

UNCERTAIN ALLIES

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KLAUS LARRES

Uncertain Allies

NIXON, KISSINGER, AND THE
THREAT OF A UNITED EUROPE

Yale

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For Jessica and Stephanie,
the bestest daughters in the world

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SECOND World War, when Hitler's forces had conquered and destroyed much of continental Europe and were still expecting to bring the Soviet Union to its knees, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill reflected on the future of Europe. Britain was about to launch the attack at El Alamein, which resulted in its first major victory in the Second World War, and things were beginning to look up. In a letter dated October 21, 1942, the prime minister told his foreign secretary, Anthony Eden, "Hard as it is to say now, I trust that the European family may act unitedly as one under a Council of Europe. I look forward to a United States of Europe, in which the barriers between the nations will be greatly minimised and unrestricted travel will be possible."¹

Almost exactly five years later, the thirty-four-year-old congressman Richard Nixon stood among the ruins of the ancient and once-proud European cities. He was deeply shocked by the destruction, starvation, and utter destitution he witnessed. The up-and-coming politician became convinced that the US needed to launch an economic aid program for Europe as a matter of great urgency. Without US aid, he said in a speech in late October 1947, "hundred thousands of people will starve and the Communists will take over." Much later, Nixon claimed that "he had always supported the idea of a European Community and NATO ever since he had come to Europe as a young Congressman."²

Just a couple of years after the US Congress passed the 1948 Marshall Plan, the memory of the trauma of World War II and the fear of an even more devastating Third World War made six European countries take the

first hesitant steps on the long and winding road to an economically integrated and politically united Europe. The terror, indescribable misery, and appalling loss of life of the Second World War and the Holocaust had awakened the world to the dangers posed by nationalism and unconstrained patriotism. The sovereignty of the individual European nation-states, it was recognized, no longer ought to be sacrosanct. Clearly, preventing yet another global war required the creation of a deeply integrated, democratic union of European nation-states to bring about a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Europe based on Franco-German reconciliation. The model for this was the federal union conceived and implemented almost two centuries earlier on the other side of the Atlantic.

Perhaps it was not surprising, therefore, that it was the United States, the world's new superpower, that showed the way. The Truman administration pushed the French government of Prime Minister Georges Bidault and Foreign Minister Robert Schuman to take the initiative in May 1950 and propose to the leaders of the only recently founded West Germany and several other European nations to set up an integrated European Coal and Steel Community. While the British refused to participate, this club of Six became the forerunner of the European Economic Community (EEC), established in 1958. In the US, the EEC was often referred to as the Common Market. It transitioned to the European Community (EC) in mid-1967, and eventually today's European Union (EU) was created in the early 1990s, a few years after the end of the Cold War.

Almost immediately problems arose between the US and The Six regarding trade competition and the controversial imposition of tariffs and discrimination against goods coming from outside the EEC bloc. Monetary and financial disputes also surfaced, and there were significant divisions on a number of political issues. Soon strategic disagreements emerged regarding nuclear decision-making and détente with the Soviet Union. Yet, despite all these proliferating transatlantic problems and conflicts, the US remained a strong supporter and defender of the European integration process—the “European project,” as it became known. “Ever closer union” and thus the creation of a truly united (western) Europe was the ultimate objective of both the Europeans and the United States.

With the advent of the Nixon administration in January 1969, this joint endeavor began to unravel. The new president's pro-European sentiments underwent a dramatic transformation shortly after he took office. There were many reasons for this, as explored in this book. In particular, during

the years 1971–73, the Nixon White House turned the US onto an increasingly euroskeptic course. The Nixon-Kissinger era thus constituted a decisive turning point in US relations with Europe. The consequences and repercussions of these transatlantic watershed years have continued down to our age. Scarcely anything remains of the United States' profound and genuine enthusiasm for helping to build a united Europe, which characterized the 1950s and 1960s. In the summer of 2018, US President Donald Trump even referred to the EU as a "foe" with regard to transatlantic trade relations. He also strongly supported "Brexit" and expected that other countries would follow the UK out of the EU, thus openly encouraging the disintegration of the European Union. Not surprisingly, in the twenty-first century, observers have frequently predicted the imminent collapse of the transatlantic alliance and the European unity process. The "European project" of "ever closer union" and the deep US-European connection, however, have proven to be quite resilient, at least so far.

This book explores the decisive turning point in Washington's policy toward the European unification process in the early to mid-1970s, when Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger attempted to dominate the Western alliance and much of the world beyond it from an often crisis-ridden White House. Once firmly installed in office, they began to perceive the unity of Europe and the increasingly self-confident, if not "uppity" Europeans as serious threats to the United States' economic well-being and geopolitical dominance in the long run.

This book has benefited greatly from the support and advice of many superb archivists and librarians in the US and Europe. I am particularly grateful to the women and men of the wonderful Library of Congress, including the Manuscript Division, and the National Archives in Washington, DC. The large holdings of the Davis Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the British Library in London, the Library of the London School of Economics and Political Science in the United Kingdom, and the Firestone Memorial Library of Princeton University also proved to be indispensable. The enormous resources of the National Security Archive at George Washington University and the Woodrow Wilson Center, including its tremendous Cold War International History Project, in Washington, DC, were also invaluable. My two tremendously stimulating stints at the Kluge Center of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, were essential for much of the research and the writing of this book. The outstanding in-

tellectual atmosphere and lively conversations at the Institute for Advanced Study (ISA) in Princeton, New Jersey, proved most inspiring and helped me to make much progress with the book.

I have had the pleasure to interview and enter into fruitful conversations with a large number of US and European politicians, officials, and diplomats. I have listed them all in the bibliography, but in particular, I wish to highlight the multiple inspiring conversations with Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Dick Smyser, and Gerald Livingstone and the deep insights provided by Egon Bahr, Rainer Barzel, Fred Bergsten, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Lord Carrington, Michael Chertoff, Lord Dahrendorf, Lawrence Eagleburger, Stuart Eizenstat, Robert Ellsworth, Douglas Feith, Joschka Fischer, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Alexander Haig, Martin Hillenbrand, Richard Holbrooke, Robert Hormats, Marvin Kalb, Robert McFarlane, George McGovern, Sir Michael Palliser, Peter Rodman, Volker Rühl, Donald Rumsfeld, Robert Schaezel, James Schlesinger, Jeremy Shapiro, George Shultz, Joseph Sisco, Walter B. Slocombe, Robert Solomon, George Stephanopoulos, Strobe Talbott, Susan Thornton, George Vest, and Karsten Voigt, as well as former German chancellors Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl. I am very grateful to all of them.

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This book has also greatly benefited from the support and advice of a large number of good and close friends and those who became good friends in the course of researching and writing the manuscript. I am particularly grateful for the always helpful and most pragmatic support of the late Dr.

Prosser Gifford and Dr. Carolyn Brown, former directors of the tremendous John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress. The late John W. Kluge and Dr. James Billington, the late Librarian of Congress, were also most helpful. It also was a great joy to work with Marie-Louise Recker, Robert Saladini, Peggy Christoff, Les Vogel, Joanne Kitching, Regina Thielke, and of course John van Oudenaren, former chief of the European Division, and exhibition director Kim Curry, as well as many other former and present Library of Congress and Kluge Center experts and fellows.

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This book is dedicated with great love and warmth to my two wonderful teenage daughters, Jessica and Stephanie.

CHAPEL HILL, NC, DECEMBER 2020

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Introduction

“THE EUROPEAN UNION, OF COURSE, was set up to take advantage of the United States, to attack our piggy bank,” US President Donald Trump stated at a boisterous rally in Fargo, North Dakota, in late June 2018. “And you know what,” he cried, “we can’t let this happen.”¹ Already the day before Trump had claimed that the European Union (EU) was cheating on the United States. “We had a trade deficit because they send the Mercedes in, they send the BMWs in, they send their products in, we send things to them and they say, ‘No thank you, we don’t take your product,’” he said. “This is not free trade, that’s stupid trade,” he shouted. “We are going to tax all those beautiful Mercedes-Benzes.”² Within two weeks, Trump expressed his enmity toward the EU in an even more outright manner. Shortly before his first meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki in July 2018, Trump told a CBS interviewer at his Turnberry golf resort in Scotland that the US had “a lot of foes,” not least the EU. “I think the European Union is a foe what they do to us in trade. Now you wouldn’t think of the European Union but they’re a foe.” When asked by the astonished reporter to elaborate a little on this, he reiterated that the “EU is very difficult. . . . In a trade sense, they’ve really taken advantage of us.”³

Nor did Trump hesitate to openly support the British decision to leave the EU. He believed that the outcome of the 2016 Brexit referendum was a “wonderful thing” for the United Kingdom. “People want their country back. They want to have independence, in a sense, and you see it with Europe, all over Europe.” He predicted approvingly, “you’re going to have, I think many other cases where they want to take their borders back. They

want to take their monetary [*sic*] back.”⁴ Again in April 2018, during a private meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron, Trump suggested the dissolution of the EU when he asked him, “Why don’t you leave the EU?” The US president indicated that he would be happy to offer France a more advantageous bilateral trade deal than the one the EU was getting from Washington at present.⁵

In a similar vein, Trump also criticized most NATO countries, and in particular Germany, for contributing much too little to their defense budgets and, he alleged, for taking advantage of the United States’ huge military budget. Internally he even repeatedly toyed with the idea of withdrawing his country from NATO and thus fatally undermining the alliance.⁶ Trump’s positions were extreme. He seemed to believe, as stated by the outgoing US ambassador to the EU, that by “supporting the fragmentation of Europe,” he would advance US interests.⁷ “Divide et impera” was the new motto of the United States’ European policy. Trump did not see the Europeans as allies and friends but as rivals and foes and financial predators who needed to be reined in.

The United States’ strong support for a united Europe and a policy of “enlightened self-interest,” pursued since the days of the 1948 Marshall Plan, had become a thing of the past. Yet this change had been a long time coming. In view of growing economic competition and increasing political differences during the last two decades of the Cold War and throughout much of the post–Cold War years, the US had begun to consider a united Europe with skepticism and, at times, outright hostility. The deep crisis of trust and confidence among the transatlantic allies and Washington’s profound doubts about European unity being in the United States’ national interest go back to the 1970s, more than half a century ago. In fact, in the early 1970s, a decisive turning point occurred in Washington’s policy regarding the unity of Europe, at a time when Richard Nixon was US president and the German-born Henry Kissinger was his closest foreign policy adviser. During these watershed years, Washington stopped supporting the European integration process and began viewing the gradual unification of the European continent as a threat. The bulk of this book deals with these crucial years, which have had a deep impact on transatlantic relations in the 1970s and indeed well beyond.

It was in 1950, five years after the end of the Second World War, when a number of French bureaucrats set in motion a process whose ultimate ob-

jective was the realization of a long-held European dream. It was a dream that could be traced back to the days of Charlemagne in the eighth century. It was the dream of a truly united Europe that would bring about once and for all the end of the horrific conflicts and terrible wars that had characterized the European continent for much of its history. After the widespread devastation and appalling number of casualties in the two world wars, something needed to be done to prevent yet another global war, which would undoubtedly lead to the wholesale destruction of European civilization.

Already during the dark days of World War I and World War II, a handful of visionary idealists had begun drawing up lofty plans for the integration of the European continent. While not much came of these plans in the 1920s and 1930s, another attempt was made in the course of the second such war within two decades. As early as 1941, thinkers such as Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi, and then also Jean Monnet developed constructive ideas about “a free and united Europe.”⁸ In August 1943, the founding document of the Movement for a Federal Europe (MFE) stated that “if a post war order is established in which each State retains its complete national sovereignty, the basis for a Third World War would still exist.”⁹ Thus, transcending the holy cow of national sovereignty was required to create lasting peace in Europe. Only a mere two years later, with the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, did it become apparent that a third world war would be fought with nuclear weapons. It gave the attempt to make progress with the fledgling European unity project an even greater urgency.

At the 1948 first Congress of Europe in the Dutch capital, The Hague, even Winston Churchill called for the creation of a united Europe as “a positive force.” After making his famous V sign, the Briton declared, “we must aim at nothing less than the union of Europe as a whole,” and in “one form or another a European Assembly shall be constituted.” He was glad, the world’s most famous statesman stated, that “far from resenting the creation of United Europe, the American people welcome and ardently sustain the resurrection of what was called the Old World, now found in full partnership with the New.”¹⁰ In particular, it was obvious that a rapprochement between the continent’s two long-standing arch enemies, France and Germany, needed to be brought about.¹¹

In the early postwar years, the US took possession of the European dream and thrust it forward. Strongly pushed by the Truman administration in Washington, DC, French and German statesmen such as Foreign Minister

Robert Schuman and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and their advisers began to build a unified Europe, albeit one that at first included only a selected number of western European states, six in total. It also focused only on two crucial sectors of the European economy, coal and steel.¹² Furthermore, the eastern part of the continent had to be excluded, as by then most of eastern Europe was dominated by the Soviet Union's iron fist. Clearly, not just Franco-German reconciliation but also the unfolding Cold War and the need to turn western Europe into a bulwark against the further spread of communism drove the United States' new European policy.

Fear and pragmatism were thus behind the European idea of developing a federally organized European Union. The dream was inspired by and modeled on the United States of America, that democratic beacon in a world beset by economic woes and the brutal dominance of dictatorships and autocratic governments in many parts of the globe. In the postwar world, and no more so than in Europe, the US was indeed perceived as a "shining city upon a hill." It is doubtful whether the Europeans alone would have had the courage, determination, and resourcefulness to embark on the European project as the integration process came to be called. US encouragement and strong support were decisive.¹³

US enthusiasm for the creation of a united Europe was greatest in the decade after the Marshall Plan, the Truman administration's grand anticommunist scheme for the postwar reconstruction of the European continent.¹⁴ Among US policy makers, it was taken for granted that in the long run the Marshall Plan could only work on the basis of a closely integrated supranational Europe. Some degree of coolness toward the idea of a united Europe began to develop in Washington ten years later, after the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in January 1958. The EEC initially consisted of France, West Germany, Italy, and the three Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg); it was formally transformed into the European Community (EC) in mid-1967.

A decisive turning point away from Washington's enthusiasm for creating a united Europe, however, only occurred in the context of the escalating Vietnam War and the economic difficulties of the late 1960s and early 1970s. These years led to the inevitable transition from the US primacy of the 1950s and most of the 1960s to a new period of much greater global interdependence and gradual European independence. It resulted in a new era of globalization. In particular, economic and financial but also increasing political competition from the leading EC countries, such as West Ger-

many and France, made Washington rethink its basic attitude toward the European unity project in the early 1970s. "American exports, while still strong," former Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker wrote, "couldn't fully offset the combination of rising imports, foreign aid, military spending, and surging capital outflows."¹⁵ In the early 1970s, strains in the transatlantic relationship and profound US doubts about the wisdom of creating a united Europe could no longer be hidden.

These years proved to be a decisive period of change in multiple respects, including the United States' European strategy. Foreshadowed by President Lyndon Johnson's distraction by the Vietnam War and growing indifference to his European allies, US support for the unity and further integration of the European continent deteriorated considerably during the Nixon era. At times it slipped away almost entirely. The West German ambassador to the US at that time, Berndt von Staden, hit the nail on the head when he characterized Nixon and Kissinger's European policy as "the yearning for the situation of the 1950s and 1960s, . . . when the United States possessed undisputed supremacy, when Western Europe did not appear as a competitor, was accordingly dependent and asked for little say in the matter, but instead left the leadership role to the United States without question."¹⁶

The Nixon and Kissinger years thus constituted a decisive turning point in US support for European unity. Not least, the Nixon administration's abrupt termination of the Bretton Woods monetary system in 1971–72 dumbfounded the United States' western European allies, who were left out in the cold and to their own devices to cope with the consequences of this financial "Copernican revolution," as a leading central banker called it.¹⁷ As a result, the Europeans began increasingly to organize themselves on the basis of independence from the United States rather than in cooperation with Washington. They felt they had no other option, if they wished to protect their interests against a new US unilateralism and economic nationalism. This new strategy contrasted vividly with the policy of "enlightened self-interest" and support for a united European continent that had shaped Washington's approach in the first two decades of the postwar era.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Europeans began wondering whether the US was still a reliable and dependable ally. For them, the transatlantic alliance had assumed an increasing quality of uncertainty. In view of the United States' growing financial difficulties and the demise of the Bretton Woods system, the Europeans had begun questioning Washing-

ton's predominance in the economic sphere and in international monetary matters. As the Soviet Union had achieved strategic nuclear parity by the late 1960s, the western Europeans were also wondering whether they could rely on the US and its nuclear umbrella as their protector in the security sphere. They certainly wished to have a much greater say in transatlantic strategic and political-economic decision-making, especially as it concerned nuclear armaments but also regarding the policy of détente with Moscow. Washington, however, was not prepared to accept this challenge to its pre-eminent, if not hegemonic, position within the Western world. The US, after all, had never intended to nourish a genuinely independent "third force" on the European continent. The Europeans, united or not, were always meant to remain secondary in importance and influence to Washington and firmly embedded in the US-led Atlantic alliance.

Already in an analysis conducted by the CIA in late October 1979, the anonymous author concluded that the United States, to a considerable extent, had only itself to blame for the growing rift with its transatlantic partners. "US policy," the analyst surmised, "was based on an implicit assumption that continued common interests, not least the threat from the communist world, would allow it to share the responsibilities, more than the rights, of leadership with its strengthened allies."¹⁸ In other words, Washington expected the allies to help pay the costs of the informal US empire abroad. Yet the US was seldom prepared to give its European partners any real influence in running the realm—and this was the crux of the problem. This was what had bothered the American colonialists two hundred years earlier regarding England's hegemonic behavior, and it still is the essential problem that any dominant and hegemonic power has to grapple with. The US has been no exception.

This book analyzes the history and politics of Washington's approach toward the slow and cumbersome process of creating a united Europe. It focuses on the decisive turning point in Washington's approach toward the European integration process during the Nixon and Kissinger era. These years were of fundamental importance. The thoughts and attitudes toward Europe and the wider world as they took shape have had a decisive impact on the following decades. Also, the United States' thinking about itself underwent important changes. In private, in the Oval Office and elsewhere, Nixon, Kissinger, and their aides frequently discussed their serious misgivings about the European integration process and their growing conviction

that the unity of Europe was detrimental to US national interest, not least to the country's economy. On occasion, they would confront their European counterparts and European diplomats with their highly pessimistic thoughts and profound skepticism.¹⁹ What almost fifty years later President Trump set forth without much restraint in public, Nixon and Kissinger had already expressed in private when talking to each other and with their advisers.

The Europeans, however, viewed this development as a temporary phenomenon. Eventually it would blow over, they believed, and better transatlantic relations would return. They seldom wished to realize that what they were witnessing was part of a fundamental rethinking of US foreign policy, including the country's policy toward European unity.

Still, since the Nixon era, opposition to US foreign and economic policy has begun to grow rapidly among European politicians. The short-lived Gerald Ford and George H. W. Bush administrations proved to be notable exceptions to this trend. President Joe Biden has emphasized that he will follow a similar constructive course. However, the unfortunate high point of US-European estrangement has come also relatively recently during the presidencies of George W. Bush and Donald Trump, when most Europeans found themselves in bitter opposition to US foreign policy.²⁰ Nevertheless, it took the Europeans quite a while to apprehend and accept the effective end of the United States' long-standing support for the creation of a united Europe. The Europeans' increasing lack of trust in the US as a reliable ally and the resulting disengagement process can be traced back to the early 1970s and the Nixon-Kissinger era.

Golden Age

YEARS OF RECONSTRUCTION

THE EMINENT DEAN ACHESON, President Truman's last secretary of state, looked as distinguished as a secretary of state was meant to look. It gave his statements, even the bland ones, a particular gravitas. Acheson was as convinced as anyone that his country played not only an essential but also a benign and constructive role in the world. He once stated, "the United States had an appointment with destiny from which there was no easy way out but for the nation to lead and bend its whole energies to ordering the world."¹ A few years later, Truman's successor, Dwight D. Eisenhower, expressed a similar conviction. "The defense of freedom was one and indivisible," he explained, and clearly "American policies were an extension of America's moral responsibilities."²

From the 1950s to the 1960s, few politicians in Washington were inclined to dissent publicly from this deeply held belief in US exceptionalism and manifest destiny. Policy makers in the United States were strongly convinced of their country's responsibilities and the unique role it played as global policeman in creating a peaceful and prosperous world, which included the necessity to maintain a well-functioning transatlantic alliance and bring about the unity of the European continent under firm but benign US leadership.

The shrewd Allen Dulles shared this idealism. During the early postwar years, the future CIA director thought he ought to educate the US public about the threat that the fragile and devastated western European countries faced from the Soviet Union's Red Army and Moscow's atheistic ideology. The implementation of the Marshall Plan to save Europe from falling prey

to the Soviets was crucial to the US national interest, he believed. In a small yet never-published book written in 1947, Dulles stated: "That a healthy and prosperous Europe is essential, if there is to be peace in the world, can be demonstrated by historical precedent. That Europe will have to have some help from the United States can also be demonstrated." Dulles was convinced that "there is no prospect that this help will affect recovery unless the Europeans can find some way to get together among themselves."³

Dulles was fully aware, and did not hesitate to tell his potential readers, that the Marshall Plan was "not a philanthropic enterprise" but was "far more than that." He outlined that this program for European relief and reconstruction was "an integral part of American policy" and "based on our view of the requirements of American security." Dulles believed that the Marshall Plan was "a logical development of the trends of our foreign policy over more than a century."⁴ In fact, he admitted quite frankly that, with respect to Europe, "American foreign policy today is seeking the very same objective as when we proposed the Monroe Doctrine or developed the principles of the Open Door in the Far East."⁵ William Appleman Williams, the penetrating left-wing critic of US foreign policy, would have felt confirmed in his deeply held conviction that the United States' use of the open-door trade and investment policy was an attempt to create an informal global empire to channel America's enormous national energies and huge economic surplus abroad, enriching itself in the process.⁶

The United States' Postwar Vision

In the early Cold War years, it was indeed Washington's intention to stabilize and reconstruct the continent through generous economic and financial aid. A number of influential, Eurocentric "wise men" in the US had been developing a visionary strategy premised on the United States' enthusiastic support for European reconstruction and unification.⁷ The thinking of Jean Monnet, a French political strategist, former deputy secretary general of the League of Nations, and adviser to Charles De Gaulle during World War II, had clearly fallen on fruitful ground.⁸

Partially based on Monnet's thinking, US politicians developed the notion that only a united western Europe at peace with itself would be able to present a concerted front against the perceived and soon very real military and ideological threat from the Soviet Union. Moreover, only such a Europe would ensure the reconciliation of the West German Republic, founded in

1949, with the countries of the Western world, thereby generating lasting Franco-German friendship while avoiding tendencies toward neutralism and defeatism.⁹ US policy makers considered a robust rapprochement between France and West Germany as one of the essential preconditions for integrating the West Germans into a new international framework that would solve the volatile German Question along Western lines and thus preserve peace on the European continent.

In this respect, the term “double containment,” introduced into the literature by Wilfried Loth and Wolfram Hanrieder, has proven a helpful explanatory construct. US “double containment” aimed at keeping the Soviet Union in check by means of military containment through NATO, which had been created in April 1949.¹⁰ At the same time, this strategy was meant to control the West Germans by safely integrating them into the Western alliance, not only militarily but also politically and economically.¹¹ In addition, such a policy would make it feasible to fulfill West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s desire to have his part of the divided country treated as a more or less equal and sovereign partner on the international stage.¹² Within a few years, Truman’s 1946 outburst about Germany had become unthinkable. That year, the president had urged Secretary of State James F. Byrnes to remember that “Germany is a conquered enemy country”: “I don’t think there is any reason for giving them any special privileges. In fact, it is the policy to see to it that Germany gets no better treatment than our allies, which she ruined.”¹³ At that time, Truman may have had in mind French concerns that a reconstructed Germany would eventually rise again and begin dominating the European continent.¹⁴

Soon, however, it became perfectly obvious that due to the divided country’s front-line location between the Western and the communist world, it was vital to do everything in the United States’ power to anchor West Germany firmly and irreversibly in the West. This included extending special preferential treatment to the former enemy to make the country and its first chancellor, the shrewd septuagenarian and strongly pro-US Adenauer, feel internationally respected and appreciated again. In April 1949, the three-power occupation statute came into being, turning West Germany into a state with a limited degree of sovereignty. Until then, the country had been ruled by the allied powers in a kind of judicial vacuum that was based on Nazi Germany’s unconditional surrender in May 1945. The three Western allies controlled the new West German state in almost all respects, and in a symbolically significant move, the renamed Allied High Commission,

formerly the Allied Control Commission, continued to reside in the Hotel Petersberg, located high up on a mountain overlooking the Rhine valley near Bonn, the new West German capital. It was here that British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had stayed on September 22–23, 1938, when negotiating with Hitler in nearby Bad Godesberg about the fate of Czechoslovakia; the handover of the Sudetenland was agreed within a few brief meetings in Munich a week later.

The 1949 occupation statute was revised as early as March 1951, and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was given new, albeit still limited, foreign policy powers.¹⁵ Policy makers of both the Truman and succeeding Eisenhower administrations were convinced that this gradual transfer of limited rights of sovereignty would enable the new West German state to develop the confidence and self-respect it needed to become a loyal and constructive partner within the Western alliance.¹⁶ The “double containment” of the Soviet Union and Germany was meant to lead to the pacification and perhaps the eventual democratization of the entire European continent.¹⁷

Complicating the issue of course was the western part of Berlin, the former German capital. West Berlin was a democratic island situated in the heart of communist East Germany, a state run by Stalinist stooges and occupied by a large number of Soviet troops. West Berlin needed to remain part of the West under all circumstances. The city was a symbol of democracy and market capitalism right in the middle of communist-ruled eastern Europe. It was living proof of Western determination not to give in to communist intimidation. Not least, West Berlin had developed into a useful center of espionage.¹⁸

Underlying the United States’ postwar vision was the assumption that only a fully integrated, stable, and economically viable Europe would develop into a peaceful and democratic continent. Achieving prosperity in western Europe appeared to depend on the creation of a unified single market. The lessons from the United States’ own past, as well as the country’s federalist structure, were to serve as the model for achieving such a single (Western) European market. The US strategy would prevent economic nationalism and lead to a truly free, multilateral transatlantic economic system. In due course, it would also have the advantage of making it unnecessary for the US to continue its economic and military aid to western Europe.

