arose which almost destroyed Europe. Our policy has been, in association with our Allies and with Germans of good will, to root out every vestige of that regime and of the force which created it.

Our policy in Germany is not, however, only to curb the forces of evil. We have striven consistently to vitalize the positive forces of German democracy. Democratic state and local governments have been established and a Federal Government created whose powers only recently have been enlarged. We are moving toward the goal of full equality and partnership for Germany in the Western community. We have devoted large resources and efforts to the endeavor to give positive assistance and encouragement to democratic elements within Germany and to enable them to build a truly democratic society.

Now I wish to speak frankly of the great danger in which Europe — and all free nations — stand today. Europe is in peril today from the menace of international Communism bolstered by the armies of the Soviet Union and its satellites. That peril America recognizes and shares. We in America have scrapped the concept of national defense in the narrower sense. Recent Congressional action to approve the sending of new divisions to Europe is clear evidence of this. Our government and our people have acknowledged that freedom is indivisible, that there can be only joint defense and that an attack on one is an attack on all. We have acted in Korea. We have acted in Europe where, as yet, the Communist forces have utilized only the paraphernalia of indirect aggression — of intimidation, pressure, and subversion and conquest by default.

In Europe we are well on the way to creating a structure of security through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which will ultimately command greater resources than any potential enemy or group of enemies. Western Europe, together with America, has the most advanced science, the greatest industrial production and the largest pool of skilled manpower in the world. There is needed only a strong spirit and a determined will to mobilize these resources for effective defense.
There are some who argue that the United States wishes to use Europe as a buffer to ward off an attack on itself. They reason that defensive measures will provoke attack and that then the most that can be hoped for is the ultimate liberation of a Europe of blackened ruins and devastated industries.

To this I would reply that our primary purpose is not to repel an aggressor once he has attacked but to prevent that attack before it has got underway. The North Atlantic system envisages building such defensive power that no aggressor will dare risk war against it. Our vast reserve power must provide concrete proof that no war could be won. And even today we possess formidable weapons which could strike through the air at the centers of aggression.

WE HAVE MADE CLEAR that Germany is to be invited to share the responsibilities and the protection afforded by the North Atlantic security system. The Federal Republic and Berlin have been given assurances that they will be defended in the event of attack. Germany will have an opportunity to make its contribution but there will be no new Wehrmacht, no new German General Staff. On the other hand, we are not looking for mercenaries. Whatever contribution in the way of armed units the Germans make, and it is theirs to decide, will be merged in the collective security force on the same basis as the military contingents of the other European nations and will be subject to international control.

I have emphasized the true character of our common defense effort because I realize that in many countries of Europe today there are those who advocate neutrality in the present crisis. This mood of “neutralism,” which is merely an expression of defeatism and nihilism, is due in large measure, I believe, to the feeling that war is probably inevitable and that Europe cannot be defended. The neutralists hold that the existing world tension is due solely to the antagonism between America and Russia which would make Europe a battleground in their struggle for mastery. Hence they maintain Europeans should stand aloof and avoid commitments to either power.

When we look at the realities it becomes apparent that such thinking is blind and dangerous. It is obvious and significant, that the Communists throughout the West seek to foment neutrality sentiment. The reason is clear. However the Soviets may utilize neutralism as a confounding and paralyzing tactic, for them it is only a station on the direct road to Communist domination. For nothing is more clear today than the Kremlin’s determination to expand the Soviet system over all Europe and add a series of new satellite states to its vast empire. The vacuum created by neutrality constitutes a tempting invitation for conquest.

NEUTRALITY FOR EUROPE is today tantamount to unconditional surrender. It would mean renunciation of the possibility of defense and removal of the chief barrier to Communist imperialism. For Europeans, the decision to act in the common security involves great sacrifices but the minimum of risk. To preserve freedom men must be prepared to fight for it.

Neutralism is an expression of impotence and a lack of faith in the future which does not correspond to the realities of today. Europe, viewed collectively, is an aggregate of peoples and cultures adding up to immense potential strength. That it has survived at all is a tribute to the enduring greatness of its peoples. The strength of the free peoples of Europe can be enormously augmented if only they unite. The concept of a European Federation, which was conceived in the wake of World War I by such men as Briand and Stresemann, emerges from the last conflict an achievable reality. That such unity, long dreamed of, is today on the point of realization is clearly foreshadowed by the recent signature of the Schuman Plan. The “cornerstone of European Federation,” it was called by Chancellor Adenauer.

A long step in the direction of European unity was taken when the representatives of six European powers signed the Schuman Plan. That Plan will create economic unity in the two industries which are basic to all others, coal and steel. It will create in Europe the conditions which, more than natural resources, has enabled the United States to lead the world in steel production: an enormous single market, free of artificial restrictions and barriers to efficient production.

