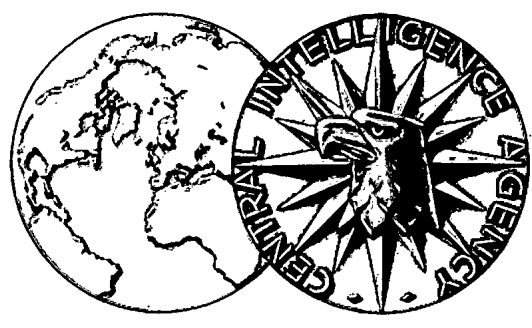


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THE CURRENT WESTERN EUROPEAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY



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THE CURRENT WESTERN EUROPEAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY

SUMMARY

As the North Atlantic Council prepares to meet one year after the NAT's signature, the European members are concerned over the global situation and its effect on the security value of the NAT. Beyond their natural second thoughts about the serious risks of having concluded a defense pact before the means to guard against those risks were available, the continental participants in particular are disturbed over the increase in Soviet power and aggressiveness during the past year and the absence of sufficient counterbalancing increase in Western military strength. In part this has been due to a delayed reaction to the loss of the US atomic monopoly, which the Europeans had largely relied upon to offset Soviet superiority in conventional armaments. At the same time, despite the initiation of a US military aid program, there are still lingering Western European doubts as to both the firmness of the US (and UK) commitment to defend Western Europe and the constancy and scale of US support.

Although these developments have had little effect in the UK and Canada, their effect on the continent has been to heighten the

underlying fears and hesitations still prevalent in Western Europe today. Despite a large measure of economic recovery, the Europeans are still acutely conscious of their exposed position and present weakness and afraid they will be "obliterated" in another war. Although the member governments and the great majority of their peoples are nonetheless still firmly behind the NAT as the only realistic course available, they are somewhat fearful that the pace of Western consolidation is not great enough to provide an adequate deterrent to the USSR.

Therefore, the principal objectives of the European NAT members are to strengthen and revitalize the NAT structure and to increase its strength-in-being. Increasingly aware of the need for unity in the cold war as well as in defensive preparations, they will urge an expansion of the treaty machinery into the political and economic as well as military fields. Acutely conscious of their own economic weakness and themselves lacking in decisiveness, they will look to the US for leadership and substantial assistance in achieving these goals.

Note: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of the Army, Navy, and the Air Force have concurred in this report; for a dissent by the Intelligence Organization of the Department of State, see Enclosure A. The report contains information available to CIA as of 22 March 1950.

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THE CURRENT WESTERN EUROPEAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY

BACKGROUND

One year ago when the North Atlantic treaty (NAT) was signed, it was favorably received in Western Europe as an expression of firm US commitment to defend Western Europe and of Western European determination to seek common security against the Soviet threat. At that time, owing largely to the European Recovery Program, the USSR had been placed on the defensive in Western Europe and the Western Powers had gained an advantage in the cold war. The NAT, coming on top of these developments, was looked upon as further evidence of joint Western determination to create a power base in Europe sufficient to hold the USSR in check. Western European official and public opinion focused on the fact that agreement had been reached and had not yet begun to examine critically the defensive strength of the combination thus formed.

Even at that time, however, it was generally recognized that the treaty itself was no more than a formal declaration of intent and that its ultimate security value could be realized only through subsequent implementa-

tion, including the necessary military aid programs. It was therefore estimated that its early impact would be primarily psychological rather than strategic and that in the next stage, when implementation began, the initially favorable European psychological attitude might become less favorable. In this later stage, it was predicted, Western Europeans would realize that they had accepted serious risks before creating the means to guard against those risks. The limited US aid available and the slow growth in Western military strength would only emphasize the disparities between security needs and actual defense capabilities. Under these circumstances, West Europeans would tend to regard any US aid program as falling short of what they considered necessary. Strains would develop during the stage of implementation and a sense of insecurity would probably begin to reappear. The USSR would attempt to take advantage of European indecision by magnifying the risks that had been taken, emphasizing disagreements over details, and encouraging second thoughts and reservations.