The envisaged single market was meant to close the dollar gap that had arisen due to the large volume of US exports into Europe and Europe’s inability to pay for them since trade with the US was largely a one-way street

in the immediate postwar period. The creation of a single market was also meant to facilitate the convertibility of the weak European currencies, allow the Europeans to rebuild their economies at a faster pace, and, not least, eventually create a huge market for US exporters. European integration, it was hoped in Washington, would enable the “self-healing” forces of the free market to take over in due time. Active US governmental support and interference were always regarded as temporary and limited.¹⁹

In the heady, enthusiastic days of the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, US policy makers believed, full of optimism, that the eventual unification of the European continent would not only ensure permanent peace and well-being on the continent but also contribute to the United States’ long-term economic prosperity. It was assumed that over time European economic integration would lead to the political unity of the European continent or at least of its western half. As early as the mid-1960s, the American political scientist and historian David Calleo predicted confidently that “the federalizing tendencies of economic union will spill over into politics” and that the respective European national governments will discover that they “have ceded so much of their power that European unity will have occurred in fact before it is conceded in principle.”²⁰

At best, it was therefore only partially correct when President Truman stated that “there wasn’t anything selfish” about the 1948 Marshall Plan. Winston Churchill’s reference to the plan as “the most unsordid act in history” was also a huge exaggeration.²¹ Washington’s reasons for supporting European integration were by no means altruistic. Nevertheless, US support for European unity was of great benefit to the western Europeans. It was indeed an unusual approach; applying the term “enlightened self-interest” to this strategy appears to hit the nail on the head.²² In fact, the Dutch politician and scholar Ernst van der Beugel has argued that the Marshall Plan was “the first stimulus to European integration and cooperation” in the post-war years.²³

The economic historian Alan Milward’s thesis that the Marshall Plan was unnecessary for European economic revival lacks the support of most scholars and also ignores the important psychological impact that US assistance had on western Europe. At the time, the Marshall Plan was widely regarded as “a lifeline to sinking men,” as British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin fully recognized. “It seemed to bring hope when there was none,” he gratefully wrote. “The generosity of it was beyond belief. . . . Therefore we responded with such alacrity and . . . grabbed the lifeline with both hands, as

it were.”²⁴ Milward’s other main argument is not widely accepted either, though it has led to lively scholarly debates. Few scholars agree with his reasoning that the Marshall Plan made the Europeans focus on the recovery of their individual nations, not on cooperation with each other, and that the receipt of Marshall Plan monies therefore delayed genuine European economic integration.²⁵

To a considerable extent, European integration must be regarded as the *deus ex machina* with which Truman’s administration intended to square the circle and solve the daunting economic and military problems of the postwar world. The main driving force for this policy was the unfolding Cold War. “Unless we can succeed in getting an economic recovery in Europe,” Truman once said, “we might just as well look forward to a real dark age because where Russia gets control the standard of living goes back a thousand years—at least that has happened in nearly every one of the satellite countries.”²⁶

Truman and his successor, Dwight D. Eisenhower, also expected that an economically healthy Europe would be able to build up strong military forces and abide by a policy of strength toward the Soviet Union. In particular, Eisenhower believed that a prosperous Europe would allow Washington to reduce the large number of US troops that were based in Europe. With the exception of the 1970s, US troop levels in Europe were well above the three hundred thousand mark throughout the Cold War. They only fell much below this threshold between 1968 and 1979. The vast majority of these troops were based on West German territory,²⁷ as indeed were a large number of US-owned and US-controlled atomic bombs, with the first one arriving in 1955.²⁸ The potential of the European integration process to lead eventually to a significant reduction of the number of US forces in Europe was an important dimension since Congress had to give its support to the United States’ expensive western European Cold War strategy.²⁹ It was also expected that the founding of NATO in April 1949 and the successful implementation of George Kennan’s strategy of containment would help the Europeans to foster a sense of security and stability.³⁰

Kennan, a Soviet expert and career US diplomat who became the first director of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff, was convinced that the Soviet Union needed to be opposed but not necessarily by military means. US policy toward the Soviet Union “must be that of a long-term, patient but firm, and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies,” Kennan wrote in his famous “long telegram” of 1946, sent to the State Department

when he was still counselor at the Moscow embassy. Kennan expected that this strategy would “promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.”³¹

Later, in particular after the outbreak of the war in Korea in June 1950, Kennan would complain about the Truman administration’s overemphasis on the military dimension of containment. He was deeply concerned when the National Security Council paper NSC-68, largely written by Paul Nitze, his successor as policy planning director, called for a huge US military buildup, even in peacetime, and referred to the necessity of “a policy of calculated and gradual coercion” of the Soviet Union. The paper, often seen as a “blueprint” or US “master plan” for fighting the Cold War, was adopted by the Truman White House in September 1950. Kennan and his more subtle approach to East-West relations would soon lose influence on US foreign policy making, though in 1952, Kennan served a brief stint as ambassador to Moscow. It did not help that Kennan had gained a reputation as someone who was “emotional and vain” and “very sensitive to real or imagined personal slights.” He certainly seemed to “require careful handling,” Henry Kissinger advised Richard Nixon at a later stage.³²

In the 1950s, US policy makers assumed, on the whole, that both the strategy of containment and the further military development of the Atlantic alliance would prevent any internal transatlantic challenges to the NATO framework, the security roof that Washington had superimposed on Western political and economic integration.³³ It was hoped that the system would work and become mutually reinforcing since it would give considerable advantages to both the US and Western Europe.³⁴ It was a near perfect win-win situation from Washington’s point of view.

Early Problems

Early European integration, however, did not function as well as had been expected in Washington. Instead of being all-embracing, initially the integration process extended to a limited number of countries and economic sectors. The Schuman Plan of May 1950 was the first concrete step toward the economic integration of western Europe; yet it only focused on the coal and steel industries, classic industries essential for warfare, and apart from France and West Germany, only Italy and the Benelux countries joined in the enterprise, with Britain pointedly excluding itself.³⁵

While London was greatly in favor of the crucial political dimension of

the Schuman Plan—Franco-German reconciliation—it had severe doubts about the plan's supranational political and economic aspects. It seemed to require a significant surrender of national sovereignty to a multinational European body that might well take binding decisions by majority vote and without allowing individual nations to exercise any veto power.³⁶ Britain was also concerned that its cherished “special relationship” with the United States, and thus London's ability to punch above its weight in world politics, would suffer if the UK were to join a regional European bloc.³⁷

Many scholars believe that when the British refused to participate in the Schuman Plan negotiations, they abdicated the leadership of Europe, theirs until then for the taking.³⁸ According to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, London's refusal to join the Schuman Plan was the country's “greatest mistake of the post-war period.”³⁹ This may well have been correct. The long accumulation of anti-European resentment over the following six decades that culminated in the 2016 Brexit referendum and the UK's subsequent departure from the EU in early 2020 might well have been prevented, if the country had joined the European integration project from the very beginning.⁴⁰ French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman was certainly right when he declared in May 1950 that “a united Europe,” including a genuine Franco-German rapprochement, “will not be achieved all at once, nor in a single framework: it will be formed by concrete measures which first create solidarity in fact.” That was the reason why he proposed “that the entire Franco-German production of coal and steel be placed under a joint High Authority, within an organization open to the participation of other European nations.”⁴¹

The US very much supported the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), as the Schuman Plan was formally called. Indeed, it had been Truman's trusted confidant Dean Acheson who had implored Schuman “to take the initiative in incorporating the new West German state in international affairs.”⁴² Subsequently, future secretary of state John Foster Dulles told Acheson of his conviction that Schuman's concept was “brilliantly creative and could go far to solve the most dangerous problems of our time, namely the relationship of Germany's industrial power to France and the West.”⁴³

While the Schuman Plan largely fulfilled its crucial political dimension, the plan's economic dimension was less successful—at least from a US point of view. The ECSC turned out to be protectionist and discriminatory in nature, leading to ever-increasing European endeavors to keep economic competition from the US and the dollar area out of Europe.⁴⁴ This meant

that genuine liberalization of trade and payments and the introduction of multilateralism and currency convertibility as desired by Washington had to be postponed. Instead, narrow European regionalism prevailed, and the creation of the European Payment Union (EPU) in July 1950 only changed this partially, though by late 1958, transatlantic trade had more than doubled.⁴⁵

Washington, however, never wavered in its strong support for the further development of the Schuman Plan. When in the mid-1950s US steel producers protested about the aggressive trade and cartel policies of the ECSC, they found very little sympathy in the State Department. The diplomats in Foggy Bottom regretted the difficulties, but “any indication of a weakening of United States support for the ECSC at this time,” a State Department memorandum explained, “could have extremely prejudicial effects on current developments in the Community and in the general area of European integration.”⁴⁶

Similarly, in mid-July 1956, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles issued a guidance memorandum to Washington’s European embassies pointing out that the US in principle deplored international trade restrictions. Nevertheless, Washington was prepared to modify its opposition to such preferential trade arrangements if this was likely to “contribute to the attainment of United States political or economic objectives in a particular area.”⁴⁷ The US agreed, therefore, to a waiver of international economic rules allowing the creation of the ECSC in the first place. Washington’s position “with respect to the ECSC,” Dulles explained, “was based on the desirability of encouraging the closer political integration of Western Europe and the opportunity which the supranational insights of the ECSC offered for such integration.”⁴⁸ Washington clearly regarded the ECSC as a decisive first stepping-stone for bringing about the unity of Europe. A strong emphasis on the creation and preservation of international institutions such as the ECSC, but also NATO and others, became an important characteristic of Washington’s postwar foreign policy.⁴⁹

Throughout the 1950s, Washington continued to regard European trade constraints and discriminations as temporary phenomena that would not be able to prevent the gradual development of full multilateralism.⁵⁰ As long as the US was economically and militarily predominant, Washington was prepared to postpone temporarily both the creation of a new export market for US goods and the full realization of its liberal market economic vision. US policy makers did not yet worry about the United States’ international economic competitiveness, despite a gradually worsening trade balance between exports and imports.⁵¹

A CIA paper published in the 1970s came to the same conclusion. US foreign policy, the intelligence experts wrote, was “conducted with relatively little regard to its economic costs” throughout the 1950s and well into the 1960s, when the economic and financial burden of fighting the Vietnam War put a stop to this.⁵² The experts believed that by doing so, the US itself created the transatlantic dilemma that would dominate the 1970s. By helping its allies to recuperate economically, Washington aided western Europeans to become politically more confident and independent in the process. It was a dilemma, however, that any participatory hegemonic power could expect to face sooner or later. “In encouraging the revitalization of its allies,” the CIA analysis declared, “the United States probably never directly confronted the probability that they would eventually want to steer a more independent course.”⁵³

The latter assumption was mistaken, however. As was a young Henry Kissinger’s conviction, based on his careful reading of public statements, that the belief of most US politicians “that there was a harmony of interests between the United States and Europe remained unquestioned.”⁵⁴ In fact, at an early stage, some US policy makers began to worry that the US was effectively helping the Europeans to become too independent in the security policy realm and develop into serious competitors in the economic sphere. Here can be seen a certain parallel with gradually emerging US concerns regarding the rivalry with China in the 1990s and in particular after Beijing joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001.

Concern about European Strategic Independence

Already in the waning months of the Truman government and the early years of the Eisenhower administration, US policy makers began to worry about the possible consequences of supporting European recovery and unity. In the course of discussions among members of the State Department and the Mutual Security Agency in November 1952, it became obvious that the Truman administration only favored the creation of a united Europe within the NATO framework. If the Europeans were allowed to act outside the Atlantic alliance, this could well result in difficult transatlantic relations. The officials even concluded that it could be safely assumed that at some point in the future a united Europe might well become a “third force” in international relations next to the US and the Soviet Union. In such a case, it would be almost inevitable that Europe would increasingly

extricate itself from US dominance and control.⁵⁵ Such a development ought to be avoided.

Only a few months after Eisenhower's inauguration in January 1953, the secret Draper report of April 1953 also referred to the danger of Europe decoupling itself from the United States unless Washington began planning for the maintenance of US dominance within the Atlantic alliance. Under all circumstances, the US had to prevent the Europeans—in particular France with a supportive West Germany in its tow—from developing into “a strong European military power, having the most modern weapons at its disposal and being capable of large-scale warfare.” This might otherwise result in the Europeans taking “military action outside the NATO context and out of concert with the U.S.”⁵⁶ Eisenhower, however, was not convinced. He believed that a unified Europe would soon realize the benefits of close association with the US in the military field. That way, after all, the Europeans effectively had access to US nuclear weapons without Washington having to physically hand over such weapons to them.

In the context of Eisenhower's “New Look” defense policy,⁵⁷ it was one of his major objectives to draw down the number of US troops in Europe by building up European military strength. It appeared that the best way to do this was by rearming West Germany. Since Nazi Germany's defeat in May 1945, the country had remained demilitarized. Yet, not surprisingly, the prospect of German rearmament a mere half decade after the end of the Second World War encountered strong French and British opposition. The years 1950–51 were characterized by heated and highly controversial public and parliamentary debates about European rearmament. Eventually, the US threw its support behind the French-inspired European Defense Community (EDC), which was modeled on the Schuman Plan and meant to create a European army of mixed national units led mostly by French officers. That way, West German soldiers would be integrated into the EDC at battalion level, while no German officers and general staff needed to be re-created.⁵⁸ Initially, the US had been in support of making the new West German state a member of NATO, but strong French and British opposition to this idea had Washington convinced to reluctantly support the French compromise proposal, the Pleven Plan, which was the basis for the EDC. Already as NATO's first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), Eisenhower had recognized that the EDC would be the only way to make the French support German rearmament.⁵⁹

Yet the French themselves soon had second thoughts when, true to form,

the British eventually declined to participate in the EDC, with Winston Churchill, the grand old man of British politics who had become prime minister again in 1951, referring to the European Army as a “sludgy amalgam.”⁶⁰ Much to the consternation of the Western allies, during a Cabinet meeting in early December 1952, the seventy-eight-year-old prime minister even pronounced that “he would not be unduly disturbed if the present plans for a European Defence Community were not carried into effect.”⁶¹ Churchill did not believe that a coalition force would be militarily effective or that British and French soldiers would be sufficiently motivated to fight for a united Europe rather than for their homelands.⁶²

The absence of the UK, an increasing commitment of French forces to fight the war in Indochina, and the concessions the wily West German Chancellor Adenauer had wrangled from the US for signing up to the EDC made Paris rather uneasy about the whole project. When US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles publicly threatened an “agonizing reappraisal” of US policy toward Europe in December 1953 if the French did not ratify the EDC treaty, the entire *grand nation* seethed with resentment.⁶³

Perhaps this was the straw that broke the camel’s back. The French had enough and put an end to the long-drawn-out agony. On August 30, 1954, the National Assembly rejected the EDC in a show of determination by moving on to a different topic and without even dignifying the EDC project with a formal vote. As the French philosopher Raymond Aaron put it, “The satisfaction of resisting American pressure was not the least reason in voting against the EDC.”⁶⁴ The National Assembly disposed of the EDC treaty with “relative calm and dignity,” a French scholar claimed later.⁶⁵ Nothing could be further from the truth. While most of Prime Minister Mendès-France’s cabinet had abstained, on the right of the National Assembly, parliamentarians began singing the “Marseillaise” after the decision to move to the next point on the agenda had been taken. The old Edouard Herriot, the radical three-time prime minister of the 1920s and early 1930s, referred to the EDC’s supranationalism as a “monstrous and ridiculous” concept. “The impotent banging of the gavel,” the historian Hans Schmitt described the scene, “merged with general chaos as the session disintegrated.”⁶⁶ *Time* magazine put it more elegantly: “Death came to Europe’s door last week and impatiently tapped out three initials: EDC. After four years of doubts and discord, the long-debated, much-despaired-of European Army treaty seemed irretrievably doomed.”⁶⁷

With hindsight it is perfectly clear that the time was not yet ripe for the

establishment of a European military organization along supranational lines. Setting up a supranational coal and steel organization was an entirely different matter from considering the same for a holy cow such as a nation's army. Indeed, it would be another forty years before European leaders contemplated again creating joint military formations in the course of the 1990s.⁶⁸ It was only yet another twenty years later that US President Trump's skeptical, if not downright hostile, attitude toward NATO motivated French President Emmanuel Macron to propose more concrete plans for a stronger and integrated European military in late 2018.⁶⁹

In the mid-1950s, the hectic diplomatic activity of British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden led to the successful realization of an alternative scenario to the EDC. In May 1955, West Germany was admitted to NATO, though the Bonn Republic had first been obliged to join the resurrected Western European Union (WEU), which among other functions was given the role of an armaments procurement agency to control German military purchases. Now any potential German initiatives to rearm the country beyond what had been agreed could be detected at an early stage. The British promised at long last to keep four divisions of troops and tactical air forces on the European continent as long as the US also maintained its military presence in Europe.⁷⁰ Paris now reluctantly consented to West Germany's admission to NATO—much to the relief of the Western world.

The US in particular was mightily pleased, and President Eisenhower repeatedly spoke of the necessity to build up Europe as a "third great power bloc" so that the US would not have to carry the rearmament burden for the Western world by itself. For a change, the president believed rather optimistically that the US "would be permitted to sit back and relax somewhat."⁷¹ Any "third force" references made by the president and US officials did not mean, however, that the US desired for Europe to become "an independent unit standing in the middle between the two existing superpowers." It was always assumed, as the Norwegian scholar Geir Lundestad has pointed out, that the Europeans "would be standing rather close to the United States."⁷² Eisenhower also assumed that "each and every one" of the western European nations "would profit by the union of them all and that none would lose." Besides, soon "the unity of Western Europe," according to the president, "would solve the peace of the world. A solid power mass in Western Europe would ultimately attract to it all the Soviet satellites and the threat to peace would disappear."⁷³ Despite these and similar rose-colored presidential sentiments, it was the reality of the escalating Cold War that

guided most US officials. During these years, John Foster Dulles reigned at the State Department; he only retired in April 1959 for reasons of ill health.

Dulles, a highly intelligent but also dour, pious, and moralistic man, was greatly focused on the Soviet threat. It had made him an ardent advocate of European unity. His anticommunism dominated the foreign policy of the Eisenhower years, especially since the president himself felt no less hatred toward the Soviet Union.⁷⁴ Dulles believed in what came to be known as “brinkmanship.” In January 1956, he told *Life* magazine, “Of course we were brought to the verge of war. The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art,” Dulles explained with reference to the various Cold War crises of the 1950s. “We walked to the brink and we looked it in the face,” he proudly proclaimed, for instance, when referring to Washington’s contemplated nuclear gamble in the conflict with China over the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. “We took strong action.”⁷⁵

Dulles also became a close personal friend of Konrad Adenauer, West Germany’s long-serving first chancellor. The astute politician, who was experienced and old enough to have already dabbled in politics as mayor of the city of Cologne during the First World War, never lost any time reminding the Americans about the terrible nature of the Soviet regime. There was a looming danger of an imminent Soviet invasion of western Europe, he thundered whenever the opportunity arose.⁷⁶ Ever since June 25, 1950, when North Korean forces had crossed the 38th parallel and invaded US-protected South Korea, Adenauer and the Western allies feared a similar invasion of West Germany from across the East German border. It was assumed that Stalin had encouraged the North Koreans to attempt to reunite the Korean peninsula by force. The Western allies did not realize at the time that, in fact, Stalin had only given his hesitant agreement to North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung’s repeated requests.⁷⁷ An unprovoked Soviet invasion of western Europe was rather unlikely, in particular once the ever more paranoid Stalin had been laid to rest after his sudden death in early March 1953.⁷⁸ In fact, throughout the Cold War, the comparatively weak Soviet economy and the huge destruction caused by World War II made Stalin and his successors very cautious when contemplating scenarios that might lead to a third world war, this time fought with nuclear weapons. As Vojtech Mastny has pointed out, the Soviet Union was not a “paper tiger.” Yet it “was neither a ten foot giant,”⁷⁹ a statement with which John Foster Dulles would not have agreed.

While Dulles was generally recognized as a brilliant lawyer with a sharp

geopolitical mind, he possessed very little, if any, understanding of complex economic problems. This meant that his officials and advisers focused almost exclusively on the geopolitical importance of creating a solid Atlantic bloc to counter the perceived military and ideological threat posed by the Soviet Union and its eastern European satellite countries.⁸⁰

Concerns about European Economic and Financial Competition

In the second half of the 1950s, however, economic and financial realities began to intrude ever more urgently on US foreign policy. Soon the notion that geopolitics was more important than mere economic and trade matters faced increasing challenges from within the US government. To many people in Washington, it appeared that economically the US and its transatlantic allies were increasingly pitted against each other. The speedy recovery of the European economies—epitomized by the West German “economic miracle” that gradually took off in the mid-1950s—and the discovery of structural deficiencies in the United States’ economic performance left a bitter taste among many US policy makers. After all, the US began suffering from rising unemployment and inflation. The years 1957 to 1959 saw a serious recession in the United States, the deepest so far since the Second World War.⁸¹

Many economists put the blame for this development firmly on the passive policies of the Eisenhower administration. In fact, Federal Reserve chairman William McChesney Martin, a Truman appointee, referred to the sluggish economy of the late 1950s, with its high rate of unemployment, as an ill-conceived “investment in sadism.”⁸² The renewed development of a recession in early 1960, which by October had led to an unemployment rate of 6.1 percent, may well have cost Richard Nixon the presidency, though there were a number of other reasons too.⁸³ The sitting vice president lost the election of November 1960 against Democratic Senator John F. Kennedy by the extremely narrow margin of 0.17 percent. Kennedy obtained a majority of less than 113,000 votes in total and 303 to 219 Electoral College votes. Nixon had failed to persuade President Eisenhower to do something about the deteriorating economic situation by, for instance, reducing taxes and convincing the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates.⁸⁴ The so-called Sputnik shock, induced by the Soviets managing to launch the first-ever

satellite into space on October 4, 1957, had not helped to increase US self-confidence either.⁸⁵

It was hardly surprising that Washington began to consider not only the Russians but also increasingly the Europeans as serious technological and economic competitors. This applied, above all, to the Schuman Plan Six, which also became the founding members of the European Economic Community (EEC) when it was established on January 1, 1958. Although the senior members of the Eisenhower administration remained strongly in favor of creating a united Europe and thus supported the EEC, at the working level within the economic and trade ministries, there was growing concern that the US was nourishing a future rival with its economic policies.⁸⁶

In fact, within a matter of years, the United States had no choice but to become accustomed to the dawning of an age of interdependence between the European and US economies. Not least, the Europeans began to voice their desire for greater political independence in a more forthright manner. Federico Romero and Alan Milward, in particular, have argued that from 1958, the year the EEC began its work, US attitudes toward European integration became much more skeptical.⁸⁷ While there is a kernel of truth in this statement, on the whole it is somewhat of an exaggeration. Although doubts about the wisdom of European integration gradually increased, most US officials continued to support the development of a more united Europe with enthusiasm. Washington's disappointment with the ongoing results of the European integration process only manifested itself more seriously when the United States' economic problems increased substantially toward the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁸⁸

Still, in the course of the 1960s, the economic aspects of transatlantic relations gained increasing importance, not least because the US balance of payments deficit in its transatlantic trade relations had greatly increased in 1958–59. A 1963 paper on this problem referred to the fact that the US "balance of payments abruptly shifted to a deficit of alarming proportions." The author explained, "this shift undoubtedly reflected certain major changes in the conditions of international competition, attributable to developments both at home and abroad."⁸⁹ Washington soon began reasoning that the genuine convertibility of the major European currencies (eventually largely achieved by the end of 1958) and the termination of all protective European tariffs and trade discriminations were long overdue. European economic

recovery, the country's growing balance of payments deficit, and soon the accumulating costs of the Vietnam War were undermining the United States' relative economic performance.⁹⁰ In fact, as Lucia Coppelaro has convincingly argued, "the United States was unable to earn the foreign exchange needed to cover its growing overseas expenditure in investments and defense costs."⁹¹

US policy makers, therefore, expressed a considerable degree of coolness toward both the British-supported free-trade area and the free-trade association (EFTA) set up in 1960 as an alternative to the EEC. After all, EFTA also entailed trade discriminations against the US without, however, having any of the expected integrationist advantages of the EEC, such as Franco-German reconciliation.⁹²

Restructuring the Transatlantic Economies

Increasing economic competition from western Europe led the US to attempt a restructuring of transatlantic economic relations that included the so-called Dillon and Kennedy rounds within GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (forerunner of the World Trade Organization, WTO, established in 1995). Founded in 1947, this international forum aimed to regulate and overcome barriers to international trade by reducing tariffs, making subsidies, and easing quantitative restrictions, thereby fostering global economic recovery from the devastations of World War II. While GATT was based on the principle of nondiscrimination, Article 24 accepted regional tariff preference areas. This enabled the EEC to apply more favorable tariffs to its member states than to the outside world.

The Dillon and Kennedy rounds of discussions, which took place in Geneva in, respectively, 1960–62 and 1962–67, aimed at easing US payments problems and creating a more liberal world trading system by, above all, reducing EEC tariffs on US goods. The Dillon round resulted in a reduction of the EEC's external tariff by 10 per cent. The 1962 US Trade Expansion Act and also the Kennedy round of the mid-1960s resulted in additional EEC tariff reductions.⁹³ The brief but fierce transatlantic "chicken war" of 1963 had endangered but ultimately not prevented this agreement. The subsequent Tokyo round from 1973 to 1979, in which 102 countries participated (up from 26 and 62, respectively, in the Dillon and Kennedy rounds), further reduced tariffs and customs duties. In particular, the transatlantic

allies succeeded in reducing their mutual tariffs to a significant extent, down to 4.7 percent on average.⁹⁴

Similar objectives underlay attempts to strengthen the role of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), the body originally created to allocate the Marshall Plan monies. In 1961, it was fundamentally restructured and enlarged, with the US and Canada becoming members. It was renamed the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The new OECD meant to strengthen and expand international and transatlantic economies along free-market lines.⁹⁵

The Kennedy administration had put a great deal of effort into successfully pushing the 1962 Trade Expansion Act through Congress. That way, Kennedy achieved a reduction of US-European tariffs on most industrial goods. It lowered transatlantic trade hurdles and thus met the challenge from the EEC head-on. In Kennedy's submission to Congress, he argued that the US needed to keep and expand its markets in Europe and thus improve the competitiveness of the US economy. This would lead to the creation of jobs in the US. The country also urgently had to improve its balance of payments position. Moreover, the aggressive, global economic-assistance offensive conducted by the Soviet Union in the developing world needed to be countered. The developing world, after all, was also dependent on trading with the US and the Europeans. Through GATT, the efforts of the US would eventually lead to the lowering of Common Market tariffs for developing countries, benefiting Western countries' access to raw material.⁹⁶

As early as November 1961, Kennedy had publicly expressed his deep concern about the trade competition of the EEC. In his remarks to the press he said that the US had "to begin to realize how important the Common Market is going to be to the economy of the United States." He argued, "the Common Market is going to present us with major economic challenges and I hope opportunities." The president recognized the necessity "to negotiate with the Common Market on a position of equality": "to protect our interest and the interests of those that are associated with us."⁹⁷

Still, the Kennedy administration expected that a showdown with the EEC could be avoided, as tariff issues would largely be resolved through negotiations in GATT. At the same time, despite the increasing trade competition, the US continued to believe in the benefits of European integration for the Western world through what scholars have termed neofunctionalism. The latter was the idea that the "spillover" from integration in one regional area

would influence European integration in other areas. In particular, it was expected that substate actors such as a variety of organizations and bureaucracies would cooperate with supranational European institutions. They would take over certain tasks and issues of a regional nature that were formerly dealt with by individual governments. This, it was hoped, would drive the whole integration process further.⁹⁸ In fact, Kennedy's 1962 Trade Expansion Act also had a political element, as it was meant to facilitate a political partnership with a uniting Europe on the basis of a sound transatlantic economy.

A New Grand Design?

Not surprisingly, John F. Kennedy's "Grand Atlantic Design," as expressed in his Independence Day speech in Philadelphia on July 4, 1962, contained the expectation that an ever more united and independent Europe would have a strong and lasting US connection.⁹⁹ Kennedy spoke of an Atlantic partnership consisting of two pillars, one on each side of the Atlantic, the two sides of a transatlantic dumbbell. Contradicting what many members of his administration secretly believed, the president explained that the United States "do not regard a strong and united Europe as a rival but as a partner": "To aid its progress has been the basic object of our foreign policy for 17 years." Washington, he explained, was hopeful "that a united Europe will be capable of playing a greater role in the common defense, of responding more generously to the needs of poorer nations, of joining with the United States and others in lowering trade barriers, resolving problems of commerce, commodities, and currency, and developing coordinated policies in all economic, political, and diplomatic areas." The president explained what the US would see in such a Europe: "a partner with whom we can deal on a basis of full equality in all the great and burdensome tasks of building and defending a community of free nations."¹⁰⁰ This certainly sounded good and visionary.

