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11-23-1971

Floor Statement on Troop Withdrawal from Europe

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Recommended Citation

Muskie, Edmund S., "Floor Statement on Troop Withdrawal from Europe" (1971). *Speeches*. 195.
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November 23, 1971

In the field of military security, the NATO Treaty has completed the 20-year period specified in article 13 and adherence to the treaty is now subject to denunciation by any of its members on 1 year's notice.

At the December 1969 meeting of the NATO Ministerial Council, the Nixon administration pledged to maintain the current U.S. troop levels in Europe at least through mid-1971. The level and the nature of the U.S. military presence in Europe beyond that date is yet to be determined. It will be influenced in an important way by developments relating to other aspects of the U.S. presence in Europe, including trade between the United States and the EEC and aid to the developing world.

Also, the progress of Chancellor Brandt's Ostpolitik, and the prospects for a European security conference, undoubtedly will influence the decision regarding future U.S. troop levels in Germany and Europe as a whole. The success or failure of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks—the SALT negotiations—between the United States and the Soviet Union could have a profound influence on the nature of the western deterrent, not only in global terms but in terms of the conventional—and tactical nuclear—defense of western Europe.

In my judgment, however, the most important factor determining the military security relationship between the United States and Western Europe in the years just ahead will be, first, the unfolding of the Mideast crisis—now reaching the climactic stage; second, trade and financial relations; and third, negotiations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

In the Mideast, Europe and NATO are living on a powder keg; in trade and financial relations the United States and Europe are on the verge of a trade war.

As we have discussed today, the stakes in the Mideast for the United States are very high for it is an area of vital security interest to the United States—as it is to Europe. The Mideast—rather than Vietnam—is an area in which the Kremlin has chosen to test U.S. power and resolve, and the tenor of its political leadership of the West.

While the Mideast is an area of high importance to the United States, it is an area of direct, critical importance to Western Europe. The Mideast commands Europe's land, sea, and air routes to Asia and Africa. Fifty percent of Europe's industrial energy resources—and 80 percent of its oil—are obtained from the Mideast. The Mediterranean is the point of attack on Europe's soft underbelly.

Because of the importance of the Mideast to European and U.S. interests, and because of the nature of the Soviet challenge there, the role which Europe plays in the developing Mideast crisis is likely to have a major effect on the nature of United States-European security ties during the 1970's.

The U.S. presence in Europe has, of course, other major facets besides the military. The U.S. economic presence in Europe is a matter of prime importance on both sides of the Atlantic. American investment in European industry con-

tinues to elicit controversy. Within the international monetary community, questions concerning U.S. balance-of-payments policy and the future role of the dollar are subjects of highest concern. All of these questions are directly related to the cost and contribution of security expenditures and will bear heavily on decisions regarding the level of U.S. troops maintained in Europe over the next decade.

I wish to emphasize that issues of the highest importance to the United States are now being negotiated in Europe. The issues now under negotiation are of transcendent importance as they could determine the fate of Europe for the remainder of the century. The massive freeze in Western and Eastern European affairs for the past 25 years is cracking and a glacial flow has commenced. In my judgment, it is essential that the United States be alert to the possibilities as well as the dangers inherent in the present situation of flux and that we be prepared to invest the energy, attention, and resources necessary to enable us to join effectively in the shaping of the future of Europe now beginning to emerge.

The critical point has not yet been reached on mutual balanced force reductions. We cannot forego this opportunity. If we risk the situation by giving the signal for withdrawal now by pulling out 60,000 troops we put both the negotiations with the Soviet and Europe in jeopardy. If we leave a vacuum by giving this signal Europe will either move toward the Soviet Union, or West Germany will have to fill this vacuum. If the former, negotiations so promising for peace, are over. If the latter the Soviet Union with its deep-seated fear of German nationalism will even more deeply divide Europe, and further jeopardize peace.

MR. MUSKIE. Mr. President, over the last 6 months, the Nixon administration has both carelessly and unnecessarily strained U.S. relations with some of our principal allies—Canada, Japan, and West Germany, to name a few. Nixon administration actions have been high-handed and unilateral, and they have given scant attention to the problems and interests of our allies. Many of us in the Senate have criticized the President for these actions. By voting now to reduce American force levels in Europe by as many as 60,000 men without prior consultation with our allies, we would be committing the same kind of diplomatic error.

I do not believe that there is any political or military magic in maintaining our current European force level of 310,000. There is fat in our European forces that can and ought to be trimmed. I am convinced that our European forces must be reduced over time by substantial numbers. But these reductions should be made only after consultations with our allies. And such reductions should be part of a planned and orderly program of withdrawal so that both allied and other nations understand our intentions precisely, and are informed as to how many troops are to be withdrawn and how many will remain.

To withdraw without consultation and

without such planning might persuade others that we are weakening a European commitment which we actually want to maintain. We should not create such an illusion where the reality is not intended and not desired.

When I voted several months ago against the amendment to make "substantial" troop cuts in Europe, I said that consultations with our allies and our decision about U.S. troop levels in Europe depended upon a number of other issues: among them, the state of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's policy of Ostpolitik, the U.S. balance of payments, and negotiations with respect to mutual and balanced force reductions—MBFR.

The fate of Chancellor Brandt's Ostpolitik still hangs in the balance. His government has successfully negotiated agreements with Poland and the Soviet Union. Berlin negotiations with the East German regime are in progress. At this critical juncture, I fear that German opponents of this policy of normalization could use American force reductions to undercut domestic support for Ostpolitik.

The U.S. balance of payments has continued to deteriorate disastrously, and we must act swiftly to reverse the decline. But the removal of 60,000 men from Europe would have very little effect on that problem. Instead, we must demand from our allies additional offsetting payments to neutralize the balance of payments cost of keeping our troops in Europe. But this can only be done appropriately and effectively by means of tough negotiations. To withdraw some troops unilaterally might only undermine ongoing negotiations with our allies for offsetting payments for our remaining troops.

The situation with respect to MBFR has also changed over the last few months, but in the direction of making it even more imperative that a unilateral American troop cut be avoided at this time. Former NATO Secretary General Manlio Brosio has been making the diplomatic rounds, including Moscow, to see what can be done to get these negotiations under way. I believe that mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe represent one of the most critical and important arms control possibilities in the near future, and I urge the administration to move forthrightly toward this goal. But I do not believe unilateral withdrawals, at a time when the Soviets have indicated their willingness to negotiate for mutual withdrawals, will advance the prospects of MBFR.

Mr. President, I do not believe this is the time for making unilateral force reductions in Europe. But I do believe this is clearly the time for tough negotiations and planning for such force cuts in the near future, and I urge the administration to press ahead with negotiations among our NATO allies and with the Soviet Union for mutual and balanced force reductions at the earliest possibility.

Mr. BEALL. Mr. President, last spring the Senate defeated efforts to precipitously reduce U.S. troop strength in Europe. But once again we are confronted with this issue and if it is de-