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CURRENT WESTERN EUROPEAN ATTITUDE

Today, one year after the signing of the NAT, this estimate has been largely borne out. With the initial psychological stimulus of the NAT worn off, Western Europeans are examining more critically the NAT grouping's ability to build adequate defensive strength. Concerned over the apparent increase in Soviet power, they are more fearful that Western countermeasures will be developed too slowly to provide the deterrent to Soviet aggression envisaged when the NAT was signed. Tired and war-weary, the continental Western Europeans in particular are not yet confident that the West will win the cold war, that armed conflict can be avoided, that present defensive measures will prevent the physical obliteration of Europe in such conflict, or that the East-West struggle is worth the effort. In short, Western Europeans are still suffering from the deep-seated psychological indecision that is their heritage from two world wars.

The persistence of this fear and indecision in continental Western Europe is attributable to numerous factors which in turn shed light upon the present West European attitude toward the NAT concept. In part, Western European leaders are having natural second thoughts with regard to the NAT, brought on both by the lag between the treaty's signature and its implementation and by a growing appreciation, now that planning has begun, of the huge gap between paper plans and Western strength-in-being.

The feeling of insecurity thus aroused has been heightened and sharpened by changes in the world situation since April 1949, chiefly the improved power position of the USSR and a renewal of Soviet aggressiveness. West Europeans are alarmed by Soviet successes in the Far East, continued Soviet progress in developing the Satellites, the accelerated Soviet campaign of subversion in Western Europe, and the intensified Soviet peace offensive. They have reacted particularly strongly

to the change in the East-West defense equation implicit in Soviet development of the atomic bomb, well ahead of Western anticipations. When the NAT was signed, Western Europeans generally believed that the US enjoyed a commanding lead over the Soviet Union in its exclusive possession of the A-bomb and that this superiority not only counterbalanced Soviet superiority in conventional armaments but afforded ample time to restore Western European power before the USSR could approach atomic parity with the US. Now, however, they realize that US atomic and industrial potential no longer acts as a safe deterrent to the overwhelming Soviet strength-in-being. Although West Europeans believe the Kremlin is not yet willing to accept the risks of open conflict, they fear that the marked increase in Soviet self-confidence and the more aggressive Soviet attitude may well manifest itself in further expansionist moves.

This fear of Soviet power and aggression has been fanned and in some instances magnified by the renewed Soviet campaign of propaganda and subversion. By contrasting growing Soviet strength with the "developing US economic crisis," the USSR and local Communists have sought to undermine European confidence and to breed a sense of futility and defeatism. Through "peace offensive" propaganda they have sought to portray the NAT and MDAP as preparations for the war so dreaded by the average European. They have attempted to arouse latent European fears of US "imperialism" by insinuating that Europe has become more subservient to the US. Although these divisive efforts have had only limited success among non-Communists, they have contributed to the prevailing confusion and indecision in Europe, particularly in Italy and France, where the local Communist parties are strong.

As a natural corollary to their uneasiness over growing Soviet power, West Europeans are concerned over the lack of any comparable

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increase in Western military strength. Painfully aware of their delicate economic situation and defenselessness, the Europeans believe that primary responsibility for reinforcing Western defenses must lie with the US and to some extent the UK. Yet despite the initiation of a US aid program, they still have lingering doubts as to: (1) the firmness of the US and British commitment; and (2) US willingness to continue or expand the MDAP and maintain a large and combat-ready military establishment of its own. In the shadow of expanding Soviet power, Western Europeans are hypersensitive to reports of a revival of US isolationism, Congressional economy drives, or the imminence of a US depression which would deprive Europe of American aid.

