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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

January 5, 1951

Mr. President:

As you requested when I saw you yesterday at 12:30, I attach an outline of my presentation to General Eisenhower on the problem of how we must proceed in implementing the North Atlantic Treaty so that we can develop the necessary defensive strength to deter aggression, or to contain it should it occur.

You may find this of some value in your meeting with the General tomorrow.

Dean Rusk

Attachment

Memorandum for the
President, dated
January 5, 1951

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E.O. 12356 STATE DEPT. CUREUOR
P. R. OF U. S. 1951 Vol. III p. 396
Project NLJ NLT #1-13

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By NLT-KC NARS, Date: 1-18-83



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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 5, 1951.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Outline of Secretary Acheson's Presentation of
North Atlantic Treaty Problems to General
Eisenhower on January 4, 1951.

A. Background of the Development of the North Atlantic Treaty.

At the conclusion of World War II, despite the major social, political, and economic dislocations which had occurred, it was hoped that the unity of purpose and of effort which the allies had shown in working together during the war would result in a peaceful era of reconstructions, and particularly that the Soviet Union would cooperate to this end and with the democratic powers.

This hope, which was shared by all democratic powers, was illusory because of the attitude and policy of the Soviet Union, which soon made it clear through its overt actions, and indirectly through the acts of various Communist Parties that it was bent upon a policy of ruthless expansion aimed at world domination.

Furthermore, the possibility of such expansion was made easier because the social, political, and economic dislocations in Western European countries, which have a highly developed and complex structure, were much greater than the dislocations within the more primitive and totalitarian organism of the Soviet Union, and the elimination of two great powers -- Germany and Japan -- had greatly increased the relative world strength of the Soviets.

It became apparent that to resist these Soviet efforts to cause the disintegration of the Western European countries, economic stability must be reestablished. This was a prerequisite of social and political stability and hence of the maintenance of democracy in these countries.

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By NLT-*HC* NARS, Date *1-11-83*

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When it became clear that our immediate post-war relief measures were not sufficient, the Marshall Plan was adopted to build the necessary economic strength to insure the preservation of democratic systems.

While the Marshall Plan resulted in great strides toward economic stability in Western Europe, it was not in itself sufficient to create the necessary defensive strength or to allay the paralyzing fear psychosis which prevailed as a result of the complete defenselessness of the area.

In the face of this situation, the United States took leadership in formulating the North Atlantic Treaty. This Treaty is not simply a military treaty, but is a vehicle for closer political, economic, and security cooperation in the North Atlantic community. It is a most fundamental part of our foreign policy, and with the Inter-American Treaty it is the foundation of our security system. The North Atlantic Treaty is of the utmost importance because while it is technically limited to the North Atlantic area, the Treaty countries actually exercise some control over a vast bulk of the strength of the free world. What happens in Western Europe has direct political and economic repercussions in Africa, the Middle East, the Far East, and Latin America.

For these reasons, the North Atlantic Treaty, if effectively implemented, would strengthen the ability of the entire free world to resist Soviet aggression.

B. Where the North Atlantic Treaty Stands Today.

The first fifteen months of the existence of the North Atlantic Treaty have been spent largely in creating the necessary organizational structure and developing plans. The time has now come, however, when plans must be translated into action. While all the other Treaty countries sincerely believe in the objectives of the North Atlantic Treaty, they have not shown the same sense of urgency as has the United States since Korea.

The principal task of the United States is to give the necessary leadership, assistance, and direction to this great collective effort and to galvanize the European countries into action so that they will press forward and, without undermining their basic economic stability, which is essential, will nonetheless make the necessary effort and sacrifices which are important if we are to develop adequate strength to deter aggression or successfully to contain it should it occur.

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This is a most difficult but fundamental task, for we cannot be successful in our effort to redress the balance of military strength unless the other North Atlantic Treaty members are willing to make effort and sacrifice comparable to ours.

Our tactics in bringing the other countries along with us must not consist simply in constant pressure and warnings that others must do more. We must -- if we are to succeed -- set the example by our actions and establish firmly in the minds of the Europeans our determination to proceed to the building of adequate strength, which is the best hope for peace.