Whether Kennedy had in mind a genuine grand design for the Atlantic alliance and western Europe that went beyond mere rhetoric is a subject of dispute among many scholars. Erin Mahan, for instance, talks about Kennedy's lack of clarity and his "blurred ideas" for European integration and security.¹⁰¹ Others, however, view Kennedy's predicaments more sympathetically and acknowledge that he faced formidable obstacles.¹⁰² Not least, Kennedy had to contend with a recalcitrant and independently minded French

President Charles De Gaulle. There also was of course the continuing Soviet threat, including the prolonged Second Berlin crisis, which eventually led to the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961. Before February 13, 1960, when France successfully and to much national acclaim and international condemnation tested its first atomic bomb in the Algerian Sahara Desert,¹⁰³ the president also did his best to undermine any joint Franco-German ambitions to obtain a finger on the nuclear trigger. Additional problems included the transition to NATO's new flexible response doctrine, various pressing international financial issues, and not least, the United States' own balance of payment predicament, as well as the unfolding dilemma in Southeast Asia, to name but a few. In light of these challenges, it was hardly surprising that JFK's grand design for the Western alliance remained somewhat underdeveloped and was indeed quite contradictory and frequently inchoate.¹⁰⁴

In any event, it quickly became clear that Kennedy and most of his advisers continued to regard it as dangerous if Europe "struck off on its own" in order to play an independent role in international politics. Independent European activities, it continued to be believed in Washington, ought to be subject to US guidance and was meant to take place within an Atlantic framework. Even in the case of Britain, the United States' most loyal European ally, Washington did not contemplate independence and genuine partnership but had something very different in mind. Dean Acheson—the elder statesman who served as Kennedy's pro-European ad hoc adviser—was convinced that London should be used to act as the United States' "lieutenant (the fashionable word is partner)" to help unite the European continent under clear US leadership. It was all very well for the US to give Europeans the impression that they were participating in decision-making, according to Acheson and his colleagues, but the real power had to continue residing in the US capital.¹⁰⁵

One of the very few truly committed pro-Europeans of influence in the Kennedy administration was Under Secretary of State George F. Ball. Renowned for his political and personal integrity, Ball was a life-long free trader who strongly believed in breaking down the barriers to a truly global economy. He was an old friend of Jean Monnet's, and due to the Frenchman's influence, Ball had become a strong advocate of European unity, especially European commercial unity.¹⁰⁶ Due to the administration's increasing preoccupation with Southeast Asia, his independence in European matters was probably greater than it otherwise would have been. "I didn't

get much interference on European policy,” he explained in an oral history interview. He was not convinced, however, that the Kennedy administration really had any clear ideas about the United States’ European policy objectives.¹⁰⁷

Ball and his small team of Europeanists, including Robert Schaetzel, later US ambassador to the EC, strongly favored pushing the administration toward strengthening European unity.¹⁰⁸ They did their best to convince other State Department officials that European integration was actually politically and economically advantageous to the US and ought to be supported on the basis of an “equal partnership.” This plea only led the real movers and shakers in the Kennedy administration, among them National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, to dismiss Ball’s team as “the theologians.” In practice, Ball’s influence and his ability to drive a truly pro-European agenda were often quite limited.¹⁰⁹ Although Charles De Gaulle believed that “at heart,” Kennedy “was a European,”¹¹⁰ the US historian Frank Costigliola concludes that, despite all the rhetoric to the contrary, on the whole “Kennedy paid even less attention to the allies” views than Eisenhower had.¹¹¹

But this is perhaps too sweeping a generalization. One needs to differentiate, after all, between the policy-making elites who focus largely on grand strategy and those middle-ranking officials who are tasked with the daily implementation of policy decisions. And the latter’s “specific contribution,” as Klaus Schwabe has pointed out, often “cannot be traced even in the primary sources.”¹¹² Kenneth Weisbrode’s diligent, almost detective work is, however, a successful effort to trace and uncover the impact of the officials tasked with implementing US foreign policy toward Europe.¹¹³

Attempts at Accommodating the Europeans and the De Gaulle Problem

In the 1960s, Washington became somewhat more attentive to accommodating the Europeans and their attempts to achieve greater independence in economic affairs as well as in the security sphere. This strategy included efforts by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to introduce a sea-based Multilateral Force (MLF) of submarines and warships. The joint fleet was to be manned by mixed NATO forces and equipped with multiple nuclear-armed Polaris ballistic missiles in an effort to reassure the Europe-

ans. It was assumed that the West Germans and the French would feel they were participating in NATO's nuclear decision-making process. At the same time, the MLF proposal would keep them firmly under the US-controlled nuclear umbrella. That way, Washington expected to avoid any Franco-German nuclear collaboration and the development of a German atomic bomb. The establishment of NATO's top-secret Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) in December 1966 and the creation in 1968 of the Eurogroup, an informal gathering of NATO's European defense ministers, were also part of this policy.¹¹⁴ In fact, the failure of the MLF led directly to the formation of the NPG. Instead of a "hardware solution" such as the MLF, the West Germans were thus offered a consultative solution to make them feel that they were still able to partake in nuclear policy decisions.¹¹⁵ Then, as later, the White House viewed the NPG as "a valuable, continuing forum for discussion and development of basic understanding about nuclear weapons" and thus regretted the nonparticipation of the French, who had left the integrated military command of NATO in 1966.¹¹⁶

During the Kennedy and initially also the subsequent Johnson years, the US ostensibly seemed more prepared than before to grant the Europeans greater input on transatlantic relations and to view them as genuinely independent actors on the world stage.¹¹⁷ Yet, scratch below the surface, and a different picture emerges. It was obvious that Washington always considered European integration and unity as subordinate in importance to upholding the Atlantic framework and maintaining undisputed US dominance within it. Washington had no desire to give up any real power. It was characteristic that the last Cold War summit to which the Europeans (i.e., London and Paris) were invited as participants was the abortive Paris summit of 1960. Thereafter, Cold War summitry was conducted bilaterally between Washington and Moscow.¹¹⁸

Moreover, it was not Europe, for example, but the US that insisted on terminating NATO's "massive retaliation" doctrine in favor of a "flexible response" strategy in the late 1960s. The new strategy essentially prescribed that any Soviet invasion of western Europe would not immediately lead to a nuclear response, as the "massive retaliation" doctrine had foreseen. Instead, an initial attempt would be made to repulse the onslaught with conventional forces. While the new controversial doctrine appeared to raise the nuclear threshold, the Europeans feared that it greatly increased the likelihood of conventional warfare being waged on their territories. The Soviet

Union might well feel less intimidated to embark on an invasion of western Europe once they realized that Washington would not immediately attempt to counter an attack with nuclear weapons.¹¹⁹

As a result, the West Germans and most other continental European countries were thoroughly underwhelmed by the new doctrine, though they could do little to stop NATO from adopting it in 1967. In the end, however, MC 14/3, the document on which the new strategy was based, consisted of an uneasy compromise between the US and West German positions. The exact definition of the point when NATO would resort to the use of the atomic bomb was left vague and ambiguous.¹²⁰ Through the Bonn government's practical experience in participating in the Nuclear Planning Group discussions since 1965–66, it had gained a much greater understanding of the huge damage that the use of tactical nuclear weapons would inflict on Europe and Germany in particular. Gradually West German politicians became less opposed to a more flexible and nonnuclear response, if a Soviet invasion were to occur.¹²¹

Already the NATO exercise "Carte Blanche," which had taken place in 1955, profoundly shocked many West German policy makers once they had been allowed to see the top-secret report on the maneuver four years later. The exercise simulated the use of 335 tactical nuclear weapons, most on West German territory, as would have been the case in a real war. The expected death of one and a half million people within two days, the severe injuries caused to a further three and a half million as well as the wholesale radiation of much of West Germany and the neighboring countries that would have occurred if this had been a real nuclear exchange made most German politicians weary to support NATO's nuclear defense posture wholeheartedly.¹²²

In the course of the 1960s, Washington's political, military, and economic predominance within the transatlantic alliance inspired more criticism than before, but there were no serious challenges to it on the whole. The only notable exception was President De Gaulle's openly anti-US policy and French withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command on June 21, 1966.¹²³ The general's deep-seated anti-US attitude angered and perturbed the US.¹²⁴ Still, Washington realized that West Germany much more than France was the key to the United States' role in Europe. It was not so much France, then, but the Bonn Republic that had to be kept fully in NATO. Without West Germany, NATO—and also Washington's dominance in the Atlantic alliance and western Europe—was bound to unravel. Without France, the Western alliance system could survive, and it did.¹²⁵

Fortunately for the United States, West Germany was much more dependent on US goodwill than was France, which ever since the Suez crisis of 1956 had decided to develop its own global power position as much as possible. France's leading role in the EEC was part of this scheme. After all, the US had successfully applied economic and political pressure on both France and in particular Britain to make them abort the invasion of Egypt and the Suez Canal area in November 1956, leading to formidable and long-lasting anti-US resentment in Paris. The French were also furious at the British and their proclivity to give in to Washington. Both countries drew entirely different lessons from the Suez crisis. The French determined never again to be exposed to US blackmail. The British, however, concluded, "we must never again find ourselves on the opposite side to the United States in a major international crisis affecting Britain's interests."¹²⁶

The aging De Gaulle posed a serious and quite unprecedented challenge not only to US dominance within the Atlantic alliance but also regarding Washington's supranational concept for the future of Europe. De Gaulle believed in a Europe of strong individual nation-states and thus in a confederally organized European continent with France in a leadership position.¹²⁷ Still, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations generally thought that the US could afford to wait patiently for the tiresome general's departure, though, as has been rightly said, this was "not a policy but an evasion."¹²⁸

From Washington's point of view, it did not seem to be necessary to placate De Gaulle too much by agreeing, for example, to the establishment of a tripartite directorate (United States, Britain, and France) for the Western alliance, as De Gaulle had desired when he returned to office in 1958, as well as on later occasions.¹²⁹ Granting him an effective veto over the use of US nuclear weapons in Europe, as Paris would have obtained if the tripartite directorate had ever materialized, was clearly out of the question. Washington had no intention of sharing its predominance within the Western alliance in order to please France. Above all, it seemed to make no sense to neglect West Germany in favor of closer relations with France and Britain. Washington remained convinced, for both strategic and economic reasons, that the Federal Republic was western Europe's most important state and that Britain, in any case, would remain faithful in most crisis situations. It was also feared that any real concessions to De Gaulle's somewhat illusionary ambition to make France once again a world power would only whet his appetite and make him ask for more favors.¹³⁰ In fact, according to Under Secretary of State George Ball, President Johnson regarded France as a

second-rate power and had no desire “to build De Gaulle up and to build France up” by getting into a “pissing match” with the French. A public row would only make Paris believe it was on a par with the United States; consequently, Johnson decided to give De Gaulle “a very soft treatment.”¹³¹

By contrast, the Federal Republic could not afford to antagonize the US too much by seriously contemplating the idea of leaving NATO, for example, or embarking on developing a nuclear weapons program against the wishes of the United States. Chancellor Adenauer knew he was dependent on the US not least in view of the Berlin problem and his country’s front-line status in the Cold War and need for military protection. All of his successors during the Cold War and indeed the post-Cold War years were also perfectly aware of this.¹³² Thus, Washington could largely rely on the loyalty of its West German ally, while the French were an entirely different story.

Still, the transformation of the Cold War was in the air. The new developments would lead to a more multipolar world, which in turn came to have a profound impact on US-European relations.¹³³ Already in May 1964, President Johnson had talked about “building bridges” between East and West, and he repeated this phrase in his State of the Union Address of January 1966.¹³⁴ In October of the same year, in an address written by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who later became President Carter’s national security adviser, Johnson called for “peaceful engagement” with the Soviet satellite states to help them obtain greater political independence.¹³⁵ It was in the mid-1960s that De Gaulle embarked on his controversial policy of rapprochement with the Soviet Union, not least in order to provide France with an independent role in East-West relations. In June 1966 he made a first dramatic visit to Moscow, and as Raymond Garthoff has observed, while edging closer to the East and toying with the idea of recognizing the international pariah East Germany, he loosened his links with the West.¹³⁶

In West Germany, the Social Democrat Willy Brandt, the foreign minister in the Grand Coalition that had come to office in December 1966, also showed a distinct interest in investigating closer relations with the Warsaw Pact countries. This included East Germany, the communist state that all Western states refused to recognize as a sovereign entity. It was Brandt’s aim to improve relations between the two parts of his divided country and gradually bring them together a little by means of improved trade and cultural links as well as eventually occasional travel opportunities. Already in the aftermath of the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, Brandt had

managed to negotiate with the East German authorities permits for West Berliners to visit family members who were stuck behind the Wall in the eastern part of the city.¹³⁷

Also in December 1966, the North Atlantic Council agreed to ask Belgian Foreign Minister (and former prime minister) Pierre Harmel “to study the future tasks which face the Alliance,” with the objective “to strengthen the Alliance as a factor for a durable peace.” This proved to be a milestone for the creative development of both NATO and East-West détente. The North Atlantic Council in mid-December 1967 formally adopted the Harmel report, officially titled “Report on the Future Task of the Alliance.” Its essence came to be called the “Harmel Doctrine.” It spelled out that “military security and a policy of détente are not contradictory but complementary.” Thus, “the ultimate political purpose of the Alliance,” it was pointed out in the report, was the achievement of “a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe accompanied by appropriate security guarantees.” The Harmel report called on each ally to do its utmost to improve relations with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, while “bearing in mind that the pursuit of détente must not be allowed to split the Alliance.” The United States’ delegation to NATO had worked hard to ensure that the report included the recognition that the achievement of “a settlement of the political problems in Europe” required “the participation of the USSR *and* the USA.”¹³⁸

Despite the transformation of the Cold War and De Gaulle’s challenge to Washington’s European policy, US dominance in the Western alliance remained largely unimpaired throughout the 1960s, as did Washington’s belief that European integration was constructive and mutually beneficial for both Europe and the US. Granted, there was an increasing number of US politicians and officials, including some in Congress, who questioned whether the process of European integration would in fact be beneficial for the US. They were nonetheless still in a minority. Most policy makers in Washington remained convinced that the prospect of a more integrated and thus economically and militarily stronger Europe under US leadership was vital to waging the Cold War against the Soviet Union successfully.

Taking the Europeans for Granted: The “Johnson Treatment”

Washington, however, continued to take the European allies for granted as the focus of the Cold War moved away from Europe toward the so-called

Third World and the war in Vietnam. In particular, growing financial disputes soured the transatlantic relationship, as shown in the squabbles between West Germany and the US over German offset payments. These at first sight bilateral problems gradually came to undermine US enthusiasm and support for the unity and the anticipated strengthening of the European continent as a whole in the long run. Policy makers in Washington wondered if an economically prosperous and pro-US country such as West Germany was unwilling to fulfill its contractually agreed financial obligations toward the United States, what kind of massive resistance to US leadership could be expected from a solidly united European continent?

The Bonn Republic's so-called offset payments were seen as the country's contribution to the high cost of maintaining US troops and equipment on German soil. Disputes over the size and the terms of the payments burdened German-US relations from the 1960s through the 1970s and beyond. The squabbles also revealed Washington's increasing concern with economic and financial matters.¹³⁹ The economic nationalism of the Nixon years was foreshadowed by the developments during the Johnson era. In fact, President Johnson's attitude even contributed to the fall from power of West German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard in late 1966, which paved the way for the creation of the Grand Coalition.

In December 1965 as well as in September 1966, Johnson refused to give the West Germans an extension to the offset payments Washington was due, though the Bonn Republic was in the middle of an unprecedented recession, the first one since the Second World War, and a deep budgetary crisis.¹⁴⁰ President Johnson was in no mood to compromise and help out when Erhard visited on December 21 and 22, 1965. By then, Johnson was contending with the escalation of the Vietnam War, rising domestic discontent, and pressure from Senator Mike Mansfield and others in Congress to cut costs by reducing US troops in Europe. These developments, coupled with the United States' worsening balance of payment deficit and dire economic performance, were taking their toll and putting the president under enormous political strain.

Johnson believed he had no choice but to adamantly insist that Erhard fully and promptly meet the agreed-on offset costs, given the United States' many obligations to protect the free world, not least in Vietnam. When Erhard begged him for an extension of time, the president exploded and gave Erhard the famous "Johnson treatment."¹⁴¹ The president's "tall, rangy figure towered over the comparatively small figure of the chancellor," recalled

George McGhee, the US ambassador to West Germany, who witnessed the humiliating episode. "Gesticulating and speaking in a strong, strident voice, Johnson alternately wheedled and threatened. He put his whole body into his demands. I was shocked by the emotion and vehemence behind his argument," McGhee later wrote.¹⁴² "Now we're going to find out who our friends are, the president said. He recounted all we had done for Germany. Now was the time for Germany to pay us back, he declared. We badly needed the help and public support of our allies for our policy and war effort, he emphasized. We needed tangible, if only non-military, aid. We expected Germany to take the lead by giving the most, Johnson announced with increasing conviction." McGhee considered that "Erhard, who appeared increasingly uncomfortable, verging on fright, must have had a very mixed reaction to the man who had sought his friendship scarcely two years earlier."¹⁴³

The West German chancellor was clearly no match for the ferocious man from Texas. Erhard acceded to Johnson's demand for a payment of \$100 million under the offset agreement by year's end, which was little more than a week away. He also promised to investigate whether West Germany's constitution, the so-called Basic Law, would allow him to send two hundred medical personnel and a construction battalion of one thousand soldiers to Vietnam, as Johnson requested. The chancellor did succeed in negotiating a requested German contribution to the Vietnam War from \$50 million down to \$30 million. But Johnson kept the upper hand through the very end of the meeting, when Erhard meekly asked Johnson to consider a state visit to the Federal Republic. The president replied that he was very busy, but he would think about it.¹⁴⁴ The chancellor had been put in his place like a naughty schoolboy.

Erhard's next visit to Johnson, some nine months later, in September 1966, was even more disastrous. Floundering in ever-more-serious budgetary straits, the chancellor was a "desperate man" who appeared to believe that personal "summitry" with Johnson was the only way out.¹⁴⁵ According to McGhee, Erhard refused to discuss the offset dilemma with anyone but the president, for he "wanted to throw himself on Johnson's mercy."¹⁴⁶ On September 22, 1966, McGhee sent Johnson an urgent memorandum since the president had declined to meet with him prior to Erhard's visit. The ambassador was aware that Johnson clearly tended toward the hardline views of Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and Treasury Secretary Henry Fowler rather than the more understanding line of his "pro-European" advisers, such as George Ball and Secretary of State Dean Rusk. McGhee informed

the president in his memorandum that “an obvious failure for Erhard in the talks could bring down his government.” He also spoke of the dire consequences for German-US relations in the long run. “The meeting,” McGhee cautioned, “takes place against the backdrop of a deterioration in U.S.-German relations, characterized by a fading confidence on the Germans’ part in the firmness of our commitments to them and Europe, by a feeling that they are not being given the consideration by us they feel is due to them as an important and loyal ally. We should set as our primary goal the restoration of mutual confidence and ease in our relationship.”¹⁴⁷

This was strong stuff, but Johnson remained unmoved.¹⁴⁸ A few days earlier, McGhee had sent an even more detailed memorandum to new national security adviser Walt Rostow. His warning was expressed in stark terms: “The Erhard Government will fall, or will in any event be irretrievably weakened. Neither he nor his successor, after such a U.S. turndown, would in the future be willing to base German policy on the U.S. with confidence. Germany and America will tend to drift apart.”¹⁴⁹ This was a prescient prophecy, though the White House was much too preoccupied with other problems to give it much attention.¹⁵⁰

In Erhard’s personal talk with Johnson on September 26, 1966, he explained that his government could fall and that his successor might be less loyal an ally than he was. The president was unimpressed and responded that “his financial problems were greater than Erhard’s.” He also expressed great surprise that Bonn wished to avoid its financial commitment and said he was disappointed that he could no longer rely on the word of the West Germans. Johnson was not prepared to offer Erhard any concessions whatsoever.¹⁵¹ So it was a very gloomy chancellor who emerged from the meeting, as McGhee observed firsthand. “He looked utterly dejected. I felt genuinely sorry for him,” McGhee later wrote in his memoirs.¹⁵²

It was clear that Erhard’s visit was a failure; in fact, it was an unmitigated disaster. In later talks at the expert level, Bonn achieved certain concessions, but these were quite minor. Johnson’s refusal to extend a helping hand and show some generosity was a severe blow to Erhard, who had to return home empty-handed with his authority in shreds. He resigned just over two months later after only little more than three years in office.¹⁵³ Within five years, Henry Kissinger, by then President Nixon’s national security adviser, would refer to the whole episode as a great “fiasco.”¹⁵⁴

Close personal relations with the US had not helped Erhard. Neither had West Germany’s status as one of the few countries that was considered to

have a “special relationship” with Washington. The other European countries took note of this and drew their own conclusions: it seemed inadvisable to rely too much on US goodwill. The days of US altruism or “enlightened self-interest” were clearly coming to an end. This became particularly obvious once Richard Nixon had been safely installed in the White House in January 1969. Not only was the new president greatly focused on dealing with the Vietnam War and developing a policy of détente with the Soviets and China, but the country also faced growing economic and financial difficulties. “It was inevitable,” Henry Kissinger wrote, “that America would learn that there were limits even to the ‘shining city on the hill.’ But the process was painful.”¹⁵⁵

Thinking of Europe and Beyond

NIXON AND KISSINGER'S PRIORITIES

IT WAS EASY TO AROUSE President Nixon's ire. In March 1973, when surveying the left-leaning governments that held power in a number of European countries, Nixon became rather depressed. He angrily unburdened himself in a memorandum to Henry Kissinger, his national security adviser and alter ego. "The way the Europeans are talking today," Nixon exploded, "European unity will not be in our interest, certainly not from a political viewpoint or from an economic viewpoint." The president fumed, "Europe will be in increasing confrontation with the United States rather than joining with us to present a united front against Soviet encroachment." He feared that the US had to do something about the movement toward an ever more integrated continent. "What matters now is what we do and we must act effectively and soon or we will create in Europe, a Frankenstein monster, which could prove to be highly detrimental to our interests in the years ahead."¹

Nixon, however, was not anti-European. In fact, he was deeply interested in the continent, as was his German-born confidant, Henry Kissinger. But Nixon's interest largely concerned the geopolitics of the European continent, Cold War matters, the manifold problems with the Soviet Union, and allied relations within NATO. And almost everything paled into insignificance in comparison with the attention the administration had to pay to the Vietnam War. "What really matters in campaigns, wars or in government is to concentrate on the big battles and win them," Nixon had grandly pronounced in an internal memorandum dating from early March 1970, just over a year after he had moved to the White House. The president proceeded

to lecture his advisers that the big battles were to be waged over East-West relations and US policy toward the Soviet Union, China, and eastern Europe. In the future, he declared, he only wished to receive regular detailed information on these parts of the world.²

Western Europe was much lower down on Nixon's list of foreign policy priorities. It came fifth. And besides, the president merely wished to be informed "where NATO is affected and where major countries (Britain, Germany and France) are affected." "The only minor countries in Europe" that he wanted to pay some attention to were Spain, Italy, and Greece. "I do not want to see any papers on any of the other countries, unless their problems are directly related to NATO," he wrote in no uncertain terms. He also explained, "I do not want to be bothered with international monetary matters, . . . and I will not need to see the reports on international monetary matters in the future."³ Less than a year later, however, he came to realize that monetary affairs might be crucial for the survival of his administration.⁴

It was little wonder that the president had not asked to be kept informed regularly about US relations with the fledgling European Community (EC). The EC was not among "the big battles" that had to be won.⁵ Indeed, for both Nixon and Kissinger, relations with Europe were still largely conducted within a traditional bilateral framework with the individual European countries. "The vitality of the traditional European states," Kissinger had written, would be decisive for the future dynamism and indeed unity of the continent.⁶ By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the United States had begun to lose interest in guiding and actively helping to shape the future of western Europe and the European integration process as Washington had done for the past decade and a half.

As early as July 1967, in an address to the Bohemian club of San Francisco—a private club for "all those rich Republicans," as Bill Clinton pronounced many years later⁷—Richard Nixon had emphasized, "Twenty years ago Western Europe was weak economically and dependent on the United States. It was united by a common fear of the threat of Communist aggression." He regretfully continued, "Today Western Europe is strong economically and economic independence," he explained, had "inevitably led to more political independence." Nixon even came to the somewhat unexpected conclusion that this new situation as well as the development of détente and the resulting "lack of fear of Soviet aggression" made it all but impossible "to keep the old alliance together on its former basis."⁸

Nixon and most of his successors shared a suspicion of the process of

European integration and where it might lead. While this mistrust of European unity was partially due to structural problems—the United States' increasing economic problems, a relative decline of power, a European desire for greater independence from the US, and serious distractions such as the Vietnam War, superpower détente, and relations with China—there was more to it. The president and his advisers were not merely guided by structural and other circumstances often beyond their reach and power of influence. They also allowed themselves to be greatly influenced by personal inclinations and subjective political preferences.

The emphasis that Kenneth Waltz and his influential neorealist theory of international relations have put on the structure of the international environment for determining the action of policy makers has rightly been criticized as overly mechanical, if not deterministic: "Structure dictates policy," Waltz's theory has been summarized.⁹ By contrast, Stanley Hoffmann, along with many other critics, believes that "nothing is more mistaken than to assume that the international system is a sort of monster with an impeccable will of its own, that the variable elements interact so as to determine the outcome, that the participants are dominated by the system in such a way that their moves are either mere responses to its dictates or exercises in irrelevance or self-defeat when they go against the system's logic."¹⁰

Still, Waltz's theory is not as simple as it may appear at first sight. Underlying his theory is a normative aspect: the notion of state sovereignty and thus of the relatively unrestrained and independent will and decision-making power of the state and its functionaries. An awareness of the personalities of the people in power, including their political worldviews and patterns of thinking, is crucial in this context. In the 1970s, as in other decades, the politicians in positions of influence were frequently constrained by the circumstances of their times. To a considerable extent, however, they also were free agents who made deliberate policy choices. This was certainly the case with respect to Washington's ambiguous policy toward Europe and the European integration process in the age of Nixon and Kissinger.

Nixon and Europe

Both Nixon and Kissinger were astute foreign policy analysts; arguably there were few experts at the time who could rival their skills. Nixon may well have possessed a deeper knowledge about foreign affairs, including European issues, than any other man who ever occupied the White House.

The future president earned his first spurs in 1946, when he was elected as a Republican congressman from Southern California. Much to his own surprise, in July 1947, shortly after Secretary of State George Marshall's commencement address at Harvard that proclaimed a new program for the reconstruction of Europe, the thirty-four-year-old congressman was asked to join the Herter Committee as its youngest member. This committee, led by Christian Herter, a Republican congressman from Massachusetts and the vice chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, was to travel to Europe to report on the necessity of a major US foreign policy aid program and its likely impact on the old continent.