Despite the persistent and growing indecision and hesitation, West Europeans still believe that collective security, with full US participation, offers the only hope of rebuilding adequate defensive strength. Although

a small portion of the press and intellectual circles, which have traditionally leaned toward the "neutrality" and "European third force concepts," have become more vocal, the continental governments and the majority of the people realize that their own weakness and Soviet expansionism make any policy of neutrality futile at this time. It must be emphasized, however, that their support of the NAT stems as much from recognition that it is the only alternative as from any firm confidence that it will suffice as a deterrent to war. Thus, their still deep fear of war makes them highly susceptible to presumed changes in the East-West balance of power. Consequently, any slackening of US support or decline in US strength, or any dramatic demonstration of Soviet superiority, might so undermine their will to resist as to reduce materially their ability to contribute effectively to the NAT.

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CURRENT OBJECTIVES OF THE NAT GOVERNMENTS

Acutely conscious of the relative growth of Soviet power, the Western Europeans see a concomitant urgency in filling the power vacuum in Western Europe by stepping up the consolidation and rearmament of the West. In this effort they are tending to: (1) shift from reliance on superior US atomic potential to a reliance on the NAT as a means of building the conventional strength of the Atlantic community; and (2) demand greater contributions and leadership from the US. Aware as well of the present Soviet emphasis on revolutionary as opposed to military means, they also seek a greater degree of Western political and economic unity in the cold war.

Thus, the chief objective of the European representatives at the forthcoming NAT Council meeting will be to strengthen and revitalize the NAT by expanding the treaty machinery, increasing the pace of rearmament, and using the NATO more vigorously as the collective nerve center of the Western Powers in the cold war. In all these respects, the Europeans will look to the US for leadership and substantial assistance, and the continental nations in particular will seek the maximum spelling out of US (and UK) commitments, if possible to the extent of when and what forces will be available in the event of war.

Although anxious for a more rapid increase in NAT military strength, the Europeans believe their present economic condition precludes any substantial rise in their own defense budgets at this time. While, therefore, favoring whatever limited rearmament is within their capabilities, they will insist on giving priority to economic recovery measures as being indispensable to strong and lasting defense. Even some countries (such as Belgium) which could afford to do so have been reluctant to make marked increases in their military outlays. Moreover, the Europeans tend to look upon US aid as a legitimate *quid pro quo* for having to face the first onslaught

in event of war. Consequently, they will exert pressure on the US to agree to and pay for a more rapid increase of NAT strength.

Western Europeans will also have some difficulty reconciling their desire for strong US leadership in strengthening and reinvigorating the NATO with their concern lest US domination of the NATO and the multiplication of US military missions lead to excessive US interference in European affairs. The desire for greater US participation, however, will override these latent fears. Aware that the US is the key participant and themselves weary and indecisive, the Europeans have already come to rely on the US to take the initiative in proposing measures to strengthen the West in the cold war. Nevertheless, they will remain sensitive to any signs of US dictation and jealous of their own prerogatives.

In their desire to strengthen the NAT, Western Europeans are increasingly concerned over recent divergences in individual national policies and feel with greater urgency that the NAT should be broadened from its original purely military concept to a more comprehensive structure for the development of common policies in the political and economic fields as well. Increasingly aware of the necessity of unity in the cold war as well as in defensive military preparations, and anxious to counteract Soviet aggressiveness, several European governments have already suggested that the NAT structure should be expanded in this manner, both as a symbol of Western unity and as a focal point for the coordination of Western policies in the cold war. Of equal significance are French and Dutch suggestions that a NATO economic agency might later be created rather than continue the OEEC after the end of Marshall Plan aid in 1952. In the military field, the continental countries in particular, which are still in the first stages of rebuilding their defense establishments, appear more willing now than at any time in the past to undertake such meas-

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ures as standardization of equipment and joint training programs. These European proposals for greater coordination and expansion of the NATO sphere of activity stem from a desire to bring the US into an even more direct and constant relationship with its European allies.