C. Views of the North Atlantic Treaty Countries Toward the United States.

The North Atlantic Treaty countries fully recognize that United States leadership is essential. They believe that the necessary defensive strength, however, can only be attained if the United States makes full and active contribution.

At the same time, they fear the inconstancy of United States purpose in Europe. They believe that we are prone to arrive at sudden conclusions, that we try to push too rapidly ahead without fully thinking through our policy, and that we are inclined to abandon projects which do not show immediate signs of succeeding. These European fears and apprehensions can only be overcome if we move forward with determination and if we make the necessary full and active contribution both in terms of military forces and economic aid.

If we pursue this course, we will be in a much better position to exercise pressure on the Europeans to do what is necessary. In other words, it is our example, rather than threats and warnings, which will induce them to move ahead at the same pace with us.

There is also a belief that the United States is more prone to adopt an aggressive attitude toward the Soviet Union than is wise. They are very apprehensive about the situation in the Far East and are inclined to doubt that there is the necessary coordination between our military in Korea and the policy of the United States Government.

D. Differences between Northern and Southern European Treaty Countries.

The Northern European countries consisting of the United Kingdom, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands, have only small Communist Parties, and therefore have to deal with a relatively minor internal Communist threat. These countries are law-abiding

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and have sound governmental structures, with the result that they are in a better position to establish the controls necessary for an all-out defense effort. In general, their public credit and internal financing is good, or at least sufficient to permit sound financing of a considerable part of their defense effort. They have been reluctant to make an all-out effort because their policies have heretofore placed greater emphasis on social advancement rather than on security. While it has thus far been difficult to get them to undertake as effective programs, it is believed that they are now prepared to face up to reality.

The Southern European North Atlantic Treaty countries (Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Italy, and Portugal), by very reason of their latin nature, suffer from emotional, political, and social instability. They are prone to swing from over-optimism to deep pessimism, depending on how they view the situation of the immediate present. They have strong Communist Parties which exercise a corrosive influence on national morale. They are more subject to the desire to be "neutral". Despite this, their governments have a real desire to move ahead in the building up of the necessary strength.

If the proper leadership is exercised by the United States, it should be possible to get them to take the steps which are necessary. The general public in these countries is inclined to be apathetic now because of their defenseless condition and because of doubts that adequate strength can ever be achieved. If they see real progress and if the plans of the Soviet Union, which are an unknown quantity, give time, it is believed that as North Atlantic Treaty strength starts building up there will be real public support of our common effort with the attendant willingness to make sacrifices which at present they are reluctant to do because they are not convinced that the sacrifices will result in the attainment of the goal.

D. Germany.

It is of the greatest importance that we adopt a policy which will tie Germany in solidly with the West. It is also most important that Germany contribute to the collective defense of the West. However, the great publicity over the question of German participation in Western defense has had an adverse effect within Germany, and has perhaps tended to exaggerate in the eyes of the Germans the importance of the immediate German contribution. This places the Germans in a bargaining position where they can attempt to fix maximum and even unreasonable conditions. We should proceed with our plans to integrate Germany solidly with the West so that it can be a fellow-member of the democratic community, and let the rearmament of Germany follow as a normal part of this process.

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This procedure, coupled with the build-up of real North Atlantic Treaty defensive strength in Europe, will provide a much greater inducement than efforts first to have Germany make a military contribution.

F. Conclusions.

General Eisenhower is in a unique position to galvanize all of Western Europe into action. The Europeans have no confidence in the ability of international committees or councils to take effective action, and they subconsciously wish to give their support to an outstanding individual in whom they have trust and confidence. Despite this, General Eisenhower faces a most difficult and formidable task, and his mission can only succeed if the United States is willing to make the necessary effort and sacrifices and to give him full support.

At the present time, in terms of the security and indeed the survival of the United States, there is no alternative but to press ahead with our program of building adequate collective defensive strength. We must proceed on this course, for if we do not, Western Europe, with its tremendous manpower and industrial potential, will disintegrate and rapidly fall within the Soviet orbit. This in turn will result in Africa and the Middle East rapidly following, with obvious implications in terms of the American Republics. In other words, if we do not press ahead, we risk standing alone in a world whose manpower and resources are dominated by the Soviet Union and aimed at our destruction.

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