Apart from the fifteen congressmen who participated in the journey, Herter had invited a number of experts, including his friend Allen Dulles, the future CIA director, with whom Nixon soon began a long-lasting friendship. Nixon later wrote that he "learned a great deal" from the trip that took place from early September to early October 1947. Indeed, his expertise in European affairs was laid during his work for the Herter Committee; yet his interest in Europe always remained linked to the East-West conflict. "Above all," he explained later, "I now understood the reasons for the success of communism in Europe."¹¹

Nixon was deeply moved by the suffering he observed in Europe, not least in a number of German and French cities where the malnutrition and cave-like dwellings of children and adults alike broke his heart. He realized that most of his compatriots in the US believed that the German people fully deserved their sufferings; after all, they had overwhelmingly supported Hitler and his henchmen, who then embarked not only on conquest and devastation of much of Europe but also on the Holocaust and many other unprecedented atrocities.¹² Nixon, however, endorsed the remark of his fellow congressman Francis Case, who explained to him, "when civilized people capture cannibals they do not eat them."¹³ Even before the trip to Europe, Nixon had supported the Truman Doctrine, as announced by President Truman in his speech before a joint session of Congress on March 12, 1947. Nixon, a believer in a bipartisan foreign policy, agreed with the anticommunist sentiments of the Democratic president, who had grandly pronounced "that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."¹⁴

In the course of the Herter Committee's European sojourn, Nixon became an even stronger advocate of a major foreign assistance program to

Europe than he had been all along. Back in Washington, the Herter Committee expressed its support for Truman's foreign policy and recommended the delivery of immediate aid to France, Italy, and Austria to enable them to survive the winter. "If U.S. aid is stopped in Europe," Nixon noted with deep conviction in a speech on October 29, 1947, "there is no question but that hundred thousands of people will starve and the Communists will take over."¹⁵ The committee also strongly endorsed the creation of a long-term foreign-aid program for European recovery. By supporting the Marshall Plan, the young congressman took a risk that could have endangered his blossoming political career. A significant number of Republican congressmen from the conservative, isolationist wing of the party were opposed to the financial commitment involved.¹⁶

Nixon's participation in the Herter Committee's trip to Europe had made him see the United States' responsibility for the fate of the Western world. He fully agreed with what Secretary Marshall said at the beginning of the foreign-aid debate in Congress: "We can act for our own good by acting for the world's good."¹⁷ The historian Irwin Gellman expressed it succinctly when he wrote that Nixon's experiences in Europe made him embark on "a crusade to halt the spread of Soviet totalitarianism into Western Europe. The United States had to participate."¹⁸ Later, on Nixon's first presidential trip to Europe in early 1969, he told Belgian Prime Minister Gaston Eyskens and Ministers Pierre Harmel and Étienne Davignon that "he had always supported the idea of a European Community and NATO ever since he had come to Europe as a young Congressman 22 years ago."¹⁹

This, however, was only partially correct. For Nixon, supporting the European continent always continued to be inextricably linked to fighting communism. The president "tended to focus on the Cold War part" of international relations "rather than on the European part of it," Nixon's former deputy national security adviser General Brent Scowcroft explained in an interview with the author.²⁰ Unique among US politicians at the time, Nixon combined internationalism and anticommunism, and he soon became the national spokesman for these at first sight quite dissimilar policies. With some notable exceptions, many internationalists (or globalists, in modern parlance) in the US were focused on European recovery and not too concerned about the precise nature of the political parties that dominated the European continent. Many US anticommunists, however, focused on US domestic politics and frequently tended to be isolationists or were at least opposed to committing US funds and troops abroad.²¹

The anticommunist and internationalist Nixon, however, only remained an advocate of European unity as long as the process of European integration could largely be regarded as an anticommunist policy. This policy, after all, was meant to safely integrate West Germany into the Western world to prevent the outbreak of another world war, to obtain Franco-German reconciliation, and, not least, to strengthen the pro-US and anti-Soviet policies of the western European nations. When by the late 1950s and in the course of the 1960s European integration became only loosely connected to anti-communism, Nixon lost interest. European integration for the sake of regional European economic and political developments did not interest him a great deal.²² This explains to a considerable degree Nixon's lack of enthusiasm for the creation of a more united European continent during his presidency. Instead Nixon would always remain focused on grand geopolitical concerns and taking on the evils of international communism. While Nixon possessed many prejudices, he had few deeply held political or ideological convictions beyond his strong anticommunist sentiments.²³

In the midterm elections of 1950, Nixon fought a highly controversial campaign to unseat the liberal Democratic senator Helen Gahagan Douglas, who also happened to be a glamorous Hollywood actress. He accused her of being "pink right down to her underwear" and smeared her as a communist sympathizer whenever he could.²⁴ As the patriotic hero and member of the House Un-American Activities Committee who in the second half of 1948 had exposed the former State Department official Alger Hiss as a communist spy, Nixon was assured of the support of the Republican Right. In the 1930s, the establishment figure Alger Hiss had passed on secrets to Moscow. Less the substance of Nixon's senatorial campaign than its style differentiated it from others.²⁵ It was during this campaign that the nickname "Tricky Dick" was coined for the young congressman. Nixon won Douglas's Senate seat with 59 percent to her 40 percent. "Douglas was simply overwhelmed," Dorrance Bowers writes in a detailed listing of the major stages of Nixon's political career. Douglas "could not repel Nixon's relentless attacks. She could not win the favorable media attention lavished on Nixon."²⁶

As one of the Senate's youngest members, Nixon embarked on a crusade to alert the US public about the global communist threat. He soon alleged that Truman was much too restrained in his conduct of the war in Korea and fiercely attacked him for it. Nixon also believed, like his hero the communist witch hunter Joseph McCarthy, that a great number of communists

were hiding in all branches of the federal government, and for good measure, he did not hesitate to accuse the Democrats of wasteful spending.²⁷

Nixon's anticommunist reputation brought him to the attention of the elderly General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who selected him as his running mate in 1952. After much soul-searching, the feted hero of World War II had opted for the Republican Party rather than the Democrats, and eventually, in July 1952, he obtained the nomination over his rival, the eminent isolationist Senator Robert A. Taft.²⁸ When Eisenhower went on to win the presidential election of November 1952 by a landslide, Nixon was elevated to the vice presidency. Not everyone was pleased. The TV host Johnny Carson later quipped, "Democracy means that anyone can grow up to be president and anyone who doesn't grow up can be vice president."²⁹ Many years earlier, Woodrow Wilson's vice president, Thomas R. Marshall, was credited with a similar entertaining joke about the lack of importance of the vice presidency. "Once there were two brothers," he explained. "One ran away to sea, the other was elected Vice-President—and nothing was ever heard from either of them again."³⁰

This did not apply to Richard Nixon, however. As vice president, Nixon involved himself actively in the country's foreign policy and traveled widely to explain the United States' Cold War position. Best known were his trips to Venezuela, where his motorcade was assaulted, and his journeys to Libya and the Soviet Union. In Moscow, Nixon engaged in the famous "kitchen debate" with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev about the advantages of capitalism over communism. The debate took place when both men toured the *American National Exhibition*, held in Moscow's Sokolniki Park, which included a typical US house with a well-equipped kitchen.³¹

Nixon managed to turn the office of vice president into a much more visible and important post than hitherto. He certainly disproved the crude and well-known statement by John Garner, Franklin Roosevelt's first vice president, that the office was not "worth a pitcher of warm piss."³² Due to Nixon's anticommunist notoriety, he was helped by the attention of the media that he attracted wherever he went. Until Dick Cheney's vice presidency between 2001 and 2009, Nixon was arguably the most prominent and active vice president the nation had ever seen. While Cheney managed to transform the office into something akin to an executive presidency,³³ the then much less experienced Nixon never attempted anything close to this, and in any case, Eisenhower would not have let him get away with it.³⁴ But the foundation of Nixon's formidable foreign policy expertise was laid

during his vice presidency. In particular, Nixon paid great attention to expanding his information base about European affairs. He further deepened his knowledge in the course of the 1960s, after he had narrowly lost both the presidential contest with John F. Kennedy in 1960 and his bid for becoming governor of California two years later.³⁵

Thinking about Global and European Affairs

Nixon's political obituary was written after his political losses in the early 1960s, and for a while, he considered his political life to be over. He focused instead on his work as a senior partner in the well-known law firm Nixon, Mudge, Rose, Guthrie & Alexander in New York City. Still, Nixon never lost interest in a political career, so he used his "wilderness" years to good effect by widening his foreign policy expertise. For instance, in 1963, he traveled to Europe with his family and set up meetings with many leading European statesmen. Nixon was pleased by the warm welcome he received. "Everywhere we went we were received as if I were still Vice President," he recalled, although, he added, "my prospects for any political comeback seemed extremely remote."³⁶

Nixon met with the right-wing Spanish dictator Francisco Franco at his summer residence in Barcelona, was extremely pleased to be invited to lunch with President Charles De Gaulle in Paris, and for the first time, visited the Berlin Wall, which made a "most indelible" impression on him. Nixon also traveled into East Berlin through Checkpoint Charlie at Friedrichstraße, the crossing point for foreigners and members of the allied forces to get from the western part of Berlin to the divided city's eastern part.³⁷ Back home, and in the aftermath of the Republican candidate Barry Goldwater's disastrous presidential campaign of 1964, Nixon secretly considered running for the 1968 Republican presidential nomination as early as 1965. Soon he began preparing his second presidential bid, including emphasizing his foreign policy credentials.

In October 1967, Nixon published a well-respected article, "Asia after Vietnam," in the foreign policy bible *Foreign Affairs*, where he called for a new beginning in US-Chinese relations and an easing of tension between the two countries. He expressed the belief that the US should remain a Pacific power and further contribute to shaping the political future of the Far East.³⁸ In the same year, he journeyed to South America and the Middle East, including Israel, areas of the world he was unfamiliar with. He also

embarked on journeys to Africa, the Soviet Union, Romania, and, not least, some western European NATO countries.

Nixon, however, was not impressed by the state of transatlantic affairs, a situation he found deeply “disturbing.” In his memoirs, he wrote that he “had not made a systematic tour of the NATO nations since 1963” and “was shocked by the extent to which our relations with them had deteriorated.” Rightly or wrongly, he believed that “the Europeans were deeply offended by our failures to consult with them, or even to inform them of decisions we made that touched on their defenses and their destinies.” Apparently, European statesmen told Nixon that “under Kennedy and Johnson, we had shown in a variety of ways how little we valued our allies and how little we appreciated the importance of NATO.”³⁹

In Europe, Nixon’s foreign policy expertise was recognized and well respected. Still, there was some unease about his anticommunism in certain circles, though more conservative politicians appreciated it and felt reassured about the United States’ commitment to defending the European continent. The ninety-one-year-old Konrad Adenauer, the canny former West German chancellor whom Nixon knew very well from his time as Eisenhower’s vice president, told him, “I am worried, my friend.” In exasperation, the retired politician expressed his fear that the Soviet Union wanted “the whole world”: “Most of all they want Europe, and to get Europe they know they must destroy Germany. We need you to keep us strong and free.” Wistfully, the ancient Adenauer, who would pass away only a few months later, added, “But you also need us.” Nixon realized at once how true this was. Good and constructive transatlantic relations were vital for Washington, if the United States wished to maintain its predominant position in Europe and indeed beyond.⁴⁰

Nixon had a quick and flexible mind and at times tended to be quite open to novel ideas. However, he also was a weak, thoroughly insecure, and frequently quite vindictive man, who was highly suspicious of friends and foes alike. John Connally of Texas, who knew him well, wrote that Nixon was an “anomaly” in a world dominated by extroverts. He was “basically a humorless man, and extremely private, almost antisocial.” In addition, “he had a distrust of academia, and an insecurity that led him to be secretive and devious.”⁴¹ This lack of trust came to border on paranoia and would eventually lead to the Watergate scandal and Nixon’s resignation in disgrace during August 1974.⁴²

Throughout Nixon’s political life, he disliked being criticized in even

minor ways. This weakness, the late historian Tony Judt concluded persuasively, “was why he surrounded himself with yes-men and hardly ever exposed his person or his policies to open debate among experts of more than one adviser at a time.”⁴³ Henry Kissinger, Nixon’s most crucial foreign policy adviser, who happened to be Jewish and who during the Watergate years would almost become a co-president, realized this, and initially he was a rather subservient and fawning, if not sycophantic, underling. He knew that his remaining in the Nixon White House was entirely dependent on the whim of the president, who he suspected was quite anti-Semitic at heart.⁴⁴ Kissinger made a great effort to court and flatter Nixon and proved to be extremely jealous of anyone in the Nixon White House who also managed to establish close relations with the president. Once in office, Kissinger immediately set about to make himself indispensable to Nixon, and it did not take him long to dominate the White House foreign policy machinery.

Soon the new national security adviser was running rings around Secretary of State William Rogers, who had served as deputy attorney general during President Eisenhower’s first term and as attorney general during Eisenhower’s second term in office. Rogers was also an old friend of Nixon, who had chosen him as the new secretary of state precisely because Rogers was neither known for his foreign policy expertise nor for his dynamism. Nixon wished to have a fairly passive State Department so he could run US foreign policy from the White House. The State Department was merely expected to deal with operational and technical issues; the president would take the strategic decisions. Yet soon Kissinger realized that operational matters could quickly develop into strategically important issues; thus, operational matters needed to be controlled by his office too.⁴⁵

As an upright, straightforward, and rather proper lawyer, Rogers was no match for the manipulative and frequently quite devious and impetuous Kissinger, who also possessed a rather well developed belief in his own brilliance.⁴⁶ Paradoxically, with hindsight, Kissinger would write that if the president did not have confidence in his secretary of state, “he should replace him, not attempt to work around him by means of the security adviser.”⁴⁷ According to the influential State Department official Martin Hillenbrand, who later became US ambassador to West Germany, Rogers had a “shrewd integrity, sharp mind, and much practical wisdom,” without, however, knowing “very much about Europe or the conduct of diplomacy.”⁴⁸ While being a fast learner, Rogers lacked the drive for power and the almost boundless ambition to succeed—a characteristic that Nixon’s national secu-

rity adviser possessed in abundance. Within a few months, one of Rogers's closest advisers, State Department Counselor Richard F. Pederson, was included on the list of those whom Kissinger had asked the FBI to be tapped to prevent the further leaking of confidential information to the press. But for all intents and purposes, the White House tap on Pederson was an unprecedented tap on the secretary of state himself.⁴⁹ Kissinger had instigated these taps, which he later blamed on Edgar Hoover's FBI, only four months after he had become national security adviser. When the wire-tapping of many of his underlings was revealed, he lost a lot of prestige and respect.⁵⁰

Kissinger managed to make the Nixon White House and in particular the office of the national security adviser, rather than the State Department, the center of the administration's foreign policy making. The chairmanships of many interagency committees, for instance, were transferred from the State Department to the White House and thus to Kissinger's purview.⁵¹ The primacy of the National Security Council in the country's foreign policy making, however, had already been established by Kennedy's and Johnson's national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy, in the 1960s. Accordingly, Kissinger, as Kenneth Weisbrode has written, "did not invent the system in which he flourished, but pushed it to its outer limits of effectiveness."⁵²

Still, by 1973, even Nixon felt that Kissinger was becoming too influential and also too popular with the media, threatening to overshadow the president himself. The latter, for example, was not pleased when both he and Kissinger, rather than just Nixon himself, were named as *Time* magazine's "men of the year" for 1973 and were jointly depicted on the magazine's cover.⁵³ In any case, this was a dubious honor, as in 1938 *Time* had not hesitated to name Hitler "man of the year." There were also other questionable choices such as Stalin in 1939 and 1942 and Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. Soon Nixon seriously considered replacing Kissinger as national security adviser. However, the Watergate scandal saved Kissinger by leading to a number of resignations among Nixon's domestic policy advisers who were implicated in the affair. Nixon felt that the country's foreign policy and not least the survival of his administration required stability and continuity rather than the replacement of his primary foreign policy adviser. Arthur Burns, the chairman of the Federal Reserve board, wrote in his diary, "Henry is most eager to become Secretary."⁵⁴

Kissinger was indeed greatly frustrated. According to Burns, "K's attitude toward Nixon is very plain. He considers him devious, guilty of what hap-

pened at Watergate, etc. He sees no future for him, since most Americans 'regard him as a felon.'"⁵⁵ Kissinger was nevertheless keen on moving to the State Department. And indeed, instead of losing his job, Kissinger was promoted to secretary of state in September 1973, while also retaining his portfolio as national security adviser. Nixon was made aware by none other than Kissinger himself that as he was now busy with two jobs, he would have to "lean more heavily on Brent [Scowcroft]," recently promoted to major general, "to continue the superior effort necessary to manage the NSC system."⁵⁶ And Kissinger immediately set out to strengthen the influence of the Department of State within the Nixon administration. The "strange irony" of this development was not lost on Burns, who later commented that "the man who destroyed State's prestige" when Bill Rogers was secretary of state was now "trying to rebuild State's prestige."⁵⁷ In fact, as Charles Ashman has argued, Kissinger's appointment as secretary of state "was a conciliatory and apologetic move" toward the Congress. After all, he had been secretary in all but name for a significant period of time, but now he would have to be "properly confirmed by the Senate."⁵⁸

Only more than two years later, on November 3, 1975, did Gerald Ford, Nixon's successor as president, relieve Kissinger of his dual role. Kissinger nonetheless remained secretary of state. While Kissinger resented losing part of his portfolio, on the whole this process "moved very smoothly given the personalities involved," Brent Scowcroft, Kissinger's deputy, later explained. Scowcroft was promoted and became the new national security adviser. Although he knew how to handle Kissinger—they continued to remain friends—Scowcroft did not hesitate to explain in an interview with the author that Kissinger was "very difficult to deal with" and "very hard on the people who worked for him." He "tended to get upset, shout at people. . . . He was not an inspiring-leader kind of person . . . but demanding, very demanding." And with a telling grin, the former national security adviser to Presidents Ford and George H. W. Bush revealed how he survived: "I learned how to manage him," and people who came to understand the "inner Kissinger" often "hang on through it all" rather than quit after six months or so, as many of his underlings did.⁵⁹

Kissinger and Europe before Nixon

Initially, in January 1969, most European governments had welcomed the surprise appointment of the forty-five-year-old Harvard professor as

Nixon's national security adviser. *Time* magazine spoke of "Richard Nixon's most astute appointment" and reported that "Bonn, London and Paris may disagree on a score of issues, but they are in happy unanimity in their respect for him; even Moscow is not displeased."⁶⁰

By the late 1960s Kissinger, the Bavarian Jew who in 1938, at the age of fifteen, had managed to escape from Nazi Germany together with his parents and his brother, Walter, had become a well-known figure in academic and foreign policy circles.⁶¹ His thick German accent, which he would never lose, became a kind of trademark for him. When his brother, Walter, was once asked why he did not have a similarly strong German accent, he is supposed to have replied, "Well, I have learned to listen." Henry Kissinger's prolific writings on the course of US foreign policy, on transatlantic relations, and not least on nuclear strategy had appeared in prestigious magazines such as *Foreign Affairs* and *Daedalus*. In the course of the 1950s, Kissinger had also begun to collaborate with such influential bodies as the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the Rand Corporation, to name but a few.⁶²

In particular, Kissinger's two well-received books, published in 1957, helped him to get a tenured professorship at Harvard, where he soon was put in charge of the Harvard International Affairs seminar (officially called the Center for International Affairs). Initially he codirected it with Robert Bowie, who from 1953 to 1957 had been the policy planning director in John Foster Dulles's State Department, though within a year, Kissinger and Bowie were hardly on speaking terms. Kissinger referred to Bowie as a "malicious maniac," and both men "would sometimes check with their secretaries," who shared the same office, "before coming out to make sure the other was not there."⁶³ The Harvard International Affairs seminar as well as Kissinger's editorship of a foreign affairs journal called *Confluence* brought him in touch with many politicians and intellectuals who rose to influence and prominence, becoming part of Kissinger's extremely wide network of international contacts.⁶⁴

The two books Kissinger published in 1957 outlined important and enduring aspects of his political thinking that clearly influenced his policy making when he became Nixon's national security adviser in January 1969. His published PhD dissertation, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812–22*, investigated—and applauded—how the two conservative politicians managed to create a new stable and peaceful international system in the wake of the Napoleonic wars.⁶⁵ Well-known be-

came Kissinger's citation of Lord Metternich's statement that he was "born to make history, not to write novels." Many critics interpreted this as Kissinger's description of his own ambitions. Kissinger's dissertation revealed, as Jussi Hanhimäki writes in an insightful book, that he was "a firm believer in realpolitik, in the primacy of geopolitics and the balance of power as key ingredients to providing international stability." In his doctoral work, Kissinger also emphasized the responsibility of the individual statesman to influence events to maintain or restore international order.⁶⁶

Kissinger's second book of 1957, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, brought him national—even international—acclaim and "established him as an authority on U.S. strategic policy."⁶⁷ For instance, Kissinger's writings influenced the future West German defense minister and chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Later, the two men became close friends, and Schmidt remained an admirer of Kissinger's geopolitical insights.⁶⁸ In particular, Schmidt was impressed by Kissinger's powers of analysis, though he often disagreed with him politically. "Henry is in a category by himself," Schmidt explained in a conversation, "he does not fit into any precise box."⁶⁹ Though densely written and argued, Kissinger's *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* proved highly popular. Over seventy thousand copies were sold, and it remained on the *New York Times* best-seller list for fourteen weeks.⁷⁰

In the book, Kissinger expressed himself in favor of a flexible Western defense policy. He was opposed to Eisenhower and Dulles's doctrine of "massive retaliation." Instead, he argued in favor of making provisions for limited warfare and the employment of atomic weapons if the Soviet Union were to invade western Europe, a possibility that most Western policy makers took seriously in the mid-1950s.⁷¹ With the main arguments of his book, Kissinger foreshadowed the debate about NATO's strategic nuclear policy, which was to dominate the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

However, the volume was only partially rooted in Kissinger's original thinking. The book was also based on the monthly discussions of the nuclear study group at the Council on Foreign Relations during the three years he spent at the CFR. Kissinger had been selected as the study director of the group, a prestigious appointment indicating his status as an up-and-coming young scholar, though he had been turned down for the position of a research assistant due to his rather too serious demeanor. With the volume, Kissinger essentially provided a succinct and persuasively argued synthesis of the views expressed by the high-level participants in the meetings.⁷² Jussi Hanhimäki has claimed that Kissinger "thus applied the obvious"

by arguing that the US needed a new strategic doctrine, which provided the country with several flexible response options in the case of war with the Soviet Union.⁷³ However, this is a somewhat unkind interpretation. Kissinger's thoughtful synthesis and deep insights into Western nuclear strategy became highly influential and shaped the discussion for years to come. His apparent willingness to consider the actual use of tactical nuclear weapons as part of the routine Western warfare arsenal caused much controversy, not least on the European continent, which would undoubtedly suffer greatly from the use of so-called tactical, that is, short-range, nuclear weapons.⁷⁴ Despite the somewhat-innocuous-sounding name, these were powerfully destructive atomic bombs.

In addition to Kissinger's academic work at Harvard and a number of think tanks, he became a part-time consultant to both the Kennedy (1961–62) and Johnson (1965–68) administrations, though he very much remained on the fringes of power, “like an outsider with his nose pressed to the glass.”⁷⁵ Still, Kissinger was one of Kennedy's advisers during the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961, and he strongly came down on the dovish side, arguing against former secretary of state Dean Acheson's inclination to send US troops down the *Autobahn* to Berlin, if the Soviets moved to cut off allied access to the western part of the city. True to form, however, Kissinger did his utmost not to alienate Acheson and kept sending him complimentary letters.⁷⁶

While Kennedy appreciated Kissinger's input during the Berlin crisis, on the whole, the president's relationship with his part-time Harvard adviser, whom he regarded as rather pompous and long-winded, was an uneasy one. Kissinger found “the Kennedy group unattractively narcissistic” and puzzlingly idealistic.⁷⁷ Kissinger clearly did not fit in with the Kennedy crowd. The president's national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy, a colleague and friend of Kissinger's from Harvard, was asked to explain this to him and dismiss him as a consultant. The White House added insult to injury by deciding not even to issue a press release about Kissinger's departure.⁷⁸

Since the mid-1950s, Kissinger had developed close and lucrative links to the Rockefeller family, in particular to New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, supporting his unsuccessful quests for the Republican presidential nomination in 1960, 1964, and 1968. The men had first met in the context of the controversial Quantico seminars on national security in 1955, which Rockefeller in his capacity as international affairs assistant to President Eisenhower had initiated to discuss US Cold War policies.⁷⁹

During the 1960s, Kissinger continued publishing a considerable number of influential articles, frequently focusing on relations within the Atlantic alliance. He developed a reputation for possessing a first-class analytical mind, but soon it became apparent that he also was highly sensitive, felt easily slighted, often dealt with his staff in a rather short-tempered way, and, not least, was full of his own importance. In short, Kissinger frequently behaved like a prima donna. He was not pleased, for instance, when he noted that an address he had drafted for Nelson Rockefeller was reviewed by three of the New York governor's speechwriters. Feeling offended, he complained that if Rockefeller "had a Picasso, he wouldn't call in three housepainters to touch it up."⁸⁰ Kissinger certainly seemed to have made up for his earlier lack of confidence. "Living as a Jew under the Nazis, then as a refugee in America, and then as a private in the army," he had once told the journalist Joseph Kraft, "isn't exactly an experience that builds confidence."⁸¹

Increasing Preoccupation with Vietnam

In October 1965 and again in the course of 1966, Henry Cabot Lodge, the US ambassador in Saigon, asked Kissinger for his advice on how to overcome the stalemate in Vietnam. Subsequently Kissinger traveled to Vietnam several times to see for himself. This initiated Kissinger's ten-year concern with Vietnam which would soon consume much of Kissinger's thinking and begin to override his traditional prime concern with Europe and the Atlantic alliance. Kissinger also soon discovered his liking for clandestine diplomacy.⁸²

During the secret Vietnam peace negotiations between the US and North Vietnam in Paris in 1967 (the so-called Pennsylvania negotiations between June and October), Kissinger acted as a consultant and mediator for the Johnson administration. In fact, he had initiated these secret talks by persuading Secretary of State Dean Rusk to use two French scientists (Herbert Markovich and Raymond Aubrac) as intermediaries. Kissinger had come across them by chance, and they had been recommended to him, as Aubrac, a hero of the French Resistance, had good personal links to Ho Chi Minh, the North Vietnamese leader. Ho was the godfather to Aubrac's daughter. Via these intermediaries, Washington offered to stop the bombing of North Vietnam, if "productive" negotiations were to follow immediately and if the North would not use the opportunity to move more troops to the South. However, no deal could be achieved. Hanoi continued to insist on the US

stopping the bombing “unconditionally” prior to entering into any negotiations. Although Kissinger did his best to overcome this problem with the help of creative semantics, it was to no avail. While impressing Defense Secretary Robert McNamara with his diplomatic skills, the talks came to nothing.⁸³

In fact, Kissinger’s famed intellect, powers of analysis, and imaginative thinking deserted him when it came to Vietnam. In contrast to his clear and sophisticated reflections on Atlantic and European strategic policy making, his as well as Nixon’s thinking about Vietnam was muddled by an obsession with maintaining US credibility. The old domino theory was also very much alive and kicking in Kissinger’s mind. In an August 1966 article for *Look* magazine, Kissinger had already referred to the danger of “a demonstration of American impotence in Asia,” which could not “fail to lessen the credibility of American pledges in other fields.” If the US were to withdraw unilaterally from Southeast Asia, he reasoned, this would greatly affect “the stability of areas geographically far removed from Vietnam.” The US was “no longer fighting in Vietnam only for the Vietnamese”: “we are also fighting for ourselves and for international stability,” he declared. “Negotiations could start only after the enemy had been crushed.”⁸⁴

Commenting on Kissinger’s views, Robert Dallek put it well: “What he overlooked was the extent to which international opinion would have seen a pullback from a failing action as an act of courageous realism that made America a more sensible ally and an adversary that would make better future use of its power.”⁸⁵ Kissinger, however, would never entirely grasp this reasoning while he was in office. In fact, even when French President De Gaulle, whom Kissinger greatly admired, made the same point during a conversation in the course of Nixon’s first trip to Europe as president in early 1969, Kissinger remained unimpressed. The French president proposed a fast US withdrawal from Vietnam and dismissed Kissinger’s emphasis of the importance of US credibility for staying in Southeast Asia as a rather peculiar line of thought. When Kissinger replied that he feared US credibility might suffer in the Middle East in particular, the general said, according to Kissinger: “How very odd. I thought it was precisely in the Middle East where your enemies were having the credibility problem.”⁸⁶

De Gaulle made a similar point to Nixon himself. The US president kept talking about ending the Vietnam War in a responsible way by not rushing out “in a panic,” as otherwise “the credibility of the US in the world would

suffer badly.” Once again De Gaulle was not convinced. He believed that a settlement of the war could be achieved, as US “power and wealth was so great that it could do this with dignity. It would be better to let go than to try and stay.”⁸⁷ But neither Nixon nor Kissinger was persuaded by this line of thinking. Even as late as June 2010, Kissinger still came out in favor of a somewhat more sophisticated notion of US credibility. He could not help but emphasize the continued importance of paying attention to maintaining US credibility in a *Washington Post* op-ed whose main points were the suggestion of alternative ways to overcome the difficulties the Obama administration was facing with the war in Afghanistan.⁸⁸

During the tumultuous years of the second half of the 1960s that saw the development of ever more outspoken and partially violent protests by both the anti-Vietnam movement and the civil rights movement, Kissinger clearly was on the rise as an up-and-coming public intellectual with widespread political connections. He had done his utmost to keep on good terms with the leaders of both political camps and had his eye clearly focused on obtaining a government position independent of which party and candidate might actually win the next presidential election.