This growing interest in the development of common NATO policies and institutions, however, is matched by a continuing tendency to think in terms more of individual than common defense. Many NAT governments, and even more the peoples, do not yet appreciate fully that the strength of the NAT lies in the deterrent posed by its aggregate resources, not in its provision of immediate and full security for every portion of each national territory. This tendency to think in national instead of global terms makes it almost a political necessity for each country to seek the maximum of available resources for its own defense, irrespective of over-all needs.

Another problem assuming greater importance in European official circles, although it does not yet appear ripe for official discussion, is that of Germany's eventual relationship to Western European defense. Despite acute fears of German resurgence, a growing body of Western European governmental and military opinion is becoming increasingly convinced that there can be no satisfactory solution to the defense problem without some form of German contribution. The contrast between overwhelming Soviet strength-in-being in nearby Eastern Europe and the otherwise slim prospects for creating an adequate counterforce within the reasonable future is driving many Europeans, particularly in the Benelux countries, to this conclusion. A further factor is the desire to push the defensive

line as far to the East as possible. Finally, the West Germans themselves are beginning to ask how they are to be defended if they establish closer economic and political relations with Western Europe.

On balance, however, European reluctance to rearm Western Germany still outweighs the growing desire to enlist German aid in Western defense. The fear of Germany remains especially strong in France, where bitter memories of World Wars I and II are still fresh. Such countries as France also are fearful lest the US allow Western Germany to rearm before they themselves have rearmed, diverting limited US aid.

Finally, the smaller NAT countries will continue their efforts to play a larger role in the NAT organization. They are concerned, for example, lest they find themselves undertaking to carry out policies in which they do not have a full voice. There is also some concern, though mitigated at present by generous US aid allocations, that small-country needs will be neglected. This feeling will manifest itself in the small-country desire for full representation on key NATO bodies.

Although many of the above concerns may not be openly manifest at coming NATO meetings, they will remain latent in European minds and may influence European positions on what otherwise appear trivial issues. In particular, if Soviet aggressiveness becomes greater during 1950, European hesitations and fears will tend to multiply. This uneasiness will remain a major psychological factor affecting NAT implementation until such time as economic recovery, US aid, and the development of common defensive strength have fully restored Western Europe's confidence in its ability to survive.

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SPECIAL COUNTRY ATTITUDES

United Kingdom.

The British Government and public remain firmly committed to the NAT and have in general been unshaken by the developments of the past year. Britain favors a strengthening of the NAT structure and Foreign Secretary Bevin has urged that it be revitalized. The UK may hope through such an expansion of NAT functions to promote the development of an Atlantic community in which the US, Britain, and continental Europe would have roughly equal stature. The British would thus hope to provide an alternative which, while meeting US desires for greater Western unity, might simultaneously relieve US pressure pushing the UK further toward integration with Western Europe than it is presently willing to go. Beyond this, the UK is anxious by every means to draw the US into closer political and economic as well as military ties with Western Europe as a means of fully committing the US.

There is some British feeling that the US does not fully appreciate Britain's major contributions to Western defense nor its special problems as head of the Commonwealth and a global power. The UK believes that because it is the second strongest participant in the NAT, has close ties with the US, and like the US is a net donor nation, it is entitled to a special position within the treaty organization similar to that of the US. Lacking great confidence in the continental countries and considering them poor security risks, the British tend to favor the development of an inner circle within the NATO, comprising the US, UK, and perhaps Canada, which would previously consult on policy and present a united front. Parallel to this British attitude is an apparent feeling that the NATO sphere should be limited strictly to the present North Atlantic area, and that defense problems in other areas should be handled separately, as a primary US-UK responsibility.

Britain, while willing and anxious to undertake any feasible increase in defense expenditures, is firm in its determination to place economic recovery first and not over-extend itself by making unrealistic commitments. The UK believes that not only is it thus making its maximum contribution but that recovery will in the long run contribute more to the strength of the NAT nations. At the same time the British are dissatisfied with the contributions of some other NAT members and feel that mutual defense expenditures might well be geared to roughly comparable percentages of national income.