Let us hope that it may be the prototype of unity in other fields; that the increased production which it will make possible in the coal and steel industries will be expanded to others; and that Europe will have a single market for, and greatly increased supplies of, all sorts of consumer goods, which is to say a high and rising standard of living.

MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, let us hope and work for the ideal which animates the Schuman Plan, the building of a structure of political unity on this economic foundation. Always before Europe has attempted to build unity wrong end first — by trying to create political unity with no foundation of common economic interests. Worse yet, it has often attempted to do so by bloody wars of conquest. The Schuman Plan represents the first attempt to create the solid basis of economic unity without which political unity can be only an artificial and sickly growth. We heartily welcome the initiative taken in the formation of the Council of Europe and Germany’s admission as a full member.

We Americans hope that Europeans will get together. Our nation was built upon the principle of federation, and we too have had many conflicting interests to reconcile. We believe that in these critical times it is more than ever imperative that the peoples of Europe should submerge their differences and establish a firm and binding union. Only such a union can mobilize the immense resources of material and moral strength necessary to establish a counterweight to Soviet power.

This union, I believe, must be threefold. It must overcome the economic barriers which have stilled trade and production, depressed living standards and exacerbated national animosities. It must establish effective political machinery to restrain nationalistic forces and safeguard the common interest. And it must create a new loyalty.
which will inspire the common men and women of Europe, and above all its youth, to new hope and a dedicated purpose to create a new community.

The United States believes that a new European community is the best insurance of peace and of prosperity. It will mean new strength based upon the united power of free peoples. And this new Europe, we feel, can not exist as a "third force" in a world still menaced by the threat of totalitarian aggression. It must add its strength to that of other free peoples everywhere in their common endeavor to create that power under law which alone can establish and maintain a lasting peace.

**WITHIN THIS UNITED EUROPE** it is imperative that Germany take its part. This is true for several reasons. Only through the inclusion of Germany in the European community can her neighbors be assured that a revived and strengthened Germany will never be in a position to seek military or political domination over other peoples. Moreover, the great human and material resources of Germany are necessary to the new Europe.

A united Europe without Germany is inconceivable. But Germany needs Europe just as Europe needs Germany. And Germany can not remain aloof, under any circumstances. Failure to integrate Germany with Europe would only mean its eventual absorption into the Soviet orbit and its subservience to the dictates of a foreign oppressor.

The Germans themselves, I am confident, are overwhelmingly in favor of integration with Europe. This has been indicated by much recent evidence, including an opinion poll in this city (Munich) on the question of European federation. But there is a related problem of which I must speak. It is the problem of German unification.

The United States favors the reunification of Germany under a democratic regime. It has striven consistently toward this goal since Potsdam. The world well knows who has thwarted the aspirations of Germans everywhere for unity. The Soviets have disrupted Germany, as they have disrupted Europe, with the clear intent to extend totalitarian Communism over all areas which they can control by force or intimidation. The Western Powers have united 70 percent of the German people under a democratic government which is rapidly evolving toward full independence and equal partnership in the association of free nations. They have repeatedly asserted their desire for a restoration of German unity on the basis of free elections and full assurances of democratic procedures and human rights.

The stumbling block to unity today is the determination of the Kremlin and its puppet regime in the East zone to accept unity only on terms which would expose all Germany to the threat of Communist domination. Such terms both the Bonn Government and the Allies have rejected. But we shall not renounce our purpose of bringing the Federal Republic within the community of free Europe. And we shall press with renewed vigor for an ultimate solution of the German problem which will join the long-suffering courageous people of East Germany with their brethren of the West and reunite them with the free world.

**I TRUST THAT MY SURVEY of United States policy in Europe today has shown that our young nation of the West has confidence in the enduring vitality of Europe. We do not share the Communist belief that the ancient civilization of Europe has run its course, that it is infected with decay and ready to fall an easy prey to onslaught from the East. It is Communism itself that is a throwback to ancient tyranny, and it is Europe that has nurtured and preserved the abiding values of human and Christian culture upon which we must build.**

The United States does not despair of an ultimate and peaceful resolution of world tensions. It is prepared to do its part to bring this about, as the long and tedious deliberations in Paris attest. The overriding purpose of our government, let me assert again, is not war but the prevention of war. War is most likely to come to Europe if the Kremlin is convinced that Europe is a "soft" area whose conquest can be achieved. War is not likely as long as the united resources and energies of free Europe and the will of its people to defend their liberties present so formidable an obstacle to conquest that no aspirant to world domination will venture upon an undertaking whose end result can be only his own ruin and that of his nation.

In the forging of this new Europe based on respect for the dignity of the individual in a society of free men and women, Germany has an important role to play, a role which, however, involves responsibilities as well as rights. It is for Germany to say whether it will fulfill this mission, for itself, for Europe and for the world. +END