After all, following the disastrous Tet offensive by the North Vietnamese Viet Cong in February 1968, President Johnson announced in a televised address from the Oval Office on March 31 that he was deescalating the bombing of North Vietnam to facilitate peace talks, with preparatory negotiations beginning soon. He also dropped the bombshell that he would not be running for reelection. The frontrunners for the Democratic nomination became Johnson’s vice president, Hubert Humphrey, the pacifist and left-leaning Minnesota senator Eugene McCarthy, and, until his tragic assassination on June 5, 1968, Robert F. Kennedy. The month of April 1968 had already seen the assassination of the civil rights leader Martin Luther King and the outbreak of widespread violence in almost all large cities and many university campuses in the United States.⁸⁹

At the chaotic and poorly organized Democratic convention in Chicago in late August 1968, Humphrey narrowly obtained the nomination. Johnson’s last-minute hope that due to the challenging times of the present, he would be drafted by the convention to run again for president did not materialize.⁹⁰ It had always been a rather far-fetched idea. In view of the incumbent president’s widespread unpopularity, the Republican frontrunner, Richard Nixon, had actually hoped that Johnson would run. Nixon had won

his own nomination at the Republican convention in early August on the first ballot. Any of the other candidates, including Nelson Rockefeller, had not proven to be a serious competitor for Nixon.⁹¹

Rockefeller had taken his foreign policy guru, Henry Kissinger, along to the convention in Miami Beach, Florida, where the billionaire had to deal with a number of vicious attacks on his person. After having participated as a Rockefeller Republican in the 1964 convention in San Francisco, at the 1968 convention Kissinger was only for the second time exposed to the rumble and tumble of US party politics. Once again he did not much like it and despised those who embarked on highly unfair personal attacks against Rockefeller. Kissinger was not impressed by Nixon either, and he made no secret of it. His disparaging remarks about Nixon were widely known, and Nixon himself became aware of them too.⁹² Even as late as November 8, 1969, after Nixon had already become president-elect, Kissinger remarked in a talk during a visit to the Rand Corporation, "Richard Nixon is not fit to be president."⁹³

Despite this view, throughout 1968 the temptation to obtain a government position had proved to be too much, and Kissinger began "to worm his way" into the Nixon campaign team, as a Rockefeller aide observed.⁹⁴ Yet, when during the campaign the Nixon team offered Kissinger to serve on candidate Nixon's foreign policy advisory board, he declined, instead expressing his willingness to help behind the scenes. Working openly for Nixon would clearly have nixed his prospects to obtain a government position if Humphrey were to win the election, which might well be the case. To help his chances with the Democrats, he promised the Humphrey camp to give them access to Rockefeller's extensive files on Nixon's dirty politics. Yet the latter never materialized.⁹⁵

Nixon, Kissinger, and the 1968 Presidential Election

The closer the election in November 1968 approached, the more Nixon began to appreciate Kissinger's nuclear and strategic expertise. After all, the Soviet Union had created a bloodbath when twenty-eight divisions of Warsaw Pact troops had crossed the border into Czechoslovakia on August 20, 1968, to prevent the country from leaving Moscow's military pact.⁹⁶ Nixon condemned the invasion as an "outrage against the conscience of the world" but also indicated in his campaign speeches that a US-Soviet summit conference might eventually still be wise.⁹⁷ For the time being, however, the

continuation of tense relations with Moscow and indeed strained Russian-Chinese relations appeared to be likely. There had been serious skirmishes between Russian and Chinese troops along the disputed Usuri River. Kissinger's foreign policy expertise was in demand. He might also prove quite useful with regard to the ongoing Vietnam peace negotiations in Paris.⁹⁸

Nixon kept worrying that with Johnson's help, Vice President Humphrey might well exploit the peace talks that had begun in mid-May 1968 for his presidential campaign. Yet Johnson actually disliked Humphrey's increasingly dovish line on Vietnam and supported him only in a lukewarm way. Still, Nixon feared that the Humphrey camp would come up with a surprise announcement just before the November election, which was bound to wrest the peace initiative from Nixon. Throughout the election campaign, Nixon kept hinting, without actually saying so, that he had a secret plan to overcome the war. The polls indicated that most voters preferred a presidential candidate who would start withdrawing troops from Vietnam as soon as he was inaugurated.⁹⁹

On the way to a conference in Britain in mid-September 1968, Kissinger stopped over in Paris. A few days before, John Mitchell, Nixon's discreet and loyal campaign manager, had enlisted Kissinger to keep the Nixon camp informed about the developments at the Paris peace negotiations with the North Vietnamese. Kissinger, however, had insisted that his collaboration remain confidential. He received most of his information from Daniel Davidson, a young lawyer who worked for the US negotiating team, led by the Democratic grandee Averell Harriman and Cyrus Vance, the former deputy secretary of defense. The young Richard Holbrooke, who worked on Harriman's negotiating team, also provided information. Davidson and Holbrooke greatly admired Kissinger and did not hesitate to pass on what they knew about the progress of the talks, which, however, hardly consisted of state secrets but merely of some interesting nuggets of insider information. Back at Harvard, for instance, Kissinger was phoned by Davidson on October 9 and informed that Johnson would announce a bombing pause very soon. Kissinger did not hesitate to pass on this information to the Nixon camp. But again this largely consisted of rumors and educated guesses, and most of this information was also available to informed journalists. Johnson eventually announced the termination of the air war on October 31, six days before the election, after Hanoi had promised to reciprocate by allowing the South Vietnamese to join the peace talks in Paris on November 2.¹⁰⁰

Kissinger did not have genuine access to Harriman and Vance's inner

circle. Despite a number of somewhat exaggerated accounts in the literature, such as in the books by the journalists Seymour Hersh and Christopher Hitchens,¹⁰¹ most serious scholarship from authors such as Walter Isaacson, William Bundy, Robert Dallek, Jussi Hanhimäki, Thomas Schwartz, and others does not claim that Kissinger was in possession of any secret information he could have passed along to Nixon.¹⁰² Walter Isaacson hits the nail on its head when he writes that “what Kissinger provided was not serious spying; rather, it was a willingness to pass along tales and tidbits. In doing so, he revealed less about the negotiations than he did about his own personality and his propensity to curry favor by sharing secrets.”¹⁰³

The crucial information that Nixon received in October 1968 did not come from Kissinger but from various other sources. Bryce Harlow, a businessman, former Eisenhower aide, and Nixon campaign assistant, was able to pass on information from a well-connected friend in the White House.¹⁰⁴ Nixon also had good links to the South Vietnamese ambassador in Washington, Bui Diem. But above all, he relied on the knowledge provided by the enigmatic Chinese-born and Washington-based Anna Chennault. She was not only a charming and attractive woman but also the widow of General Claire Lee Chennault, the legendary commander of the US air force in China during the Second World War (“Flying Tigers”). Above all, Chennault was a personal friend of Thieu, friendly with Bui Diem, and well connected in both Washington, DC, and Southeast Asia.¹⁰⁵

It was Anna Chennault who gave Nixon reliable information about President Johnson’s intention to proclaim a bombing halt of North Vietnam a few days prior to the US election. That way Johnson wanted to put pressure on South Vietnamese President Thieu and persuade him to join the Paris peace negotiations. Naturally it was not Henry Kissinger, who knew little if anything about these contacts, but Chennault with her well-known links to the South Vietnamese who was asked by John Mitchell to get in touch with Thieu. On behalf of Nixon, Chennault encouraged Thieu not to join the Paris peace negotiations. He might get a better deal from a Nixon administration.¹⁰⁶ Thieu also seems to have held a personal grudge against Humphrey and may have expected a partial withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam, if Humphrey were elected president.¹⁰⁷

Nixon clearly believed that President Johnson’s halt of the bombing was motivated only by politics and the imminent election. He felt he had to make a counteroffer to save his election campaign from destruction by the Machiavellian Johnson. Soon, however, Johnson became aware of Nixon’s

activities. He was furious. Nixon phoned him on November 3 and flatly lied by denying any of the allegations in order to prevent Johnson from going public with his accusations about Nixon's allegedly treacherous behavior; this might well have had a profound effect on the voting intentions of the US electorate.¹⁰⁸ Some authors argue that it was in fact Humphrey's soft line on Vietnam that Johnson viewed highly critically and that stopped him from making Nixon's maneuverings public.¹⁰⁹

In any case, if Thieu had joined the peace negotiations shortly before the presidential election on November 6, 1968, the US public might well have received the impression that Johnson was about to successfully negotiate the imminent end of the Vietnam War. This, in turn, might well have shifted a decisive number of votes in favor of Vice President Humphrey. Nixon's activities through his intermediaries John Mitchell and Anna Chennault to prevent Thieu from joining the Paris peace negotiations were certainly unethical and of a highly dubious nature. Nixon, however, was convinced that Johnson's halt of the bombing had also happened for entirely political reasons and was thus equally unethical. None of them appears to have given much thought to the great beneficial effects a bombing halt would have on the long-suffering Vietnamese people.

There also was another dimension to this episode. When Thieu did not join the negotiations before Nixon had won the presidency, he convinced himself that Nixon was deeply in his debt. This tremendously complicated the subsequent relationship between the two politicians and made finding a resolution to the war even more difficult, once Nixon had come to power.¹¹⁰

Not surprisingly, many authors take a rather negative view of Nixon's maneuvering to win the 1968 elections. Although "probably no great chance was lost," "from a moral and political standpoint, Nixon's actions must be judged harshly," William Bundy writes. Bundy was an assistant secretary of state for the Far East during the Johnson years and the brother of McGeorge Bundy, Kennedy's and Johnson's national security adviser. If "the full extent" of Nixon's tactics had become known right at the outset or in the course of his presidency, Bundy asserts in his insightful book, Nixon's "moral authority would have been greatly damaged and the antiwar movement substantially strengthened."¹¹¹ Moreover, as Robert Dallek has pointed out, according to the Logan Act of 1799, private citizens are legally not entitled to conduct diplomatic negotiations with foreign governments.¹¹² Jussi Hanhimäki provides a sober interpretation. He writes that "while there is no doubt that both major candidates played politics with the war in 1968,

it seems equally clear that Kissinger engaged both sides during the last months of the presidential campaign.”¹¹³

Whether an actual chance for peace was missed in October–November 1968 is more than doubtful; after all, successful negotiations would have lasted many months, and a multitude of complex factors would have influenced them. Success was by no means assured, even if Thieu had joined the negotiations in early November.¹¹⁴ Yet the US electorate may have given the Democrats and Humphrey the benefit of the doubt, if President Johnson had managed to persuade Thieu to join the peace negotiations and if a realistic prospect for an end of the war had appeared to be around the corner. Even as it was, Humphrey won 42.7 percent of the popular vote, as compared to Nixon’s 43.7 percent (though only 191 electoral votes went to Humphrey, while Nixon won 301). But Nixon’s electoral support was partially absorbed by the third candidate, the independent right-winger George Wallace of Alabama, who received 13.5 percent.

Kissinger was certainly aware of the fact that the information about the progress of the Paris negotiations that he provided to the Nixon camp would do him no harm if the Republicans won the election. As a natural conservative, Kissinger was more attracted to the Republican Party in any case. He had always felt he was treated like an outsider during his consulting work for the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. This made him uncomfortable, but it actually was a stroke of luck; if either of the two presidents had offered him a full-time government post, as he had initially aspired to, Nixon would have been unlikely to consider him for a prominent position.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the familiarity with the White House machinery gained during his work for the Kennedy administration in particular, Kissinger explained during a conversation with the author, made it a great deal easier for him and sped up his ability to settle into his new White House role as national security adviser in early 1969.¹¹⁶

As it was, Nixon appreciated the fact that he was able to draw into his camp a former supporter of his old rival Nelson Rockefeller as well as someone from Harvard, the bastion of East Coast liberalism. “Nixon became Kissinger’s last real patron,” the late Bruce Mazlish observed, although Rockefeller also continued in that role.¹¹⁷ That way, moreover, the Rockefeller wing in the Republican Party would be represented without Nixon having to give a post to Nelson Rockefeller himself, whom he greatly disliked. Rockefeller viewed the situation with a dry sense of humor and was fond of

saying, "Three times Henry and I worked on presidential campaigns. And in 1968 we finally made it. Henry went to the White House."¹¹⁸

Whether or not Kissinger's less-than-crucial role in the Paris peace negotiations in September–October 1968 was a factor in persuading Nixon to offer the national security portfolio to Kissinger is unclear. Kissinger himself thought he might be offered a government job, perhaps as director of the policy planning staff in the State Department, independent of who won the election, be it Nixon or Humphrey.¹¹⁹ Nixon had met Kissinger only once in the course of a Christmas cocktail party in December 1967, and the two men had only had a very brief talk and did not seem to "hit it off" particularly.¹²⁰ What had been decisive for Kissinger's appointment by Nixon, it appears, was not their personal meeting or Kissinger's clandestine reports from Paris but the fact that the president-elect had been greatly impressed by Kissinger's writings on international affairs, including nuclear issues, in general and transatlantic and European issues in particular. They "shared a strategic- and geopolitical-minded view of the world,"¹²¹ including a similar outlook on the future of transatlantic relations, as Kissinger had laid out in his writing throughout the preceding decade.

Kissinger and Europe: The Looming Decline of the United States?

In the course of the 1960s, Kissinger had published two more books that cemented his reputation as a serious foreign policy thinker. In 1961, the volume *The Necessity for Choice* surprised readers with opening paragraphs stating that the US had been in decline since 1945. If this trend was not reversed as a matter of urgency, he argued with his excessive pessimism, it would make the country irrelevant in international affairs within fifteen years.¹²² "America has reached a turning point in its relations with the rest of the world," he claimed. "We have come to the end of the policies and of the men that dominated the immediate post-war period." Kissinger believed that "whatever aspect of American foreign policy we consider, the need for new departures is apparent."¹²³

Kissinger did not shy away from admitting that the need for "new departures" also applied to transatlantic relations. He argued that "nowhere else are the stakes so high" in the security but also cultural context of the Cold War.¹²⁴ "If our hopes for a world based on the values of freedom and human

dignity are to be realized,” he proclaimed, “the closest co-operation between North America—indeed, the entire Western Hemisphere—and Europe is essential.”¹²⁵ In his 1961 *Necessity for Choice* book, he also reversed his position with regard to NATO’s willingness to fight limited nuclear wars for practical reasons. It would be impossible to define what “limited nuclear war” actually meant, he reasoned, and he abandoned the concept in the book.¹²⁶

Four years later, Kissinger’s even more influential book *The Troubled Partnership: A Reappraisal of the Atlantic Alliance* outlined his thinking on the future of the Western world and US-European relations. Next to his expertise on Western nuclear strategy, it was this book that turned him into an acknowledged expert on transatlantic relations and European affairs. In any case, his German background, including his native German language, and his intelligence work for the US occupation army in Germany in 1945–46, which saw him rise to the position of sergeant, gave him a certain advantage over most other US policy makers with an interest in western European affairs.¹²⁷

The Troubled Partnership was a revised collection of three lectures Kissinger had given to the Council on Foreign Relations in March 1964. The book contained the essence of Kissinger’s thoughts on transatlantic relations and the development of a united European continent. As became clear in due course, the reasoning in this book was to guide his policies toward Europe and the Atlantic alliance when he became Nixon’s national security adviser and later secretary of state.¹²⁸

In *The Troubled Partnership*, published in 1965, Kissinger did not hesitate to attack the concept of a Multilateral Force (MLF) that was based on equality and joint control of the US and its European allies. In fact, he was “unusually antagonistic” to the scheme.¹²⁹ It did not help that the MLF idea, as well as John Foster Dulles’s earlier “massive retaliation” concept, had originated with Robert Bowie, Kissinger’s codirector of Harvard’s International Affairs Center, whom he thoroughly disliked. But Kissinger’s hostility to the MLF concept also reflected, as Walter Isaacson put it succinctly, “his deep and lasting mistrust of the Europeans as reliable military allies, especially on nuclear issues. Throughout his career he was skeptical that most Western European governments had the backbone to sustain a tough anti-Soviet defense policy.”¹³⁰ Regarding Germany, he always thought that the country was “the last country that should be encouraged to ‘go it alone.’”¹³¹

Kissinger explained in *The Troubled Partnership* that transatlantic relations

had really become a “dialogue among the deaf,”¹³² and he admitted that the US had come “to deal with its allies paternalistically” and with a “certain self-righteousness and impatience.”¹³³ He also wondered whether the unity of Europe, which he believed was in the interest of the United States, necessarily needed to be in the form of a supranational Europe. A confederate structure within an overarching and strong Atlantic framework would be just as good, if not better. Kissinger had clearly adopted a partial Gaullist perspective on the future of Europe. He was convinced that due to the process of decolonization, and of US discouragement, the Europeans no longer thought of themselves as great powers. As the West German case proved, a strong economic performance mattered little.¹³⁴ Kissinger was convinced, as Gregory Cleva expressed it well, that “nations assume roles in the international arena based on their political aspirations and national identity—not their economic vitality.”¹³⁵ Above all, the will to exercise power seemed to be decisive. Still, it was obvious, of course, as the British example in the 1960s and 1970s demonstrated, that if economic vitality was lacking, the ability to conduct a global foreign policy was greatly constrained. The will to power was not everything.

Similar to the phrases Kissinger would later use in his controversial “Year of Europe” speech of 1973, he also explained in *The Troubled Partnership* that the US was “the only member of NATO with world-wide interests.” And of necessity, this had resulted in “unavoidable differences in perspective” between Washington and the European countries.¹³⁶ Kissinger also believed that the perceived lessening of Cold War tensions, due to the gradual rapprochement with the Soviet Union during the previous few years and European economic recovery, had stimulated “Third Force tendencies” in Europe and “reduced Europe’s receptivity to America’s political maxims.”¹³⁷ In fact, it could be expected that the development of “a specifically European view of the world,” Kissinger wrote, would lead the Europeans to “challenge American hegemony in Atlantic policy.”¹³⁸

Kissinger admitted frankly that the US found it difficult to accept Europe’s increasingly autonomous voice. “Adjusting to a loss of pre-eminence is always a difficult process,” he wrote. Still, he argued, the Europeans who wished to get away from the existing “relationship of tutelage” tended to overlook the benefits of this relationship while focusing on the “burdensome” aspects.¹³⁹ Not least, he criticized the naïve US view that European unity would lead to “parallel policies” and “similar views about appropriate tactics” in international affairs.¹⁴⁰ Kissinger emphatically wrote, “a united

Europe is likely to insist on a specifically European view of world affairs—which is another way of saying that it will challenge American hegemony in Atlantic policy.” While “this may well be a price worth paying for European unity,” he explained, “American policy has suffered from an unwillingness to recognize that there is a price to be paid.”¹⁴¹

Kissinger was convinced that “European unity is not a major cure-all for Atlantic disagreements. In many respects it may magnify rather than reduce differences.” Much to his regret, he was forced to admit: “As Europe gains structure, it will be in a better position to insist on differences whose ultimate cause is structural rather than personal.”¹⁴² Kissinger surprised few experts when he concluded his book by writing that “the interests of Europe and the United States are not identical everywhere.” He was hopeful, however, that “it may be possible to agree on a permissible range of divergence.” Each partner would thus “regain a measure of flexibility” and continue to benefit from the transatlantic alliance.¹⁴³ But clearly, according to this statement, it seemed that certain divergences were not permissible. The US would define which divergences were acceptable and which ones were not. Kissinger’s carefully selected phrase of an acceptable “measure of flexibility” also indicated that he was convinced that the US ought not to dilute or even give up on its hegemonic position in the transatlantic alliance.

European Difficulties in the 1960s

Even before Nixon and Kissinger entered office in January 1969, they were well aware of the transitional, if not fragile, state of transatlantic relations. Kissinger refers in his memoirs to the disappointment of Walt Rostow, President Johnson’s national security adviser, and Francis Bator, deputy national security adviser under Johnson, with the state of transatlantic relations. Bator was particularly disappointed that “early notions of Atlantic political integration had lost their hold.” Kissinger seemed to agree with Bator’s belief that “none of the overarching visions designed to settle the Second World War and prevent a third is moving toward fulfillment.”¹⁴⁴

This, however, was an overly gloomy assessment. After all, by the late 1960s, the unification of western Europe had made enormous progress when compared to the dire and disjointed state of the continent by the end of the Second World War. Above all, Europe had been partially integrated by means of the establishment of the six-member EEC in January 1958. Furthermore, the European continent had certainly been pacified, and the like-

likelihood of violent conflict among the western European countries was extremely remote. Still, the new Nixon administration was concerned that the structural changes in the transatlantic relationship, above all, the growing economic and political independence of the western Europeans, would soon lead to even more serious friction with the allies than hitherto. It was quite true after all, as Kissinger expressed it in his memoirs, that it could hardly be expected that "Europe would unite in order to share *our* burdens or that it would be content with a subordinate role once it had the means to implement its own views."¹⁴⁵ Yet, in practice, it was difficult for the new administration to accept this state of affairs.

Simultaneously, the perception in many European countries that the US was not taking seriously the endeavors of the Europeans to stand on their own feet as an increasingly integrated continent created a great deal of frustration and anger. It seemed that the erosion of the US commitment to a united Europe was rooted to some extent in the fact that the enthusiastically pro-European policy makers within the US establishment—men such as Dean Acheson, John Foster Dulles, George Ball, and also David Bruce, the former ambassador to France, West Germany, the UK, and NATO (and also China) as well as influential Europeanists in the State Department bureaucracy and elsewhere—were departing.¹⁴⁶ Their close personal ties with European statesmen had "lubricated" transatlantic relations, frequently leading to candid and "intimate, continuous dialogue at all levels between Europeans and Americans."¹⁴⁷ Yet, by the late 1960s, these days of mutual trust and confidence had largely become a thing of the past.

Moreover, the 1960s had been a difficult and frustrating decade for European integration. Not only had relations with the US been severely strained due to differences over the Vietnam War and various conflicts over strategic, military, and financial burden-sharing issues.¹⁴⁸ Even more importantly, three major crises had greatly shaken the European Community to its core, making the Europeans more introverted and focused almost exclusively on their internal problems.¹⁴⁹

The failure of the French Fouchet plan discussions had led to the first crisis. As an alternative to an increasingly supranational EEC, in October 1961 French President De Gaulle had proposed the creation of a "Union of States" on a European level. After all, his proposal of September 17, 1958, for a "tripartite directorate" consisting of the US, Britain, and France to conduct Western, if not global, policies had come to nothing despite several negotiating sessions with his NATO partners.¹⁵⁰ Even his close ally West

German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer regarded the “tripartite” idea as “incomprehensible.” But the old chancellor’s indignation was not surprising considering that with the proposal for a tripartite directorate France clearly desired to formalize its perceived supremacy over the West Germans or any other continental European nation.¹⁵¹

De Gaulle was fully aware, however, that in 1958 he had “asked for the moon” and that he was unlikely to obtain formal Anglo-American agreement for a great power role for his country and effective equality with the US, even before France had developed its own nuclear weapons. “I knew they would not give it to me,” De Gaulle told Alain Peyrefitte, his minister of information. “The Anglo-Americans would like to use their forces as they see fit, and they do not want us involved. What they want is to dominate us.”¹⁵² He concluded that France might be wise to focus on the European theater of politics to obtain the great power role that De Gaulle believed was due to the *grand nation*. He was quite convinced, as he informed a member of his cabinet with little modesty, that “Europe is the chance for France to become what she has ceased to be since Waterloo: the first in the world.”¹⁵³ For a time, before the upheavals of 1968, De Gaulle was even hopeful that the French franc might replace the dollar as the global reserve currency.¹⁵⁴ At a later occasion, when he showed the visiting President Nixon around the Grand Trianon Palace in Versailles, he told him tellingly, “Louis XIV ruled Europe from this room.”¹⁵⁵

On occasion, De Gaulle was also keen on pushing the role of the EEC (and subsequently the EC, which formally succeeded the EEC in 1967) as a political player, if France was in charge. Already in 1959, he had initiated regular meetings of EEC foreign ministers every three months, and there also occurred two EEC summit meetings of heads of government in 1961, the first ones ever. However, regular meetings of EC heads of government (European Council meetings, as they came to be called) were only proposed by French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing in 1974.¹⁵⁶

As the name of De Gaulle’s 1961 proposal for a “Union of States”—the Fouchet plan—implied, this was meant to be an intergovernmental union of independent European states with extensive national veto powers. Community laws would be made subservient to national laws. The so-called Fouchet plan was named after Christian Fouchet, the then French ambassador to Denmark, who drew up the proposal. Yet this plan for the wholesale institutional remodeling of Europe was rejected by the five other EEC member states. In the course of the discussions in 1961–62, all of them, but

in particular the Dutch with the strong support of Italy and Belgium, objected to De Gaulle's essentially quite traditional intergovernmental ideas for the future character of a united Europe.¹⁵⁷ The EEC Commission, however, was largely absent from the discussions. The Fouchet plan would have created a council consisting of heads of government or foreign ministers that would meet regularly, and its decisions would have had to be based on the unanimity principle. There would have been intergovernmental committees for considering foreign and defense policy issues as well as an assembly of delegates from the various national parliaments.¹⁵⁸

Still, the intergovernmental nature of the Fouchet plan was unacceptable to most other EEC countries; there also was some concern that it might undermine NATO. The plan resulted in tense relations between the French president and EEC Commission president Walter Hallstein, a prominent West German politician.¹⁵⁹ It also led to the resignation of several French ministers who were opposed to De Gaulle's policy, as they believed, quite correctly, that it would emasculate the European integration project.¹⁶⁰

Three years later, the empty chair crisis of 1965–66—the second major crisis—also badly shook the EEC.¹⁶¹ In this dispute over the EEC's institutional development and the financing of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), De Gaulle was again at loggerheads with the other five EEC members. Paris ceased to participate in the work of the Council of Ministers, and French representatives only returned to the table when a resolution of the deadlock was found with the so-called Luxembourg compromise (or Luxembourg veto) of late January 1966. It was essentially an agreement to disagree. To a considerable extent, France got its way when the six EEC countries accepted that an EEC Commission proposal should not be adopted by majority vote if “very important interests” of a member state were involved. In such a case, it was agreed, the Council of Ministers would continue discussing the issue in question until a compromise was reached that was acceptable to all member states. In practice, this meant that each member state obtained a veto, even in cases when legally majority voting would have been possible. That way, De Gaulle avoided, for instance, that a decision on the financing of CAP could be taken by majority vote, which might overrule French wishes. Moreover, what counted as a crucial national interest remained undefined.¹⁶²

Soon, consensus decision-making was the order of the day, as the EEC member states wished to avoid another empty chair crisis or being outvoted on an important issue. Thus, unanimity rather than majority decisions be-

came the normal decision-making procedure. It certainly was a victory for nationalism and a defeat for European supranationalism, leading to great frustration in Brussels.¹⁶³ The European Parliament did not obtain greater budgetary powers either. At the time, Washington did not like the Luxembourg compromise. It was clear, as Terrence Guay has expressed it, that “the integration process was not progressing in the linear manner that Washington had hoped during the EEC’s early years.”¹⁶⁴

The third major crisis related to the envisaged first EEC enlargement and Britain’s two unsuccessful membership applications. De Gaulle was unimpressed by the UK’s weak pro-European sentiments, but he feared above all that Britain would serve as Washington’s Trojan horse within the EEC. He anticipated that in the long run, this would threaten his country’s European leadership position. Not least, De Gaulle always doubted London’s genuine enthusiasm for the European integration process, and as the 2016 Brexit referendum demonstrated, he had been right all along. In January 1963 and May 1967, respectively, the French president rejected London’s membership applications, creating a huge and long-drawn-out crisis in the process.¹⁶⁵

Only as late as December 1–2, 1969, toward the end of Nixon’s first year in office, did the European Community gain a new impetus when the summit conference in The Hague in the Netherlands proved to be surprisingly successful. This ended the EC’s “chronic crisis” and relaunched the integration process. “Completion,” “deepening,” and “widening” were the three main objectives of the summit, as expressed by French President Georges Pompidou, who had succeeded De Gaulle after the general’s resignation for domestic political reasons in late April 1969.¹⁶⁶

At The Hague, the six EC member states managed to enter into a number of compromises such as commencing the final phase of creating a truly Common Market, including the completion and funding of CAP. They also agreed on new complex mechanics for financing the EC budget. In addition, plans were authorized for the creation of European Political Cooperation (EPC), eventually realized in the 1970s, and the establishment—at least in theory—of a common economic and monetary policy. It was hoped that the former would achieve the coordination of a united European foreign policy, and the latter, it was expected, might unify the EC in financial and economic terms. Yet, despite some promising beginnings in the 1970s, in the years to come neither initiative would fully meet the expectations set in them. But much to Washington’s relief, the summit conference in The

Hague in December 1969 resulted in the decision to enter into new membership negotiations with the British.¹⁶⁷

The success of the summit in The Hague was largely based on the fact that both France and West Germany had become aware of the urgent necessity to make progress in the most important policy areas. Prior to the summit, both countries had informally agreed on the way to resolve the outstanding issues that had slowed down the development of the EC for years. This would become common practice for the next two decades or so, until a number of EC enlargement waves following the end of the Cold War made the Franco-German dominance of the EC/EU much more difficult. The monetary upheavals in the 1960s that the EC needed to address as a more or less united body also helped to give the conference in The Hague great additional impetus.

Furthermore, West Germany's perceived need to balance its unfolding eastern strategy (*Ostpolitik*) with an even more dedicated pro-Western policy than hitherto contributed to the success of the summit in The Hague in late 1969. By means of the Federal Republic's dynamic policy toward both the development of the EC and Franco-German relations, West German Chancellor Willy Brandt wished to demonstrate that his country was as committed to the Western alliance as ever.¹⁶⁸ The new chancellor's left-leaning Social Democratic Party (SPD) also felt a great deal of socialistic solidarity with the British Labour Party and its prime minister, Harold Wilson. The West German Social Democrats wished to support Wilson's cause of bringing Britain at long last into the EC. Yet, only some six months later, in the snap election of June 1970 and much to his own surprise, Wilson lost power to the Conservatives and their leader, the strongly pro-European Edward Heath.¹⁶⁹

By this stage, the new French president, Georges Pompidou, had become increasingly convinced that West Germany's position within the EC was becoming too powerful and dominant. Admitting Britain to the EC, and thus resolving the long-standing application crisis, appeared to be an obvious solution to balancing West German influence somewhat. And indeed by 1970–71, the prospects for British membership looked surprisingly good (and eventually, in January 1973, the country managed to join the EC, together with Ireland and Denmark).

As early as November 1969, US ambassador Sargent Shriver had reported that French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert had informed him that it was the "fear of resurgent German nationalism" that had made France

“offer to seek a more united European Community including perhaps [the] UK in which context hopefully the Germans could be controlled.”¹⁷⁰ By this stage, Pompidou had already made an off-the-record comment that “because of Germany’s growing strength UK entry would be welcomed.” For the same reasons, the French desired “to seek closer relations with the US.” Jobert explained that it was France’s “major objective” at the December 1969 summit in The Hague “to move ahead towards real unity of policy,” if France’s EC partners also wanted “a tighter and more united EC.” From the French point of view, it was patently obvious that the EC’s major political objective consisted of the “control of Germany.”¹⁷¹

Claudia Hiepel succinctly summarizes the major results of the meeting in The Hague when she writes that the “summit sent a clear signal that the EEC was not in the throes of disintegration. To the contrary, the summit was a turning point. The member states resolved several long-standing problems and demonstrated unanimous will to advance the process of European integration.”¹⁷²

The White House, however, did not quite view it the same way. Already, after De Gaulle’s demise, Nixon had told his Cabinet skeptically, “we should see if Europe will unite now, as so many people have said would occur if only De Gaulle were not present.”¹⁷³ Washington recognized the surprise success of the conference in The Hague in strengthening the EC, but old habits die slowly. As chapter 3 will show, the Nixon administration was never able to overcome its predisposition to approach relations with the European continent on a traditional bilateral nation-state basis. The administration’s two crucial foreign policy makers, the president and Henry Kissinger, found it philosophically quite impossible to take the process of European integration seriously. When they soon had no choice but to pay great attention to the rapidly developing European project, both politicians looked on the integration process with great concern.