While realizing that they must soon alter their negative position on firm military commitments to the continent, the British are stalling because of their own general weakness, their far-flung non-European responsibilities, and their reluctance to face another Dunkerque. However, as Western rearmament and Britain's own military strength develop, the British themselves are coming to realize the necessity of some such boost to continental morale.

France.

The French Government is wholly committed to the NAT, but the bulk of French public opinion, while accepting the pact, remains unenthusiastic. This general lack of enthusiasm for the NAT and MDAP reportedly springs from the conviction that French territorial integrity is not insured and that in event of war France would be crushed whatever the outcome. The French fear of war is symptomatic of the general European pessimism noted above, and will tend to decline only as Western armed and economic strength revives. The substantial and aggressive Communist minority in France seeks to capitalize on these fears.

The current French official attitude toward the NAT is a mixture of general satisfaction

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that France's key role has been recognized through French inclusion in the Standing Group and the promise of the bulk of MDAP aid, with a continuing concern that France is still a junior partner in a US-UK "show." Despite such encouragement as the US promise of newer types of equipment instead of obsolescent materiel, the French still feel that insufficient attention is paid to their pivotal position in Western European defense arrangements and their status as a world power. They are jealous, for example, that they are not advised of the latest US and UK military developments, and urge that they be taken fully into US-UK confidence. This exaggerated French pride will be a constant factor to contend with in the NATO.

In addition, the French still have lingering doubts about the constancy of the US-UK commitment for initial land defense of Western Europe, a feeling which will not be fully dispelled by anything short of the firmest US-UK commitments and possibly the physical presence of stronger US and British forces on the continent. This fear is reinforced by the suspicion prevalent on the continent that the US and UK do not believe any effective defense of the continent is yet feasible.

Strong French misgivings about long-term US-UK intentions with regard to Western Germany's role in European defense are also prevalent, although some military opinion recognizes that German participation may be essential, particularly if defense lines are to be pushed toward the Elbe. This attitude may soften as growing French confidence in collective security arrangements offsets French fears, and as France's own military and economic recovery develops.

There is some desire on the part of the French to extend the NAT to include all of their North African possessions and now probably Indochina as well. They argue logically that defense against the USSR is a global problem and that the NATO should therefore be global in its scope. By such means they probably hope to secure US-UK support in maintaining the somewhat shaky French Union.

Italy.

Despite the present Italian Government's complete Western orientation, an attitude of semi-defeatism—tending toward an incipient neutrality—tends to permeate the public mind. The masses are fearful of war and have no confidence that Italy can be defended against the USSR, especially under the peace treaty limitations. The result has been widespread apathy, which though present since the end of the war, is tending to crystallize into neutrality sentiment. The existence of a strong Communist and pro-Communist minority which plays upon these fears obstructs the development of a strong will to resist.

The Italian Government and military are afraid that Italy is considered a peripheral area, expendable in terms of over-all Western strategy. Italians are aware that the other Western Europeans were dubious over their entry into the NAT and that US insistence was primarily responsible for Italy's inclusion. This persistent feeling of not being wanted may strengthen latent neutrality and defeatist sentiment.

Conscious of its over-all military weakness, Italy will eagerly participate in any mutual defense measures. At the same time the Italians are somewhat disturbed at their relegation to secondary status in the NAT structure, and will seek a more equal role. They also hope that eventually the major Western Powers will support their desire to lift the peace treaty restrictions on their military establishment.

Belgium.

Notwithstanding the Belgian Government's strong support of the NAT, it tends to take somewhat of a "business as usual" attitude and to be reluctant to undertake its full share of defense responsibilities. As a result the government will probably do no more than satisfy the minimum financial demands arising out of mutual planning. Belgium, however, is a strong exponent of the concept of Western unity through the development of supranational machinery and will favor any strengthening of the NAT. There is also a growing though reluctant Belgian feeling that Ger-

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man participation with adequate safeguards is essential to Western European defense.