To make matters worse, at a bilateral Franco-German meeting in January 1970, a month after the summit in The Hague, the issue of European-US relations was discussed. At the summit in The Hague, this theme had not played much of a role. In the course of the bilateral Franco-German meeting, Pompidou came out strongly against establishing any formal institutionalized links between the EC and the US. According to Chancellor Brandt, Pompidou explained that “the Americans must not . . . be led to believe that they could exercise a right of supervision over the European

Community.”¹⁷⁴ When this became known, the US was not amused, and the Nixon administration felt confirmed in its suspicion that the EC was becoming a competitor and rival rather than remaining a loyal partner and ally.

These developments did not augur well for transatlantic relations in the 1970s. Despite Nixon’s early presidential trip to Europe to improve relations with the allies, the early part of the decade developed into a decisive turning point for both transatlantic relations and the United States’ long-standing support for the integration of the European continent. Once this prolonged turning point—or watershed—had passed, the nature of transatlantic relations had changed for good. Already by the late 1970s and 1980s, during the Carter and Reagan administrations, the nature of transatlantic relations and the United States’ politics toward European integration were very different from what they had been ten and twenty years earlier. During the post-Cold War years, the growing tension and coolness in transatlantic relations continued by and large. And this did not only have to do with the different personalities that had meanwhile come to power on both sides of the Atlantic. As Kissinger had written as early as 1965, the “ultimate cause” of transatlantic difficulties was “structural rather than personal.”¹⁷⁵ The reasons for these “deeper structural problems” appeared to consist primarily of “the growth of European economic strength and political self-confidence,” as well as increasingly diverging geopolitical conceptions.¹⁷⁶ Yet the latter, of course, was to a significant extent tied to the personalities of the leading transatlantic politicians of the day and their differing views of the world.

Once in office, however, Kissinger failed to act according to these insights, which he had developed in a timely essay published in 1968, just before he moved to the White House. The main ideas in this article came straight out of his 1965 book *The Troubled Partnership*. It was “not ‘natural,’” he explained in the essay, “that the major decisions about the defense of an area so potentially powerful as Western Europe should be made three thousand miles away. It is not ‘normal’ that Atlantic policies should be geared to American conceptions.”¹⁷⁷ Kissinger also concluded, “the age of the superpowers is now drawing to an end.” Returning to the days of the Marshall Plan and attempting to “reassert the notions of leadership appropriate to the early days of NATO” was neither possible nor desirable. Kissinger believed that a “more pluralistic world,” not least “in relationship with friends,” was “profoundly” in the United States’ long-term interest.¹⁷⁸ Later, in his mem-

oirs, he pontificated with regard to the United States' European allies that a "common focus had to be achieved among sovereign equals; partnership had to be evoked rather than assumed."¹⁷⁹

Yet it was a lot easier to speak and write about the need to implement these insights than to convert them into pragmatic policy making. Still, Kissinger as well as Nixon recognized that Atlantic relations despite all appearances of "normalcy" were facing "a profound crisis."¹⁸⁰ So did the administration's policy toward European integration. By 1969, there were few advocates left in Washington who continued to believe in the necessity of steadfastly supporting the development of a united (western) European continent.

Special Relationships

A JOURNEY TO A CONTINENT IN TRANSITION

ROBERT SCHAETZEL WAS AN OLD-STYLE US diplomat. He was a serious man, tall, slender, with piercing eyes and an equally penetrating mind. He often was a little grumpy and certainly not afraid to speak his mind. Over time he “developed a reputation as a sharp-tongued diplomat,” always ready to take on his superiors in the State Department.¹ Schaetzel was a believer in the necessity of a closely knitted Atlantic community. He also strongly favored the unity of the European continent. His hero was Jean Monnet, and for him the personification of political evil was Henry Kissinger, with Richard Nixon coming a close second.² This, however, was fully reciprocated; Kissinger greatly disliked him.³ It did not help that in the mid-1960s Schaetzel had been a strong proponent of the Multilateral Force (MLF), the concept for a joint transatlantic nuclear force that Kissinger had thoroughly attacked in his scholarly work. Even Under Secretary of State George Ball, an equally strong supporter of the MLF idea, regarded Schaetzel as a “zealot” on the issue who “scared off” the politicians with his missionary advocacy of the concept and, he could have added, with his advocacy of European unity.⁴

There is no reference to Schaetzel in Kissinger’s extensive memoirs. Nixon’s national security adviser regarded him as a bit of a bore and thus to be avoided whenever possible.⁵ Schaetzel was certainly not respected within the administration. In February 1970, when French President Georges Pompidou asked Nixon about the importance of Schaetzel’s statement that the administration was opposed to the Common Market, Nixon merely replied, “None.”⁶ From September 1966 until his retirement in October 1972,

Schaetzel was the US ambassador to the European Community (EC). He viewed the arrival of the Nixon administration with dread. Later he wrote, "for the next four years it was difficult to detect any coherent pattern in American policy toward Europe." It appeared obvious to him that by 1973 many European policy makers "were convinced that it was no longer American policy to support European unity."⁷

While there was a great deal of truth in this statement, initially the Nixon administration was not as cool toward the European project than Schaetzel thought, however. The Nixon presidential papers, which are now largely available for perusal, tell a somewhat different story. Initially at least, it was less disinterest than the distraction by apparently more important matters and, above all, a growing spirit of competition and rivalry that resulted in the new administration's increasing neglect of European integration matters. Concern about domestic economic and electoral issues were clearly much more important than worrying about the unity of Europe. Schaetzel himself was prone to adopt a condescending and lecturing tone toward the Europeans, who he believed did not fully grasp themselves the great importance of making progress with the further unification of the European continent.⁸

Surveying some of the major events that shaped international relations in the first half of the 1970s, the late historian Tony Judt has referred to a "protean moment in the international and national history of our times." He wrote, "Nixon's presidency coincided with such an important turning point in world affairs."⁹ In fact, an increasing number of historians view the 1970s as a crucial period of transition in recent world politics.¹⁰ Hartmut Kaelble has it right when he refers to the 1970s as a "soft turning point" in twentieth-century history. It was a turning point that did not occur due to the beginning or end of wars or the breakdown of empires but a turning point characterized "by rapid economic changes and by cultural upheavals."¹¹ Richard Nixon himself considered the year 1971 as "the watershed year" due to the achievement of greatly improved relations with China and the Soviet Union in particular but, from Nixon's point of view, also with Japan and Europe. Regarding the latter, he clearly deceived himself as relations with the European allies continued to deteriorate.¹²

With hindsight, it is apparent that during the early 1970s—and in particular during 1971–73—an important and indeed crucial turning point occurred with regard to transatlantic relations, not least in its economic dimension and the United States' policy toward the unity of the European

continent. As a consequence, the United States' relations with its European allies changed decisively and irreversibly—and not for the better. The repercussions of this turning point could be felt throughout the remainder of the Cold War era and indeed beyond. The low point of this development was clearly the adversarial and almost hostile attitude toward some of the leading European countries and their leaders as well as toward the European Union exhibited by President Donald Trump. The initial watershed years in US politics toward the integration of Europe were bookended by the years 1969 and 1973. In 1969, the new Nixon administration wished to make a fresh start in the United States' politics toward its European allies. Just over four years later, Henry Kissinger felt he had to patch up transatlantic relations by announcing a “Year of Europe” in his “famously unfortunate speech.”¹³

How and why had this development come about? After all, when the new administration took office in January 1969, Nixon had the best of intentions to mend the perceived rift in transatlantic relations that he believed had been caused by the Vietnam War and other contentious issues during the Johnson years. In principle, the Nixon administration did not wish to embark on a dramatic change of course in its relations with the European allies; a genuine “reappraisal” of relations with Europe did not take place.¹⁴ Instead, Nixon hoped to stabilize and consolidate transatlantic relations. Martin Hillenbrand, assistant secretary of state for Europe and in charge of the important Bureau of European Affairs within the State Department, was certainly reassured when he surveyed the European policy ideas of the new administration. He “saw no undesirable changes on the horizon.”¹⁵

A New Transatlantic Approach?

During the first few years of the Nixon administration, relations with western Europe underwent a rapid transformation. While some of this was deliberate, some of it came about by default, as throughout the 1970s the White House often became distracted by other urgent issues. There were, after all, a number of crucially important foreign policy areas that the administration paid a lot of attention to, most notably relations with the Soviet Union and China as well as the war in Vietnam. This was both a strength, as it focused the administration's energy and attention, and a weakness, as it clearly led to the neglect of many important geographical areas and thematic issues. In particular, Nixon viewed the Vietnam War as “the bone in

the nation's throat," as his speechwriter William Safire expressed it later. In early 1969, there were still over 550,000 US soldiers fighting in Vietnam, of whom 300 were killed every week.¹⁶ Their average age was just nineteen.

Western European matters were thus initially often ignored or sidelined. Symbolic of this neglect was the fact that Bob Schaetzel, a registered Democrat and known Nixon skeptic, was left in his post as US ambassador to the EC for almost Nixon's entire first term in office. On occasion, however, the administration was not averse to maintaining or appointing Democrats to senior positions, such as Herbert Stein, the chairman of Nixon's influential Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), or later Treasury Secretary John Connally.¹⁷ In fact, during Nixon's presidential campaign, he had never tired of promising to appoint a bipartisan Cabinet.¹⁸ The administration does not seem to have regarded Schaetzel's post in Brussels as sufficiently important to make an effort to replace him with a Nixon Republican. Instead, the importance of his post in Brussels was downgraded. "In the economic area," the White House ruled, "the Ambassador to the Common Market" was to report to the US ambassador to NATO, who thus in practice became Schaetzel's line manager; formally, however, they remained on the same hierarchical level. Still, this arrangement clearly indicated where the administration's priorities were within the transatlantic context. Over the next few decades, this state of affairs hardly changed. For instance, during Clayland Boyden Gray's tenure as ambassador to the EU (2006–8), when Condoleezza Rice was secretary of state in the George W. Bush administration, the US ambassador to NATO was still regarded as much more important and much more worthy of consultation than the US ambassador to the European Union.¹⁹

The Nixon administration, like its predecessors, was also somewhat baffled and bewildered by the process of European integration and the complex EC bureaucracy. Nixon and Kissinger found it difficult in principle to take the development of a more united Europe seriously. Although the EC's small Washington office was elevated to the diplomatic status of an official delegation in 1971, the former NSC staffer Robert Gerald Livingstone could not recall that the EC and European integration played much of a role in any of the many NSC discussions he participated in.²⁰ West German Chancellor Willy Brandt was quite explicit in his memoirs. He writes that he received the impression that Kissinger "was reluctant to pay clear enough regard to the existence of the European Community and its slow and laborious evolution." Brandt admits that "the laboriousness and irrationality" of

the procedures of the EC “undoubtedly frayed the nerves and tried the patience of all its partners.”²¹

Although it was Kissinger who had quipped in the early 1970s, “Who do I call if I want to talk to Europe?” it soon became apparent that Kissinger and his colleagues in the Nixon administration were not really interested in having to deal with a genuinely united European continent. Years later, Kissinger explained that he could not really remember ever having made this famous remark, though Richard Smyser, a former member of his staff, confirmed that Kissinger did in fact say it.²² Certainly, the Nixon White House would not go out of its way to actively support the creation of a united Europe, as previous US administrations had done. “European unity is for the Europeans to achieve,” the administration kept reiterating, somewhat lamely; the United States was no longer interested in getting involved.²³ The subliminal message was that the Nixon White House could not care less.

In the 1970s, moreover, the EC Commission clearly was not an important player in international politics. Establishing a good accord with the Commission hardly seemed to matter. Half a century later, this is still true to some extent, when considering the detachment with which the EC/EU Commission has been regarded by administrations from Reagan to Trump. In Washington, the EU ambassador is still regarded as not quite as important as the envoys from Europe’s old nation-states. What counted for Nixon and Kissinger was the improvement of bilateral relations with Europe’s most important countries. Relying on the United States’ traditional bilateral links with the Europeans also seemed to be a lot easier and much more advantageous.²⁴ Certainly Chancellor Brandt had not been persuaded by the sincerity of Kissinger’s expressed desire for a common European number that he could call. Brandt emphasized in his memoirs, “Henry Kissinger did not like to think of Europeans speaking with one voice. He preferred to juggle with Paris, London and Bonn, playing them off against another, in the old style.”²⁵ Brandt’s statement was quite correct with regard to certain phases in the administration’s policy toward Europe. Still, his sweeping conclusion was also clearly influenced by his and Kissinger’s mutual dislike and the Nixon administration’s very strong suspicion of *Ostpolitik*, West Germany’s controversial eastern policy.²⁶

At the outset of Nixon’s administration, the president was fully aware of the crucial importance of the European allies and the NATO alliance for the United States within the context of the Cold War. He could well remember

his private visit to various European countries in 1967, when he had been shocked by the dire state of transatlantic relations. He blamed both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations for having neglected relations with the United States' important European allies and wished to do much better himself. Nixon decided that there ought to be "an early meeting" with the western European heads of government, as the transatlantic allies had "much to talk about" if they were "to establish the confidence so essential to the maintenance of a strong and healthy Alliance."²⁷

After eight years of Democratic government, it was natural perhaps that the new Republican administration viewed the country's foreign relations in terms of crisis. The State Department, however, was less concerned; "there was certainly no crying need for an immediate presidential visit to Europe," Martin Hillenbrand, responsible for European policy at Foggy Bottom, thought.²⁸ Even before Nixon's inauguration, however, he had contemplated making a trip to Europe. Nixon's "rationale for the trip was that it would provide a badly needed reaffirmation of [the United States'] commitment to partnership with Europe."²⁹ Instead of the continuation of US unilateral decision-making, from now on the Europeans were to be consulted in advance. The new president wanted to achieve "the revitalization of the American-European community."³⁰ His expressed objective was to "reaffirm America's commitment to partnership with Europe" and "re-establish the principle and practice of consultation."³¹

This objective also seemed to be wise before embarking on the envisaged, though still secret, détente negotiations with the Soviets and Chinese and in view of western Europe's great skepticism regarding the United States' Vietnam policy.³² Nixon had in mind to internationalize a Vietnam settlement by, as Safire wrote in his memoirs, "probing De Gaulle on the possibilities of an opening to Red China."³³ Still, this might not be easy, as French President Charles De Gaulle, the grand old man of European politics, had firmly refused to support the United States' Vietnam policy, as had British Prime Minister Harold Wilson. The West German and Italian governments were not enthusiastic either, though with the help of some creative rhetoric, they generally managed to fudge their lack of support.³⁴ The Europeans mostly attributed "reduced U.S. interest in Europe" to US "preoccupation with the Vietnam war."³⁵

This view was another reason for Nixon's belief that his first foreign trip as president ought to lead him to Europe's major capitals. Harking back to the immediate postwar years, Nixon wished to reaffirm the US president's

standing as the leader of the free world. He wanted to show the Western allies “that the new American President was not completely obsessed with Vietnam” and that despite all opposition to the war, the president “could still be received abroad with respect and even enthusiasm.”³⁶ Nixon also had in mind to make the Europeans realize that he fully understood that the old anticommunist fear that had stalked the continent had dramatically receded and that “a new cement” was needed to keep the Atlantic alliance together. Not least, he wanted to demonstrate that “he was not a throwback to the Fifties” but well aware of the changing times.³⁷ Initially, Nixon intended to keep his European trip secret for some inexplicable reason, but an inadvertent leak by Communications Director Herb Klein put an end to this somewhat unrealistic plan.³⁸

Europe in 1968–69

Not only transatlantic relations and US domestic policies were under pressure, however. All was not well within Europe either. If the US could be accused of being preoccupied with the Vietnam War, the Europeans seemed to be largely occupied with themselves rather than with strengthening the Atlantic alliance and creating a united Europe. The 1960s, and in particular the revolutionary and violent years 1968–69, were a period of transition on the European continent, not unlike developments in the US. A generational change could be observed in most western European countries. Younger and more liberal politicians came to the forefront with the gradual retirement of the first generation of post-Second World War leaders, who had mostly been of a fairly conservative bend. Culturally, a new radical student and youth movement put its stamp on almost all aspects of life in Europe. Inspired by the liberating influence of Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, and not least the hippie movement, including the 1968 Woodstock festival, the enormous new influence of popular culture quickly spread across the Atlantic and could be noticed in almost all walks of life in both Europe and the U.S.³⁹

In the United States, the counterculture era became radicalized by opposition to the Vietnam War and the increasing anger of the civil rights movement, with its many serious grievances. On the other side of the Atlantic, in Europe, great unhappiness about the powerful domination of the societies of western Europe by the old conservative elites and, in West Germany’s case, tremendous frustration among the young about the failure of German

society to deal with the crimes of the Holocaust and World War II also led to a radicalization of the movement. Of great importance for this development were the radical left-wing ideas of Herbert Marcuse, Ernst Bloch, Theodor Adorno, and of course Karl Marx, as well as the influence of leaders such as Fidel Castro, Ho Chi Minh, and Mao Zedong who openly defied US global leadership and were thus feted by the Left. Violent clashes at many French and West German universities occurred, and an outspoken anti-US protest movement developed.⁴⁰ A minority among them developed into a home-born left-wing terrorist movement, particularly in Italy and West Germany but also in France and a number of other European countries. This remained a serious problem. Throughout the 1970s, a significant number of prominent businessmen and politicians, including the former Italian prime minister Aldo Moro, were brutally murdered by the Italian Red Brigades and the West German Baader-Meinhof gang.⁴¹

The volatile transition from one era to a new, much more radical one could also be observed in the economic and social sphere. By the late 1960s, the boom years of the long “golden age” of European reconstruction were coming to an abrupt halt. Recession, financial constraints, and, for the first time, a significant rate of unemployment and inflation, coupled with concerns about waning energy resources, the dangers of nuclear energy, and the wholesale destruction of the environment, became an almost permanent worry for most western Europeans and led to the formation of Green parties. In addition, there were growing concerns about the lack of equality in gender and race relations, the effects of the sexual revolution on society at large, and the continuing existence of rather deep pockets of poverty, despite an ever expanding and increasingly expensive welfare state. Together with the large influx of migrants from the former colonies in countries such as France, Italy, and Britain and “guest workers” from predominantly Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey in West Germany’s case, these issues made many contemporaries feel trapped in the midst of an explosive situation. The world was in upheaval. Far Right parties and movements experienced a mostly short-lived renaissance.

By the late 1960s, the European integration project, so dynamic and promising in the 1950s, stumbled along in a rather lackluster way. An ever more complex and bewildering bureaucratic jungle in Brussels stifled all creative energy to achieve European unity. “The grand design was in danger of drowning in a sea of tedium,” Willy Brandt commented in desperation. “Feelings of disgruntlement, disquiet and plain indifference were rife

in the countries of Western Europe, which needed and wanted to unite but seemed incapable of doing so.”⁴² Europe was in the midst of a profound and all-encompassing identity crisis.

In particular, Franco-British relations had been under severe strain ever since President De Gaulle had twice rejected Britain’s application for EEC membership in 1963 and 1967. By early 1969, he still adamantly refused to allow the UK to join the European Community. He did not believe that the British had reoriented their foreign policy toward Europe and away from the “special relationship” with Washington. And of course he was not altogether wrong. While the West Germans attempted to mediate on occasion, they were also desperate to avoid antagonizing the French. Only seldom did they have the courage to side openly with London.⁴³

In fact, Franco-German relations had also hit rock bottom. De Gaulle’s collision course with the United States and his eastern policy, not least his inclination to recognize communist East Germany, was viewed with alarm by the governments in Bonn led by Christian Democrat chancellors Ludwig Erhard and, after his resignation in December 1966, the controversial Kurt-Georg Kiesinger. The latter, a former member of Hitler’s National Socialist Party (NSDAP), was in charge of the first postwar Grand Coalition between the country’s two largest parties.⁴⁴ The efforts by the Bonn Republic and some other countries to intensify consultative and commercial links with the British in order to bring them gradually closer to the EC did not find De Gaulle’s support. Washington was not enamored either, as the US feared discriminatory consequences on the United States’ trade relations with the Common Market and an increase in protectionist sentiments in the US if the EC concluded special economic arrangements with a select number of European nations or indeed with extra-European countries in the Middle East and elsewhere. These pacts also seemed to violate the international GATT trading rules.⁴⁵

There were a number of issues that were greatly contentious between France and Britain in early 1969.⁴⁶ When two high-profile conversations were leaked and became headline news in most of the world’s newspapers, White House officials spoke of a “French-British storm.”⁴⁷ The West German chancellor referred to a “little war” that had broken out between Paris and London.⁴⁸ On February 4 and February 14, French President De Gaulle and British ambassador Christopher Soames, a former Conservative Cabinet minister for agriculture who also happened to be Winston Churchill’s son in law, had confidentially talked about the future of Europe. Apparently

De Gaulle had expressed his belief that a “truly independent Europe” had to free itself from “the encumbrance of NATO” and emancipate itself from “American domination and machinery.” Although denied by the French government, it appeared that De Gaulle wished to break up both NATO and the EC to create an independent Europe “guided by the concert of the greatest European powers.”⁴⁹ According to Georges Pompidou, the former prime minister and future French president, De Gaulle had simply “talked too much,” as he felt close to Soames in view of the latter’s family relationship with Churchill. Resentful about De Gaulle’s repeated vetoing of London’s EC membership applications, the British joyfully leaked the substance of the talks, deeply embarrassing the French in the process.⁵⁰

De Gaulle’s active lobbying for the implementation of his vision to bring about the disintegration of both US-dominated NATO and the EC was not something he had done before. This proved to be yet another contentious issue surrounding NATO in this anniversary year. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization had been concluded in 1949 for a duration of twenty years and now needed to be extended. Yet, in an age of détente, the Europeans, not least the French, who had left NATO’s integrated military command in 1966, had begun to wonder about the continued effectiveness, if not necessity, of NATO. Not only were they suspicious about superpower collaboration at the expense of Europe, but they also questioned the US commitment to the defense of the old continent. It seemed, after all, that Congress was growing increasingly restive about the benefits of US involvement in Europe, not least about the country’s costly deployment of US troops on the European continent.

Ever since 1961 and essentially throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, a Democrat, had talked about the necessity of US troop reductions in Europe. He introduced a series of so-called Mansfield amendments in the Senate to bring this about. An isolationist at heart and a strong opponent of the Vietnam War, the Senate majority leader believed that the increasingly wealthy Europeans ought to shoulder most of the burden for the defense of Europe themselves. Paradoxically, and quite conveniently, for years almost all European countries had convinced themselves that if they increased their defense budgets and the strength of their armies, this would in fact only lead to the US withdrawing a considerable number of its own forces from Europe. Thus, few European countries had any incentive to raise their defense expenditures.⁵¹ When Nixon told the Europeans that the opposite was true and that if they “helped themselves,”

the US “would be willing to help more,” there were few European politicians who believed him.⁵²

The White House was well aware that it was only the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the ruthless ending of the Czech revolt by Soviet tanks as well as the subsequent announcement of the Brezhnev Doctrine that had prevented many congressmen from pushing too hard to bring US troops home from Europe.⁵³ Nevertheless, the Nixon administration was taken by surprise when on May 11, 1971, in the middle of a serious balance of payments crisis, Mansfield submitted an amendment to the Selective Service bill pending before the Senate and called for the halving of the three hundred thousand US troops stationed in Europe. This was a “formidable challenge.” The White House, after all, believed that the United States’ “conventional forces in Europe needed to be enhanced, not reduced.”⁵⁴ Yet Mansfield’s amendment enjoyed great popularity in Congress and indeed among the US public, many of whom were greatly concerned about the country’s deteriorating economic and financial position. It was only with great effort that the Nixon administration was able to ensure the defeat of the amendment by a Senate vote of 61–36.⁵⁵

Even the French were relieved by this development. Neither during nor after President Charles De Gaulle’s tenure had Paris any genuine interest in a withdrawal of US troops from Europe, despite some of the contrary rhetoric employed. A partial reduction was a different matter, however. Although after mid-1967 no US and NATO troops were allowed to be based on French soil, De Gaulle and his successor fully appreciated the balancing role that the US still played on the European continent regarding both West Germany and the Soviet Union. France, thus, fully subscribed to the free-rider principle in international affairs, without, of course, ever admitting it.

Throughout De Gaulle’s long time in office, he continued to support the doctrine of massive retaliation, which had been formulated in the 1950s by John Foster Dulles and the Eisenhower confidant Robert Bowie, Kissinger’s later nemesis at Harvard. This became yet another bone of contention in De Gaulle’s complicated relations with the US. De Gaulle saw NATO’s new flexible response doctrine as an indication that the US defense of Europe in case of a Soviet onslaught could not be relied on.⁵⁶ According to a CIA paper of October 1968, De Gaulle greatly doubted “whether the US would respond immediately with nuclear weapons if German borders were violated.”⁵⁷

Although it was an open question whether De Gaulle would really have favored a nuclear retaliatory response by the US, as this would have de-

stroyed much of his own country in the process, the French president's doubts about US reluctance to use the nuclear option were fully justified. The new flexible response doctrine, after all, had precisely been dreamed up by Washington to make sure that NATO would not have to respond immediately with nuclear weapons in case of a serious East-West military crisis. Incidentally, Nixon asked during his 1969 visit to London "whether the European countries would really wish the decision to be taken . . . to make use of nuclear weapons." British Prime Minister Wilson replied somewhat tersely "that this was not really the point at issue. What Europe wanted was that the deterrent should work (i.e. that there should be no aggression). But it could only work if there was confidence that, in the last analysis, the will to use it was there."⁵⁸ This convoluted logic was hardly likely to persuade a largely skeptical antinuclear European public about the wisdom of the West's nuclear strategy.

Preparing the European Journey

In preparation for Nixon's trip to Europe, the State Department submitted a large number of reports on the issues the president would be confronted with in Europe. Kissinger thought they "were extraordinary in range and detail," and Nixon read them with great attention—one of the few presidents ever to do so.⁵⁹ Even Secretary of State William Rogers handed a thorough, albeit somewhat general, preparatory survey to Nixon.⁶⁰ Among the reports that Nixon received were analyses about the economic outlook of the five European countries he would visit. Other narratives dealt with the respective countries' position on East-West relations, the Middle East, China, strategic arms talks, and of course, NATO as well as international monetary issues.⁶¹

Nixon viewed monetary matters as "of great importance," or so he claimed by then. But in fact he hated dealing with these issues and was greatly bored by them, including by "the so-called French war against the dollar."⁶² Nixon therefore wanted his experts to deal with them by means of "a very quiet and inconspicuous bilateral discussion between the leading countries," rather than an international conference.⁶³ In principle, the western European leaders were not interested in a dramatic monetary summit either. Not least in view of the weakness of the British economy and the recurrent pound sterling crises of the mid- to late 1960s, it was obvious that "an overhaul of the system was needed," but the Europeans procrastinated.

They wished to know what the likely results would be before they were prepared to begin reforming the entire Western monetary system. Nixon was convinced that systemic reform would be extremely difficult, as fear of recession was much larger in Europe, he thought, than concern about inflation and the US payments deficit.⁶⁴

Surveys of more purely bilateral matters were also submitted to the president in preparation of his European trip. In the case of West Germany, Nixon received analyses of Bonn's great dislike of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the status of Berlin, burden-sharing issues, and reunification matters.⁶⁵ With regard to France, Nixon was given a detailed account of De Gaulle's unique eastern policy and his rapprochement with Russia. The French president's motives for his opposition to British EC membership and Paris's standpoint on international currency matters, including French pressure to change the price of gold, were also explained in great detail.⁶⁶

Nixon was also handed a detailed analysis of the difficult economic situation the British were facing and papers that analyzed Anglo-American relations, Britain's attitude toward the EC, the UK's Middle Eastern policy, London's politics toward China, international monetary issues, and, not least, the Wilson government's lack of support for the Vietnam War.⁶⁷ Nixon was informed that Wilson ought to be humored a little. He needed "reassurance," Kissinger told Nixon, "that you intend to maintain a close relationship."⁶⁸ Both the president and Kissinger thought highly of the Labour prime minister, despite their ideological differences. They knew about Wilson's disappointment that Nixon would only come to London as part of his wider European journey. Initially it had been planned for Wilson to visit Washington before Nixon changed his mind and decided to make a trip to Europe. Nixon therefore emphasized in a letter to Wilson that of course he intended to "begin the crucial part" of his European trip in London, ignoring the fact that his first stopover would actually be in Brussels.⁶⁹

Nixon's advisers also included substantial analyses of intra-European developments and Washington's relations with the EC Commission. Although the president planned to visit Brussels, he did not wish to do so to honor the Belgian government or even less to pay his respect to the EC Commission headquartered in the Belgian capital. His main reason for traveling to Brussels was to visit the new NATO headquarters just outside the city and participate in the annual meeting of the North Atlantic Council on the occasion of the alliance's twentieth anniversary. Nixon only visited

the Belgian government and the EC Commission as an afterthought. According to Bob Schaetzel, a visit to the EC Commission had merely been squeezed in at the last minute.⁷⁰

Still, the State Department had put a lot of effort into preparing properly for the meeting with EC Commission President Jean Rey. After the merger of the three European communities (the ECSC, Euratom, and the EEC) on July 1, 1967, the former Belgian economics minister Rey had been chosen to head the first unified EC Commission. Rey developed a reputation for being a highly intelligent and competent, somewhat withdrawn and unassuming, and deeply religious jurist. During his time in office as EC Commission president, from 1967 to 1970, Rey focused on strengthening the powers of the European Parliament and, like all EC presidents, was greatly in favor of a directly elected Parliament, which, however, was only achieved in 1979. He was rightly very proud to have managed the completion of the European Customs Union as early as 1968.⁷¹

Nixon was informed that Commission President Rey hoped that the US president would “reaffirm US support for European unity” as Lyndon Johnson had done when he met with Rey in February 1968 in Washington. Clearly influenced by Kissinger’s line on what the new US policy toward European integration ought to be, Nixon’s briefers advised him to tell Rey, “The shape of Europe is the business of the Europeans. If unity is achieved, it will have to be through European initiatives. We support this goal.”⁷²

Still, Nixon’s advisers also pointed out to him about his first meeting with Rey: “You will be establishing the policy of your Administration toward European unity. You will be setting the tone of the U.S. relations with the Communities.” He was advised, “this is your opportunity to affirm your support for European unity.” The president should say that he was in favor of Britain becoming a member of the EC and also “stress the importance of avoiding protectionist measures on both sides of the Atlantic.” He ought to emphasize “the desire of the U.S. to consult with the Communities on these and other matters of common concern.”⁷³ Nixon was also told that Rey would be worried about “the danger of a potential trade war with the United States” and might refer to US protectionism, in particular regarding steel and textiles. The president ought to counter by pointing to the EC’s “highly protected and costly common agricultural policy,” which could well lead to a major trade war if it remained uncorrected.⁷⁴ Nixon was warned, however, that the EC was “the largest trading unit in the world,” and it was “as capable of effective trade retaliation as the United States.”⁷⁵ Judging by the de-

tailed briefing books submitted to the president in preparation for his trip, it is clear that Nixon's briefers regarded US relations with the EC Commission and its president as important, though not quite as crucial as the United States' bilateral relations with the various European countries.

The officials were aware of the new administration's more cautious attitude toward the unity of Europe and had incorporated this stance in their preparatory reports. Essentially they attempted to merge Nixon and Kissinger's aloof and lukewarm attitude toward European unity—their euro-skepticism, to use a current term—with the United States' strong traditional support for European integration. The result was a somewhat convoluted position. In the last resort, the officials had little choice but to side with the White House and come down in favor of emphasizing the Atlantic context and Washington's bilateral relations with the western Europeans while also doing their best to uphold the United States' traditional support for the unity of Europe.⁷⁶

Nixon's First Presidential Trip

From February 23 to March 2, 1969, Nixon embarked on his eight-day journey to Europe.⁷⁷ It was the first presidential working trip to western Europe for five and a half years. John F. Kennedy's grand tour had taken place as long ago as June 1963. Roger Morris, an NSC staffer under Johnson and Nixon who later resigned over the invasion of Cambodia, refers to a sense of "national relief and satisfaction at the sight of an American president once again on a popular tour."⁷⁸ In view of the huge unpopularity of the Vietnam War at home and abroad, Johnson, after all, had been holed up in the White House for much of the last year of his presidency.

The journey would take the new president to five western European countries (Belgium, Britain, West Germany, Italy, France) as well as the Vatican. These were the "key" countries, as Secretary of State Rogers expressed it, which constituted "the industrial heart of Western Europe, a key element of free world economic, political and military power, and an area vital to American security."⁷⁹ Nixon would also visit three international organizations (NATO, EC, and OECD). Robert Dallek's reference to Nixon's trip as "a whirlwind of ceremonies largely devoid of substance" is a little unfair, however. Instead, Nixon's claim in his memoirs that his European journey "accomplished all the goals" the administration set for it was quite true, by and large.⁸⁰ His trip was meant to serve a "useful purpose."⁸¹ And indeed,

Nixon managed to demonstrate to the Europeans “that a new administration which respected their views had come to power in Washington.”⁸² The mostly very positive TV and press coverage of his first presidential trip abroad did him no harm with the American people either.

Kissinger, however, did not yet play the crucial role he would later play. At this early stage in the administration, he still had to make great efforts to put his imprint on Nixon’s foreign policy. Throughout the trip, he fiercely competed for the ear of the president with the secretary of state and frequently with other members of Nixon’s entourage, such as Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman or John Ehrlichman, Nixon’s chief domestic adviser. Still, Haldeman noted in his diary, “Henry swings from very tense to very funny. He’s getting into the swing of things pretty well.”⁸³ On occasion, Kissinger also clashed with Colonel Alexander Haig, his deputy, who in 1982 would become Ronald Reagan’s first secretary of state (Haig was promoted to brigadier general in September 1969 and major general in 1972). Al Haig, in fact, was the man whom NSC staffers turned to, as he frequently succeeded in pushing both urgent and more mundane issues through the White House bureaucracy, when the national security adviser himself was too busy with reordering the world.⁸⁴ Initially, Lawrence Eagleburger had been Kissinger’s first deputy, but he threw in the towel after a short time, only to return “for more punishment with Kissinger in 1973.”⁸⁵ Much later, in the early 1990s, the chain-smoking Eagleburger became George H. W. Bush’s secretary of state for a few months before Bush had to vacate the White House. Eagleburger, incidentally, was the first ever career foreign service officer to rise to secretary of state.⁸⁶

During Nixon’s first presidential journey, Kissinger was impatient and impetuous enough that he managed to clash with his own underlings on the National Security Council, such as Helmut (Hal) Sonnenfeldt. The national security adviser had made sure that Sonnenfeldt would not travel with the president on Air Force One, as he did himself, but on the backup plane.⁸⁷ Kissinger’s relationship with Sonnenfeldt during both the European trip and later is not atypical for the contradictory treatment that was metered out to Kissinger’s staff. Throughout the entire trip, Kissinger was careful to sideline Sonnenfeldt. On one occasion, when Kissinger had asked him to write some speaking notes for the president’s speech to the West German parliament, Sonnenfeldt believed quite rightly that Kissinger would not be averse to taking credit for the speech himself. After all, the president did not really seem to be aware of Sonnenfeldt’s existence; while in London,

he had mixed up Sonnenfeldt with a local British official. After Nixon had delivered his speech in Bonn, Sonnenfeldt, therefore, went up to Nixon saying, “[I hope] you could read my handwriting on those talking points I wrote for you.” Kissinger was not amused. “God damn it, Hal, you’re always trying to get to the president. Stay away!”⁸⁸

Sonnenfeldt, an expert on the Soviet Union, eastern Europe, and nuclear weapons, was one of the most capable staffers in the White House. Married to an heir of the Hecht department store empire, he also was a Jewish fellow émigré from Nazi Germany, and Kissinger refers to Sonnenfeldt in his memoirs as an “invaluable collaborator.”⁸⁹ Incidentally, neither of them was a physical giant and in fact they resembled each other a little. Yet relations between Kissinger and Sonnenfeldt were always riven with an underlying tension and a competitive spirit. In particular on Sonnenfeldt’s part, there existed a good deal of resentment, though in effect he would become “Kissinger’s Kissinger.”⁹⁰ Sonnenfeldt, nevertheless, had the tendency to nettle Kissinger with teasing remarks about Kissinger’s boundless ambition or by calling him “Mr.” rather than “Dr. Kissinger,” which Kissinger liked to hear despite the fact that many other White House experts also held doctorates.⁹¹ Haldeman, Nixon’s chief of staff, on the other hand, often sarcastically referred to Kissinger as “our resident intellectual.”⁹² But Kissinger was aware of Sonnenfeldt’s envy. With some badly hidden glee, Kissinger once remarked to the author that Sonnenfeldt thought quite mistakenly that he was much more qualified to be national security advisor or secretary of state than Kissinger himself.⁹³

Kissinger, in fact, had a great deal of respect for Sonnenfeldt’s work, and when he moved to the State Department in September 1973, he took Sonnenfeldt with him as counselor. The historian Kenneth Weisbrode aptly characterizes the strongly anticommunist Sonnenfeldt as “Kissinger’s hatchet man on the right.”⁹⁴ In a September 1969 evaluation, Kissinger wrote that Sonnenfeldt was “one of the best European experts in the country.” “He is a brilliant analyst, whose work output is prodigious, timely and incisive,” and, according to Kissinger, he had “an uncommonly subtle understanding of his area, particularly with regard to East-West relations.” In an unusually generous statement, Kissinger even observed, “the success of the President’s European trip in late February was in large part the result of his efforts.”⁹⁵ Despite seeing Sonnenfeldt’s name used for the so-called Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, which alleged that the administration was prepared to give Moscow a free hand in eastern Europe,⁹⁶ outside expert circles, he

was largely unknown. On more than one occasion, Sonnenfeldt submitted his resignation in frustration, only to be persuaded by Kissinger to withdraw it.⁹⁷ And the national security adviser, of course, was no stranger himself to threatening his resignation when he was huffing and puffing and not getting his way or when he was heavily criticized in the press. Only when Kissinger received a great deal of reassurance from the president and was told “how important he was to the country” and asked to stay on did his “vulnerable ego” calm down.⁹⁸

Nixon and NATO

In Brussels, during the first stopover of Nixon’s European journey, the new president did his best to reassure NATO members that an “era of negotiation” was about to begin, while the Cold War “era of confrontation” was over. Nixon’s long talk to the North Atlantic Council dealt with three main issues: nuclear sharing, East-West relations/détente, and intra-Western consultations. Nixon pointed out that there was strong pressure on the new administration “to look again at the mission of NATO in terms of sufficiency” regarding “quality of forces, tactics and basic overall strategy.” He was quick to add, however, “this did not mean he was going to withdraw US forces from Europe.” Nixon also outlined that the “credibility of the NATO deterrent” needed to be discussed by NATO countries at their forthcoming April meeting in Washington. In an age of détente, “the credibility of the alliance was not only a military but political question.” He did not want “the West to get into the ‘numbers game’” with the Soviets.⁹⁹

It was fairly obvious, however, that the era of negotiation would be an age based on US-Soviet bilateral talks rather than on multilateral negotiations between the members of the two military blocs. While in the aftermath of the 1967 Harmel Doctrine, NATO was in the process of being turned into a partially political organ, NATO also continued to be a military Cold War instrument. The rise of NATO as a genuinely multilateral negotiating forum lay still far in the future. With the exception of the French, the Europeans were happy “to consult through NATO” with the US, but they all wished to “maintain bilateral channels as well.”¹⁰⁰ And the latter, not least the various personal back channels Nixon and Kissinger established with the major European leaders, proved to be much more important than the NATO channel. In any case, the Europeans had made clear to Washington that “none of them want [the US] to make formal proposals to the Soviets on

arms control without having been consulted.”¹⁰¹ The US president appeared to agree.

Nixon and De Gaulle

Among Nixon's main objectives during his European trip was his desire to bring about reconciliation with France, despite the country having opposed US foreign policy in most international fora since 1958, when Charles De Gaulle had become president again. Within three months, he withdrew his country's naval fleet from NATO command. This was a symbolically highly important gesture indicating the beginning of a new independent and anti-US phase in French foreign policy.¹⁰² Other major stepping stones on De Gaulle's path to dispute US hegemony over Europe were the Franco-West German Élysée treaty, signed in 1963, which initially included an anti-US preamble that proved highly controversial in Bonn. The German parliament, the *Bundestag*, insisted on adding a pro-NATO and pro-EEC preamble, as the original text had remained suspiciously silent about both institutions.¹⁰³ De Gaulle's diplomatic recognition of communist China in 1964 also rather displeased the US. The French president's rapprochement with the Soviet Union and its satellite states soon after and, of course, France's 1966 withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command were further important milestones in De Gaulle's long-standing quarrel with the United States' European policy.¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, Nixon greatly admired the eminent Frenchman and regarded him as “a genuine hero, one of the towering figures of the twentieth century.”¹⁰⁵ In the pantheon of global statesmen, Nixon was convinced, only Churchill deserved even greater recognition as a true genius.¹⁰⁶ In April 1960, Nixon had been greatly impressed by De Gaulle when he had given a dinner at the vice president's residence in honor of the visiting French president. When Nixon was out of office after having lost the 1960 presidential election, De Gaulle had been among the few European statesmen who had received the former vice president in both 1963 and 1967 and shown him great respect and courtesy. This encouraged other foreign leaders to do likewise. Nixon was so impressed by De Gaulle's statesmanship that he often attempted to emulate De Gaulle's political style. Like De Gaulle, Nixon loved to impress with a display of the trappings of power, though in his heart of hearts, Nixon was “a quintessential loner, withdrawn and awkward.”¹⁰⁷ His shy and insecure personality frequently wished to withdraw

from the world and hide away. After all, according to De Gaulle, "great men of action have without exception possessed to a very high degree the faculty of withdrawing into themselves." This statement found Nixon's wholehearted approval. It was from De Gaulle's book *The Edge of the Sword*, which the president had closely studied.¹⁰⁸

Nixon regarded his visit to Paris as the trip's "most important stop."¹⁰⁹ He knew that he needed French cooperation in a number of concrete matters. He was convinced that the support of France, as the former colonial power in Indochina, "would be vital to ending the Vietnam war" and for opening a new chapter in relations with communist China. In contrast to Washington, the French, after all, entertained diplomatic relations with both Hanoi and Peking.¹¹⁰ In addition, the resolution of the looming crisis in international monetary matters, the pursuit of détente, and, indeed, the admission of Britain to the EC all required French cooperation. During Nixon's visit to Paris, he was deeply impressed by the political vision of the eminent French statesman. In fact, both Nixon and Kissinger were somewhat overawed by De Gaulle, who was the only major historical figure from the Second World War era still in power.¹¹¹ Both in substance and atmosphere, this was the highlight of Nixon's European tour.¹¹² Nixon met three times with the French president, with Kissinger being present on only one occasion. The meetings were a huge success. At dinner, "the General's toast was warm, eloquent, and way beyond the need of protocol," Haldeman noted in his diary. Nixon's "response was absolutely superb. He really built up France and De Gaulle in beautiful style."¹¹³

The substantive talks also went very well. The elegant, slim, and physically towering De Gaulle explained patiently to his visitor, "there was Russia and there was Communism." Presciently, he pointed out that, not least due to détente, the Kremlin's "dynamic is gone." He said that "he did not think that the danger of Communism was over, it may last many years still but it can no longer conquer the world."¹¹⁴ De Gaulle continued to favor a rapprochement with the Soviet Union, including the opening of strategic-arms limitation talks, as the Kremlin was becoming fearful about a potential military clash with China and thus interested in improving relations with the West. De Gaulle suggested pursuing much closer links with China before the US was "obliged to do so," when in perhaps ten years' time, Peking would have made progress with developing its own nuclear program. The West, De Gaulle argued, should not leave China "isolated in their rage" but engage them.¹¹⁵

These were wise words, and Nixon certainly took note of what the philosopher-statesman had to say. In fact, as was later revealed, the Nixon administration's first feelers to China were made with the help of De Gaulle's mediation. And Nixon, of course, was also fully in agreement with the policy of "linkage" concerning relations with China, the Soviets, and the Vietnam War that De Gaulle seemed to favor. Sargent Shriver, John F. Kennedy's brother-in-law and confidant, the popular US ambassador in Paris since 1968, and no friend of Nixon's, certainly believed that a new "spirit of frankness" had developed in Franco-US relations due to Nixon's visit to Paris.¹¹⁶ The French president, for instance, told Nixon that the Soviets thought "the Germans were again becoming a real power on both sides of the Wall."¹¹⁷ De Gaulle clearly agreed with Moscow's assessment. West Germany's rising influence seemed to bother him greatly, though he did not elaborate much further, contrary to the expectation of Hervé Alphand, the secretary general of the French foreign ministry and former longtime ambassador to the United States. A few days prior to Nixon's trip, Alphand had told US ambassador Shriver that De Gaulle would like to hear "Nixon's thoughts on how best to control the resurgent Germany."¹¹⁸ Instead, De Gaulle held forth about Europe and the Atlantic alliance.

Regarding European integration, De Gaulle explained that the idea of a united Europe was a myth; in fact, "there was no Europe. There might be someday but there was not at present." But he was equally dismissive of NATO and the Atlantic alliance. Atlantic "integration to him was nothing," the US minutes recorded. "It was a sort of renunciation of defense," De Gaulle outlined.¹¹⁹ The French president believed that the Atlantic alliance was "simply" a "U.S. protectorate over Europe." While London "believed it was more practical to be under U.S. protectorate" and accept NATO as "in fact an integration under U.S. Command of the military forces of European countries," France could not give up "a real national policy and national defense." "The British, by contrast, had been willing to accept being subordinate to the U.S.," and this "had been going on since Churchill."¹²⁰ With the diminishing of the Soviet threat, however, "relations would change," and the situation in Europe would change. On the whole, De Gaulle explained to his American counterpart, "he felt that someday it might be possible to concert the policies of the countries of Western Europe and they might perhaps even do this with their defense arrangements. But this, while very possible, was not for today. It might be possible for tomorrow."¹²¹

Nixon was hardly inclined to agree with De Gaulle's dismissal of the At-

lantic alliance as a US fiefdom. But he liked to hear De Gaulle pontificate about the undiminished value of the nation-state and the fact that France, Italy, Germany, and the UK were so very different that they simply “cannot be put together” at present. The president nodded in agreement when De Gaulle indicated that therefore the EC was of no particular importance.¹²²

Still, Nixon and Kissinger were not opposed to European unity in principle. If conducted with US cooperation and, ideally, in the form of a loosely organized confederation and firmly integrated within the Atlantic alliance, there was nothing wrong with it. Such a development would actually avoid a permanent and burdensome European dependence on the United States in the military, political, and also psychological fields. It certainly was not a supranationally organized European unity that they had in mind but a closely knit Europe of nation states, approximating De Gaulle’s conception. Indeed, both Nixon and Kissinger were Gaullists at heart.¹²³

Kissinger, like his boss, was also deeply impressed, if not fascinated, by his personal encounter with De Gaulle; it “took him back to the days of Metternich, Castlereagh, and Talleyrand,” he told his advisers. When Kissinger asked the French president how he would prevent German domination if there ever was a united Europe, De Gaulle simply replied, “by war,” displaying a certain lack of understanding for the developments that had taken place since World War II.¹²⁴

Richard Nixon was clearly flattered by the respect and attention heaped on him by the distinguished French politician, who, extraordinarily, even said a few words in English to him when he had welcomed the president at the airport.¹²⁵ Nixon asked De Gaulle to visit Washington in 1970 or 1971. Yet this would never happen, as De Gaulle resigned only two months after Nixon’s visit when he was defeated in a public referendum on governmental reforms—“a rather foolish plebiscite,” as the State Department official Martin Hillenbrand described it.¹²⁶

The referendum was held less than a year after the tumultuous events of May 1968, which had seen France rocked by a two-week-long general strike, in which almost two-thirds of the French workforce participated. There also occurred prolonged student protests including violent street battles, which led to De Gaulle briefly fleeing to Germany of all places when seeking refuge at a French air force base near the West German town of Baden Baden. The Gaullists, however, overwhelmingly won the new elections in late June 1968. Nevertheless, ten months later, De Gaulle interpreted his defeat in the ref-

erendum of April 1969 quite rightly as a loss of confidence in his leadership and resigned.¹²⁷ Martin Hillenbrand hit the nail on the head when he shrewdly observed that at the time there was very “little understanding in Washington that the French leader had never really recovered his poise and confidence after the tumultuous challenges to his regime in 1968.”¹²⁸

The last time Nixon would see De Gaulle was in March 1969, when the French president attended former president Eisenhower’s funeral. Due to De Gaulle’s already legendary historical role, he quickly became the center of attention among the many political celebrities who in the midst of “unseasonably cold weather” had descended on the National Cathedral in Washington, DC.¹²⁹ De Gaulle himself would pass away in retirement in November 1970, shortly before his eightieth birthday.

The Unity of Europe and “Special Relations” with Britain and West Germany

The issue of European integration and the unity of Europe frequently came up during Nixon’s visit to the various European capitals. And particularly in Paris and London, Nixon and Kissinger heard the message they wished to hear: states were still “the only legitimate source of power; only they could act responsibly.”¹³⁰ The issue of “an integrated supranational Europe was as much anathema in France as in Britain.”¹³¹ Still, not surprisingly, in Belgium, one of the founding countries of the EC, Prime Minister Gaston Eyskens and Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel told Nixon that the country “was deeply committed to the idea of communities and multilateral relations.” The prime minister referred to his conviction that “a united European community was a far more valid and useful partner for the United States than dealing with a number of smaller European countries,” and not only in military matters but “also in political, monetary and trade matters.”¹³²

In Bonn, Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger was moving toward agreement on a three-year deal with Washington to resolve the military offset problem that had burdened West German–US relations for the best part of the decade, though Nixon avoided any controversial discussion of the issue.¹³³ Not surprisingly, Kiesinger also emphasized the value of a united Europe to Nixon but added that the “relationship with France is not as good as it used to be.” Still, West Germany could “not conceive of a united Europe without

the United Kingdom or France.”¹³⁴ While the British-French disputes “posed problems” for Bonn, they were not as serious as often thought, and the “FRG would do its part to help solve the difficulties.”¹³⁵ The West German chancellor continued by explaining, “Europe must be united and become a stabilizing factor in world affairs.” He wished “to emphasize very strongly,” he told the president in his distinct Swabian accent, “that the most important goal of German foreign policy was European unity,” and the “entire cabinet, the German Government, and the vast majority of the people” supported this aim.¹³⁶ Similarly, Italian Prime Minister Mariano Rumor, a Christian Democrat, told Nixon in his elegant office in the Palazzo Chigi in Rome that his country “had always supported the integration of Europe and felt that everything should be done to bring this about.” He advised that “a frontal clash” with the French ought to be avoided.¹³⁷

In London, however, things sounded very differently. Nixon had lunch with the queen at Buckingham Palace, and he was given the special privilege of visiting the prime minister’s country residence at Chequers on February 24, 1969. In a survey of East-West relations and possible US-Soviet talks, Nixon explained that he realized that this course of action may well run the danger of weakening “the cohesion of NATO.” And for him, NATO was a “blue chip” investment “which must on no account be discarded in exchange for possible speculative gain elsewhere.” Prime Minister Wilson appreciated the fact Nixon did not desire to embark on “instant summitry” with Moscow but wished to consult widely and explore all negotiating options.¹³⁸

A day later, Nixon addressed a meeting of the British cabinet at 10 Downing Street. While the president impressed with his brilliant geopolitical survey of global developments, he also, in the words of Chancellor of the Exchequer Roy Jenkins, “mysteriously succeeded in picking up a crystal inkwell and pouring its contents over his hands, his papers, and some part of the table.” The British were not used to this kind of clumsy behavior from a high-ranking politician, and “consternation broke out,” with “extremes of surprise, horror, and sympathy being registered.” Not to be outdone by the president, the eminent Cabinet Secretary Burke Trend even managed to pour “cream over his own trousers,” Jenkins reports, “although it was not clear whether this was because he was so shocked or because he thought the president would feel less embarrassed if carelessness verging on slapstick appeared to be a Downing Street habit.” In any case, Nixon could no longer concentrate, he looked dumbfounded, and “his brilliance was all gone.” Yet, by dinnertime, the president had recovered his compo-

sure, put on a fresh suit, and “made an excellent speech.”¹³⁹ Prime Minister Wilson politely kept quiet about the incident in his own memoirs. Instead, he referred to his talks with Nixon as “relaxed and extremely friendly.” For instance, the two men confirmed the back channel between Kissinger’s office in the White House and Downing Street, which conveniently circumvented both countries’ foreign ministries.¹⁴⁰

In Nixon’s address to the British cabinet, and before the inkwell incident occurred, he had outlined that his administration continued its “support for the concept of Europe as an economic and political unit.” Yet, by emphasizing in the very next sentence “that he personally—for a period going back 22 years—deeply believed in the concept of an Atlantic alliance and an Atlantic community,” he fudged the issue. It was not clear entirely whether Nixon actually had referred to his support for European unity. Later in the evening, among his closest advisers, Nixon announced his conclusion that “the dream of European unity is not dead” on the continent; however, it seemed that “the steam has gone out of it.” It was obvious that “De Gaulle’s nationalism was not the only nationalism on the continent.”¹⁴¹

Rather than endorsing the European integration process, it became apparent that Nixon was much more supportive of the United States’ “special relationship” with the United Kingdom. In the president’s talks in London, neither Wilson nor Nixon had any hesitation to talk about “the special relationship” as a given that did not need further elaboration, “as if no alternative were conceivable.”¹⁴² Even Wilson expressed in his memoirs his surprise when Nixon used the term in his arrival remarks at the London airport. In fact, the British prime minister felt “special relationshipped” by Nixon and believed he had to show a little distance to the US to strengthen his country’s chances to join the EC, for which French support was vital. Wilson thus mentioned that the Anglo-American “special relationship” was not exclusive.¹⁴³ Kissinger exaggerated the relationship in his memoirs as “a pattern of consultation so matter-of-factly intimate that it became psychologically impossible to ignore British views.” Successive US presidents, he wrote, came to believe that it was very much “in their self-interest to obtain British advice before taking major decisions.”¹⁴⁴

Britain between the US and Europe

From this point of view, it was a little unfortunate, however, that in mid-June 1970 Edward Heath, the leader of the Conservative opposition, was

elected British prime minister. At a time when the White House was once again happy to emphasize the Anglo-American special relationship, Heath, uniquely and unlike any of his predecessors, was so focused on Europe and so intent on emphasizing the potential value of Britain's role in the EC that he showed no interest whatsoever in pursuing particularly close relations with the Nixon administration. In fact, Heath appeared to go out of his way to keep the US "at arm's length." When considering past British prime ministers, Heath, according to Kissinger, was probably "the least committed emotionally to the United States," and his relations with Nixon always remained difficult.¹⁴⁵ Still, Washington continued to be prepared to do its best to assist cautiously Britain's endeavors to gain entry to the EC once De Gaulle's successor, Georges Pompidou, proved to have a much more constructive attitude regarding British EC membership.¹⁴⁶

Not surprisingly, new president Pompidou had his own reasons for his support. With the help of London, he wished to leverage West Germany's increasing influence within the EC in general and Brandt's preoccupation with eastern Europe in particular.¹⁴⁷ Also the development of good relations between London and Bonn—Kissinger referred to it as an "Anglo-German entente"—may have played a role in Paris.¹⁴⁸ In the mid-1960s, British Defense Minister Denis Healey had proposed "the idea of special European defense collaboration." In particular, he had thought in terms of a "joint U.K./FRG defense procurement" system. While initially the West German government had liked this sort of "European caucus," Bonn had become cautious about entering "a special relationship with the British," for the French had come out in strong opposition to the scheme.¹⁴⁹

Paris was also greatly concerned about West Germany's participation in a joint gas centrifuge project for producing enriched uranium that London, The Hague, and Bonn were negotiating. Paris clearly felt that there was a high risk "that the project would be turned to weapons use," as Sonnenfeldt outlined in an internal memorandum. The White House, however, did not see it that way. The project, after all, would be conducted on the basis of the provisions and safeguards of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Washington, moreover, was happier about the Germans being involved in a multilateral European project "rather than their undertaking it on their own."¹⁵⁰ The entire British-inspired multilateral nuclear project, however, had contributed to De Gaulle's deep suspicion of the British, and Pompidou also remained mistrustful, though perhaps not quite as badly as the general.¹⁵¹

Although De Gaulle himself had investigated Franco-American nuclear cooperation with the Kennedy administration in the early 1960s, toward the end of his career, a nuclear deal either bilaterally with Washington or in a multilateral context with London and others had been anathema to him. De Gaulle “did not trust” the British at all. The centrifuge project “might create serious complications in international relations,” the Americans were told by a visiting French delegation headed by the president of the National Assembly. They conveyed De Gaulle’s conviction that it was perfectly clear that “the United Kingdom continues, as in the past, to play a separate and devious game with France and West Germany.” The Germans might well be tempted to “move in the direction of producing nuclear weapons,” in particular as they were becoming stronger economically. De Gaulle also was still sore about the Soames affair. The British, after all, had leaked his proposals for the radical restructuring of Europe, which he had revealed to them “in the utmost confidence.” This had “set back European affairs by eighteen months or two years,” Jacques Chaban-Delmas, the president of the French National Assembly, explained to Nixon. Still, Chaban-Delmas sighed, it was true “that you cannot make Europe without the U.K. but it is very difficult to make Europe with the U.K.”¹⁵²

One of Nixon’s motives for supporting British EC entry was his belief that it would make the Europeans more mature and supportive players in international affairs. “The British,” he said in a private Oval Office conversation with some of his advisers, “will give a responsibility to them politically that they would otherwise never have.” He was, however, fully cognizant of the fact that by helping the British into the EC, the US was running the risk of creating “a united trading unit of 300 million people,” and such a large and potentially powerful bloc “can really do it to us,” he feared.¹⁵³ Still, it was his “strong conviction,” as he had told the British prime minister, “that British entry into the Common Market will be a major milestone in the building of our Western partnership.”¹⁵⁴ Nixon and Kissinger greatly appreciated that the UK, in their view, had “maintained a broad political and economic perspective,” despite the country’s “fluctuations in its own economic fortunes,” as Nixon put it politely. Unlike the other Europeans, with the possible exception of the French, the British had “not put aside its long-standing concern over world problems.” They thus shared with the US “a common global concern and perspective.”¹⁵⁵ A globally thinking Britain, it appeared, deserved the United States’ respect and full support, in spite of the country’s prolonged economic crisis.