Netherlands.

Strong Dutch official support of the NAT is also tempered by budgetary considerations. Metropolitan Dutch defense expenditures have been limited by earlier needs in Indonesia and the prior demands of Dutch recovery. The Dutch will probably be reluctant to expand their defense budgets beyond the minimum envisaged in combined planning. However, military and official levels in general are enthusiastic over NAT and the US aid program as offering the only real prospect for security. They also feel increasingly that only with some form of German participation can Western Europe hope to meet successfully any Soviet aggression. Dutch interest in this connection stems largely from the fact that extension of defense lines further into Germany would help protect the whole Dutch territory.

Portugal.

Since Portugal firmly believes in the principle of collective security, Portuguese adherence to the NAT was an acceptance of the "realities of the situation" and a natural outgrowth of Portugal's alliance with the UK and existing ties with the US. The government feels little present need for expansion of its forces and evidently regards the potential use of the Azores as an adequate contribution to the common defense. Although not participating actively in most NAT activities, the Portuguese will be jealous of their prerogatives and tend to assert their rights. Portugal believes that Spain must eventually be included in any realistic defense arrangements and will

raise this question again, without pressing it too vigorously.

Denmark.

Although the Danish Government and people still consider sound their adherence to the NAT, Denmark remains gripped by a sense of futility in the face of the East-West struggle and because of its proximity to Soviet-held areas tends to be fearful of the pact's effect on the USSR. Denmark abandoned its long standing neutrality policy reluctantly and joined the NAT largely because of its inability to promote a neutral Scandinavian defense bloc. While Danish hesitations and second thoughts will tend to diminish with the development of Western strength, the Danes will adopt a cautious attitude in NAT councils toward any measures which might tend to affront the USSR.

Norway.

The Norwegians appear to have taken to heart the lessons of World War II, and rely upon the combined military strength of the NAT countries to counteract the threat posed by the USSR. Despite the continuance of some neutrality sentiment, Norway is ready to cooperate fully in mutual defense measures and favors a strengthening of the NAT.

In fact Norwegian officials are disappointed over inadequate utilization of the NAT machinery and point out that although the NAT Council already provides a forum for discussing the common political objectives of member countries, proper advantage has not been taken of this body. Behind this attitude is some concern that Norway's vigorous opinions will not be taken sufficiently into consideration on issues involving the East-West struggle.

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ENCLOSURE A

DISSENT BY THE INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Intelligence Organization of the Department of State agrees with the major conclusions of ORE 22-50. We disagree, however, with certain statements relating to Italy, Portugal and Denmark, because we feel that they are not supported by available evidence and convey an incorrect impression.

1. With respect to Denmark and Italy we agree that public sentiment reflects, respectively, sentiments of "futility" and "semi-defeatism." In Italy a majority of the people as well as the government are western oriented but this outlook is in turn clearly modified by "an attitude of semi-defeatism tending toward incipient neutrality" which definitely exists. We do not agree, however, that this attitude is so extensive as to "permeate the public mind." Similarly, with respect to Denmark, large segments of the Danish public do reflect a discernible "sense of futility" in the face of the East-West struggle. However, the statement that "Denmark is gripped by a sense of futil-

ity" is not warranted and incorrectly conveys the impression that the entire nation is in a state of paralysis.

2. With reference to Portugal we believe that, in contrast to the statements made, the Portuguese Government is definitely interested in strengthening its defense forces. Judging from recent experience, moreover, rather than considering the air base facilities in the Azores "as an adequate contribution" to the NAT, the Portuguese intend to tie the use of these facilities for common defense purposes to the development within the NAT of defense plans satisfactory to Portugal. With reference to Spain, moreover, Portugal has continually insisted that this country must eventually be included in any defense arrangements for Western Europe, and can be expected to press this position with increasing vigor as the opposition to such action diminishes among the NAT members.

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