Nixon's Return to Washington

When the president returned to Washington on March 2, 1969, the Nixon administration was mightily pleased with the results of his European trip. The White House speechwriter Pat Buchanan informed Nixon that the public now saw him as “a man of stature and wisdom”: “We could have not asked for more.”¹⁵⁶ Secretary of State Rogers spoke, in his typically sober way, of a “notable success.” The trip “accomplished more than might have been expected,” and the president had come across as “a secure and self-confident American leader.” Nixon, Rogers’s memorandum said, had succeeded in creating “an atmosphere of confidence among key allies and at least a predisposition to look favorably on United States initiatives.”¹⁵⁷

While this was high praise indeed from the down-to-earth Rogers, Henry Kissinger decided to be a little more effusive when he gave his overall assessment of the European trip. He had already realized how much Nixon’s insecure personality longed for vastly exaggerated praise and outright flattery. Kissinger, therefore, did not hesitate to tell Nixon in his own memorandum that the trip had created an “excellent atmosphere” and that “foreign reactions abound with highly complimentary appraisals of [Nixon’s] personal abilities, knowledge, demeanor, and performance.” Therefore, Kissinger, concluded, it was clearly “an understatement to say that the trip was an overwhelming success.”¹⁵⁸

The administration was indeed very happy about having managed to reestablish cordial, if not intimate, relations with the major western European countries. For the time being, Washington was content not to get involved in “doctrinal disputes.” Instead, the Nixon government focused on “Atlantic relations”—a euphemism for Washington’s bilateral approach to Europe—and was indeed happy to “leave the elaboration of Europe’s internal arrangements to the Europeans.”¹⁵⁹

Perhaps the main reason for the latter was that Nixon never actually believed that the Europeans would be able to construct something like a united Europe if left to their own devices. He was convinced that the Europeans had “one hell of a time acting as a bloc,” as they simply could “not get along with each other. The French don’t get along with the Germans, the Germans don’t get along with the British.” Therefore, “it will be some time,” Nixon concluded, “before they can learn to act as a group.” And this meant, as he told his Council on International Economic Policy (CIEP) later, “we have to work with the heads of Government in the various countries and not that

jackass in the European Commission in Brussels.”¹⁶⁰ It was quite true, as Roger Morris has pointed out, that Nixon’s European trip, like his subsequent state visits and other foreign journeys, tended to reinforce his views; they seldom led him to change his mind or develop entirely new insights.¹⁶¹

US Retrenchment

From the outset of Nixon’s administration, the president was inclined to adopt “a new strategic posture” for Washington’s foreign policy, at least in the abstract. The president was aware of the “limits of American power.”¹⁶² The extent of the new president’s intention to adhere to a grand new strategy for US foreign policy is disputed, however.¹⁶³ It does seem that Nixon had decided on a degree of retrenchment of the United States’ role in the world. Yet the kind of reduction he had in mind was meant to undermine neither Washington’s preponderant global position nor the confidence of its allies in US leadership. The credibility of the country’s foreign policy, including Washington’s willingness to adhere to its international commitments, was supposed to remain intact. Still, the United States’ ability and perhaps willingness to “pay any price” and “bear any burden” to assure “the survival and the success of liberty,” as John F. Kennedy had expressed it in his inaugural speech, were clearly coming to an end.¹⁶⁴

The wider public became aware of Nixon’s considerations by means of a press conference on the island of Guam on July 25, 1969, and his subsequent elaboration in the so-called Silent Majority speech of early November 1969. Although Nixon’s statements primarily referred to the United States’ future role in Asia, the way some of his sentences were phrased hinted at the global application of what soon came to be termed the “Guam” or “Nixon Doctrine.” Not only the United States’ Asian allies but also the ones in Europe paid careful attention to what appeared to be the announcement of a shift in US foreign policy priorities. This hardly promised to be good news. After all, the United States had a serious and increasing balance of payments deficit, and a reduction of the number of troops stationed abroad appeared to be on the agenda for both financial and political reasons. The international community, including the new administration itself, realized that the US would soon be unable to continue playing the role of global policeman.¹⁶⁵

And this shift was indeed what Nixon hinted at during his press conference on Guam, a US territory with a large military base in the western Pa-

cific Ocean. On July 23, 1969, Nixon had set out on a tour of six Southeast Asian nations; on the return journey, he also visited Romania and once again Britain. And right at the beginning of his trip, on July 24, the new president used the opportunity to extend a highly symbolic welcome to the Apollo 11 astronauts on their return from the moon when their space capsule dropped down in the middle of the Pacific.¹⁶⁶ The day after, during a stopover on the island of Guam, Nixon provided the waiting US and foreign journalists with his “perspective” on the US “role in Asia and the Pacific.” His press conference, given for the purpose of a background briefing, mostly dealt with Asian affairs. His remarks were not dissimilar to the outline of his thinking that Nixon had presented in his 1967 *Foreign Affairs* article “Asia after Vietnam.” There seemed to be some concern among Asian nations that Washington would “withdraw from the Pacific and play a minor role” in the region in the future, he said. But Nixon reassured the United States’ Asian allies that the US would remain a major Pacific power.¹⁶⁷

The US president never intended to use his press conference to make a major statement on US foreign policy in general or to pronounce a new doctrine. This was also the view of Kissinger, who was initially miffed, as he had not been consulted.¹⁶⁸ And in fact, Nixon’s pronouncement “was not a guiding, coherent policy doctrine,” as Jeffrey Kimball has written; it was indeed mainly “intended for home-front and allied consumption.”¹⁶⁹ What seemed to turn Nixon’s statement into a more general pronouncement was his remark that the US would support friendly countries with internal subversions to “help them fight the war but not fight the war for them.” He continued by saying, “Now, that of course, is a good general principle, one which we would hope would be our policy generally throughout the world.”¹⁷⁰ This statement electrified US allies everywhere. When Nixon was answering questions from journalists toward the end of his press conference, he stated what he wanted: “to be sure that our policies in the future, all over the world, in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the rest, reduce American involvement. One of assistance, yes, assistance in helping them solve their own problems, but not going in and just doing the job ourselves.”¹⁷¹

With these words, Nixon seemed to have partially reversed the Truman Doctrine of March 1947. The US wished to uphold its global credibility while trying to avoid “imperial overstretch.” Or as Kissinger later said during a background briefing, “The United States alone cannot make itself responsible for every part of the world at every moment of time against every danger and to capitalize every opportunity.”¹⁷²

As soon as Nixon's Guam press conference was over, newspapers around the globe began referring to Nixon's vague and imprecise pronouncement as the "Guam Doctrine." Indeed, the ambiguity of Nixon's statement was perhaps "the central feature of the Nixon doctrine," as Robert Litwak has argued. It was meant to allow US foreign policy "to regain the initiative" and become more flexible again.¹⁷³ This, however, was precisely the reason why in Europe and among the old pro-Europeans in the US foreign policy establishment, a good deal of concern developed. George Ball, the veteran Europeanist, thought that to save money the US should "close half our embassies in Africa," but, he added, "where our interests are real and important, as in our relations with Western Europe or Japan or the Soviet Union, I think we should stand as tall as possible, exerting our leadership and exercising our influence wherever it is needed." Ball feared, as he told the elder statesman Dean Acheson, that the idea of reducing US troops in Germany was "stupidly timed," as it would only "strongly enforce the growing German feeling that they may have to make their own security arrangements with the Russians." Ball encouraged Acheson to persuade Nixon "to redesign the 'Nixon Doctrine.'" He found all "talk about America lowering its 'profile' an absurdity."¹⁷⁴

In a televised "address to the nation on the war in Vietnam," on November 3, 1969, Nixon elaborated on his statement during the Guam press conference, which in the meantime the administration had been at pains to rename the "Nixon Doctrine."¹⁷⁵ In this so-called Silent Majority address, he announced that he had embarked on "a new direction in American foreign policy." Much to the relief of US allies in Europe and elsewhere, he emphasized, however, that the US would continue providing a nuclear shield and, in case of aggression, would also "furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments." But once again, Nixon made clear that Washington would "look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense."¹⁷⁶

Similarly, in Nixon's "First Annual Report to Congress on U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's," submitted on February 18, 1970, he called for "a more responsible participation by our foreign friends in their own defense."¹⁷⁷ These annual reports, largely written by Henry Kissinger, were a new initiative to outline the administration's foreign policy objectives and achievements. Nixon submitted in total four annual foreign policy reports to Congress, the last one in May 1973.¹⁷⁸ The practice was abandoned under President Gerald Ford.

In Nixon's first annual report, the most important one, he explained that the postwar period was over. And this had resulted in the fact "that the whole pattern of international politics was changing."¹⁷⁹ Still, Nixon continued to believe in US exceptionalism. He declared, "This nation occupies a special place in the world. Peace and progress are impossible without a major American role." His administration had certainly "no intention of withdrawing from the world," but he felt he had to insist on sharing the United States' global burden with the country's allies.¹⁸⁰ After all, "a more balanced and realistic American role in the world is essential if American commitments are to be sustained over the long run." Washington intended only to enter into any new commitments "in the light of a careful assessment of our own national interests and those of other countries, of the specific threats to those interests, and of our capacity to counter those threats at an acceptable risk and cost."¹⁸¹

A considerable part of his first annual foreign policy report was dedicated to relations with western Europe, as the administration remained concerned about the state of transatlantic relations. Referring to the unity of Europe, Nixon said that "preponderant American influence," so necessary in the immediate postwar years, "would be self-defeating today." Instead, he explained, "a more balanced association and a more genuine partnership are in America's interest." These ideas came straight out of Kissinger's 1965 book *The Troubled Partnership*. Nixon's first annual foreign policy report made it clear, however, that the main motive for the president's somewhat unexpected expression of transatlantic multilateralism was resource driven. Nixon outlined that with the advancement of the European integration process, "the balance of burdens and responsibilities must gradually be adjusted, to reflect the economic and political realities of European progress." The president believed that "our allies will deserve a voice in the alliance and its decisions commensurate with their growing power and contributions."¹⁸²

Nixon, however, was aware that this might well be interpreted as the beginning of a US withdrawal from Europe, and he was quick to counter any such sentiments. "As we move from dominance to partnership," he explained, "there is the possibility that some will see this as a step toward disengagement. But in the third decade of our commitment to Europe, the depth of our relationship is a fact of life. We can no more disengage from Europe than from Alaska." Kissinger's somber voice can almost be heard through the lines of Nixon's speech. "Intra-European institutions are in flux.

We favor a definition by Western Europe of a distinct identity, for the sake of its own continued vitality and independence of spirit. Our support for strengthening and broadening the European Community has not diminished. *We recognize that our interests will necessarily be affected by Europe's evolution, and we may have to make sacrifices in the common interest. We consider that the possible economic price of a truly unified Europe is outweighed by the gain in the political vitality of the West as a whole.*"¹⁸³

This was the last time that a US president indicated that he was prepared to pay an economic price for the evolution of a united Europe. At this point in time, however, the remark had already deteriorated to mere rhetoric; the subsequent chapters will show that it was no longer meant seriously. Nixon referred to one of his administration's new principles regarding the creation of European unity by saying that "the structure of Western Europe itself—the organization of its unity—is fundamentally the concern of the Europeans." He did not hesitate either to hint at the fact that his administration preferred a confederate rather than a supranational western Europe. "We cannot unify Europe and we do not believe that there is only one road to that goal." Referring to the 1954 failure of the European Defense Community (EDC), an organization Washington had strongly supported, Nixon said that "when the United States in previous Administrations turned into an ardent advocate, it harmed rather than helped progress."¹⁸⁴

The president also came out unambiguously in favor of strengthening the United States' bilateral relations with the individual European nations. He said that his administration could "render support to the process of European coalescence not only by our role in the North Atlantic Alliance and by our relationship with European institutions but also by our bilateral relations with the several European countries."¹⁸⁵ Nixon's various statements about "a truly unified Europe" were fine words indeed,¹⁸⁶ but they did not reflect transatlantic reality, as the developments within the next couple of years would show. There is, after all, a kernel of truth in Talleyrand's saying that "language was given to man to conceal his thoughts." Despite the positive and constructive rhetoric of Nixon's first annual foreign policy report to Congress, the White House was by no means ready to pay a price, economic or otherwise, for "a truly unified Europe," which by definition would be a Europe much stronger and more competitive and in all likelihood much more independent from the US than hitherto.

Not just rhetorically but also in pragmatic policy terms did the European integration process and its resulting organizational setup count for little in

the White House. Nixon, for example, did not find the time to meet with EC Commission President Rey in June 1969 when the latter was in Washington, although Kissinger had pointed out to him that such a meeting might well be “beneficial,” not least with regard to overcoming US-EC trade problems.¹⁸⁷ A year later, however, the president reluctantly agreed to see Rey’s successor, the Italian Christian Democrat politician Franco Maria Malfatti, “for a MAXIMUM of thirty minutes,” as Nixon had not hesitated to make clear.¹⁸⁸ While the president’s lack of enthusiasm for the meeting was obvious, his advisers had implored him to see Malfatti. Kissinger also recommended such a meeting “strongly.” After all, he told the surprised Nixon, “the European Communities are a centerpiece of our European policy, with its focus on increased European integration.” Kissinger explained that Nixon’s inability to see Rey in June 1969 had had “resultant ill effects on our relations with the Community.”¹⁸⁹ Fred Bergsten, Kissinger’s young economic adviser, even talked of a “debacle” when Rey did not get an appointment with Nixon. In view of this precedent and “the increasing delicacy of relations,” any repetition of such an incident “would be disastrous for U.S.-E.C. relations.”¹⁹⁰ Nixon allowed himself to be persuaded and saw Malfatti, though he never was able to view the EC as quite on the same level as Europe’s traditional nation-states. In the late 1970s, Malfatti became successively Italian minister of finance and minister of foreign affairs.¹⁹¹

Although Nixon “had the gift of seeming to believe every word he said,” when he gave idealistic speeches and made visionary public announcements, he also was a hardnosed realist, and the latter almost always won out.¹⁹² There were at least two crucial areas where the White House was not prepared to take a back seat and allow the Europeans to develop too independent a position. Most importantly, as outlined in chapter 4, Washington intended to remain at the forefront of dealing with the economic and financial/monetary developments in the West that had the potential to undermine the United States’ economic vitality. But the Nixon White House also regarded the conduct of Western relations with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe as a US prerogative.

West German *Ostpolitik* and European Security

The Nixon administration felt that it ought to be the US rather than a European country that was in charge of relations with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. Washington had largely been unable to control De Gaulle’s

eastern policy in the 1960s. When the new West German government under Chancellor Willy Brandt began intensifying West Germany's own policy toward the East in the fall of 1969 as head of a Social Democratic–Liberal coalition government, Washington was not amused.¹⁹³ While the administration busily pursued its own superpower détente with Moscow, the White House was rather suspicious of Brandt's motives and kept in close touch with the developments, always ready to interfere.¹⁹⁴ *Ostpolitik* was West Germany's policy of rapprochement with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe that had already begun in the early to mid-1960s but was much more actively pursued when Brandt and his foreign minister, Walter Scheel, assumed office in late September 1969. It took Kissinger almost two years before he realized that his great skepticism about the wisdom of this policy was unfounded.¹⁹⁵ France and in particular Britain were somewhat less skeptical than Washington.¹⁹⁶

Initially, the White House feared that *Ostpolitik* might weaken NATO, lead to a greatly more nationalistic West Germany, and, perhaps with a little help from the devious men in the Kremlin, eventually even result in a reunited but neutral Germany.¹⁹⁷ Kissinger also greatly disliked the demonstration of a new spirit of independence and self-confidence displayed by the Bonn government in the course of *Ostpolitik*. "I tell you! If a course of détente is to be pursued, we do it," he once told the visiting West German deputy foreign minister in no uncertain words.¹⁹⁸ Kissinger, however, could not hide entirely that perhaps due to his own German past, he was greatly suspicious of the Germans in general and German socialists such as the complex and complicated Willy Brandt in particular. Robert Osgood, a senior White House adviser, thought that Kissinger was full of "great fear and distrust of the Germans, particularly those who wanted closer relations to the East in what he considered a fuzzy-minded and dangerous way."¹⁹⁹

The Nixon administration only began to view *Ostpolitik* as useful and sensible from the summer and fall of 1971. But already the contents of the Brandt government's treaties with the Soviet Union (August 12, 1970) and Poland (December 7, 1970) had reassured Washington at least to some extent that Brandt's eastern policy was indeed "an integral part of Western détente," as Gottfried Niedhart has written.²⁰⁰ West Germany's August 1970 treaty with the Soviet Union set the stage for the succeeding negotiations with Poland, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and Czechoslovakia. The treaty with the Soviets, however, was immensely controversial in West Germany, in particular among conservatives.²⁰¹

The Brandt government, after all, was prepared to recognize the post-1945 German borders and accepted that these frontiers could only be changed by peaceful agreement among all parties concerned. It was unlikely, or so it was understood at the time, that the Kremlin would ever give its agreement to a change of borders in Europe.²⁰² Bonn formally recognized the division of Germany and the German-Polish border along the Oder-Neisse line with this treaty, signed in Moscow in August 1970. The Federal Republic, thus, accepted the permanent and irreversible loss of the former German territories in Silesia, as agreed by the World War II allies at the summit conferences in Yalta and Potsdam. In a TV address to the German nation from Moscow, Brandt explained quite correctly, “nothing is lost with this treaty that was not gambled away long ago.”²⁰³ In a letter to President Nixon reporting on Foreign Minister Scheel’s successful negotiations in Moscow, Brandt emphasized the “especially intimate cooperation with the governments of the Three Powers.” Much to Nixon’s satisfaction, Brandt wrote, “without our Alliance and the trust between us we could not have attained such a result.”²⁰⁴ In October 1971, Brandt received the Nobel Peace Prize for his policy of reconciliation, the first German to receive the prize since Carl von Ossietzky had been unable to accept it in person in 1935 because he was incarcerated in a Nazi concentration camp.

Throughout Brandt’s time in office, he went out of his way to emphasize his dedication to the Western alliance and West Germany’s close links with the West. He demonstrated this, for instance, by signing the unpopular Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty soon after entering office to reassure the world of Bonn’s peaceful and nonmilitary ambitions.²⁰⁵ He also increased West Germany’s defense contributions to NATO and supported Britain’s membership in the EC. The West German chancellor certainly wished to extinguish any notion that Bonn had embarked on pursuing a more nationalist foreign policy. Brandt regularly wrote to the Western leaders, and above all to President Nixon, reporting on his talks with the Soviet and eastern European leaders, reassuring them in a subtle way that West Germany intended to remain a loyal member of the Western alliance.²⁰⁶

Brandt and Kissinger never hit it off, however. In April 2010, in the course of a long conversation with the author, Kissinger politely expressed his respect for Brandt’s “moral vision,” but he was not impressed by Brandt’s “lack of pragmatism.”²⁰⁷ In fact, both Brandt and Kissinger were highly complicated personalities, though British Prime Minister Wilson

characterized Brandt as “honest and subtle and much less tricky than Kissinger.”²⁰⁸ Even when Brandt’s pro-Western politics became clear beyond doubt, Kissinger remained skeptical. It suddenly was no longer “so much Brandt’s intentions” that worried him but, as he told Nixon, now he was concerned about the chancellor’s “ability to contain the momentum of the Eastern policy and its divisive potential in German domestic affairs.”²⁰⁹

Nixon’s relations with Brandt were even more awkward than Kissinger’s. Their personal relations were lukewarm at best, and they tried to avoid meeting each other as much as possible.²¹⁰ The Nixon confidant Arthur Burns was convinced that the president had “nothing but contempt for Brandt.”²¹¹ Indeed, a few years later, in February 1973, Nixon and Kissinger expressed regret that the tumor on Brandt’s vocal cords, which had been surgically removed the previous December, had turned out to be benign. In conversation, Kissinger informed the president, “Unfortunately, it’s not malignant. Now, that’s a terrible thing to say.” But Nixon cut in, “I know what you mean. . . . You mean, unfortunately, he’s in very good health.” Kissinger agreed: “Unfortunately, he’s likely to hang on in there, yeah.” Nixon added, “Well, I’m afraid he’s dangerous. I really have to agree with you. I agree.”²¹² Relations had begun on a wrong footing when on election night in late September 1969, Nixon telephoned Chancellor Kiesinger to congratulate him somewhat prematurely on being able to continue in office as head of government.²¹³ A few hours later, it was announced that on the basis of a combined small majority of seats in parliament, Brandt had managed to form a coalition government with the Liberal Party and its leader, Walter Scheel, under his chancellorship.²¹⁴

While Nixon’s faux pas was embarrassing, Washington found it worrisome that a prominent policy responsibility was given to Egon Bahr, Brandt’s close adviser and the brain behind *Ostpolitik*. At first Kissinger regarded Bahr as “an old-fashioned German nationalist” who “was also free of any sentimental attachment to the United States,” a most disconcerting fact in the view of the White House.²¹⁵ Kissinger explained in his memoirs that after all, “from Bismarck to Rapallo it was the essence of Germany’s nationalist foreign policy to maneuver freely between East and West.”²¹⁶ He therefore believed Brandt and Bahr’s foreign policy had to be tightly monitored and controlled. After all, unlike Adenauer and Erhard, Brandt and of course Bahr apparently “never had an emotional attachment to the Atlantic Alliance.”²¹⁷ Thus, *Ostpolitik*, Kissinger believed, had to be embedded “in a ma-

trix of negotiations that . . . set limits beyond which [the Federal Republic] could not go without allied consensus.”²¹⁸ Both Nixon and Kissinger feared that otherwise Brandt’s foreign policy might “finally come together on some nationalist, neutralist program.”²¹⁹ US displeasure over Bonn’s tendency to “inform rather than consult” did not help matters either. Bahr had used these rather undiplomatic words during a visit to Washington.²²⁰ Eventually, however, Kissinger developed good relations with Egon Bahr. After all, Kissinger and Bahr shared a penchant for back channels and secret diplomacy, and over time, particularly in retirement, they became rather fond of each other.²²¹

Thus, great personal mistrust as well as constant disagreements over the right balance between superpower détente and *Ostpolitik* dominated German-US relations during the Brandt era. Superpower détente, frequently conducted via Kissinger’s back channel to the long-standing Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in Washington, would lead to Nixon’s first dramatic summit with Soviet Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev in May 1972 and the signing of the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I).²²²

The Pentagon (though not the State Department) and large sections of the East Coast foreign policy establishment, however, shared Nixon’s concern about Brandt’s eastern policy. Notables such as Dean Acheson, John McCloy, Lucius Clay, and even the much more liberal George Ball were “deeply disturbed” and viewed Bonn’s new foreign policy “with great alarm.”²²³ British Defense Secretary Denis Healey referred to them as “distinguished American dinosaurs from the occupation age,” who found it difficult “to come to terms with a world so different from that in which they were able to determine the policies not only of the U.S. but of Germany.”²²⁴ In particular, former secretary of state Acheson became unusually outspoken. He advised that “Brandt should be cooled off” and that the “mad race to Moscow” ought to be slowed down. In August 1970, Acheson told a friend: “My real worries center about Willy Brandt’s foolish flirtations with the Russians.”²²⁵ It was generally assumed that Kissinger had encouraged Acheson to go public with his concerns to ensure that the Brandt government was aware of Washington’s profound anxieties.

Nevertheless, soon it was recognized in Washington that *Ostpolitik*’s time had come. Nixon and Kissinger felt that attempting to obstruct this policy would be unwise. Instead, it seemed to be sensible to integrate Brandt’s eastern policy in order to avoid “the risk of cutting the Federal Republic loose from the bonds of NATO and the restraints of the European Commu-

nity.”²²⁶ Kissinger began to follow the time-honored slogan to never ever let a good crisis go to waste and sought to capitalize on the new developments. *Ostpolitik*, after all, gave the US the opportunity of ending the permanent crisis over Berlin. Brandt repeatedly expressed his conviction that it was “very important” that West Germany and the three Western powers “take a unified standpoint in their respective conversations in all questions, but particularly with regard to the Berlin issue.”²²⁷ Kissinger, however, was convinced that it was only his insistence on a linkage between *Ostpolitik* and the free access to Berlin that had made the quadripartite negotiations succeed and led to the Berlin agreement of 1971. He wrote proudly, “Berlin disappeared from the list of international crisis spots.”²²⁸ And indeed, during Nixon’s meetings with Brandt in June and in particular in December 1971, *Ostpolitik* no longer was the main topic of conversation.²²⁹

Instead, it was the matter of a European security conference that was high up on Washington’s list of concerns. The Soviet Union had first proposed such a conference in the mid-1950s and kept pushing for it in the context of superpower détente and *Ostpolitik*. The Kremlin clearly hoped to use the opportunity to formalize its control over eastern Europe by obtaining the international recognition of the post-1945 territorial status quo in Europe at such a conference. With the participation of thirty-five states, the long-drawn-out Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) opened in the Finnish capital, Helsinki, in November 1972. The main objectives of the Western world were the political and military reduction of East-West tension, the improvement of economic cooperation, and advances in human rights in eastern Europe.²³⁰ Eventually, in August 1975, President Ford and his thirty-four counterparts, including Soviet Secretary General Brezhnev, signed the contentious Helsinki Final Act.²³¹

Although the long CSCE conference was highly controversial among the growing number of neoconservative opponents to détente in the US, it slowly began to dawn on the Nixon White House that economic and financial developments in the US and the Western world were of much greater concern than either *Ostpolitik* or the CSCE. The country’s increasingly poor economic performance threatened to undermine the United States’ hegemonic position within the Western alliance and endanger Nixon’s reelection. The more the congressional elections of November 1970 and the presidential election of November 1972 approached, the more worried Nixon became about the rapidly increasing unemployment rate, the high rate of inflation, and the country’s general economic and monetary malaise. It did

not take Nixon long to blame the United States' European allies for the country's predicament and begin what in essence turned out to be an "America First" policy. "It's time for America to look after its own interests," Nixon pronounced. "We have got to play a very hard game."²³²

Living with Deficits

ECONOMIC PREDICAMENTS

BY ANY ACCOUNT, JOHN CONNALLY of Floresville, Texas, was a politically formidable and physically impressive man. Born into poverty, as one of seven children, the former Democratic governor of Texas became President Nixon's second secretary of the Treasury in February 1971. In the summer of that year, the new secretary lived up to his reputation for blunt statements. Connally succinctly summarized the Nixon administration's economic strategy to a number of Treasury consultants when he pointed out that his "basic" philosophical conviction was "that the foreigners are out to screw us. Our job is to screw them first."¹

This, of course, was a somewhat unorthodox approach to international economic policy and cooperation with allies. Although having made a fortune as a skillful lawyer representing some of the wealthiest people in Texas, Connally was known neither for his economic expertise nor for his interest in the finer complexities of transatlantic relations. A sort of gunboat diplomacy had characterized his eleven months as President John F. Kennedy's secretary of the Navy in 1961 when at the height of the Cold War he sent the Sixth Fleet to the Mediterranean to demonstrate a US presence there.²

President Nixon, however, always remained impressed by Connally. In his memoirs, he described Connally as "the only man in either party who clearly had the potential to be a great President." He appeared to have "political 'fire in the belly,' the energy to win, and the vision to lead."³ Peter Peterson, Nixon's commerce secretary, and the speechwriter Bill Safire concluded that the normally sober Nixon had an "affair of the head" with

Connally and fallen politically in love with him.⁴ Nixon clearly greatly admired the man and stood in awe of him. Connally even seemed to replace Kissinger as Nixon's day-to-day confidant. The touchy national security adviser, however, unaccustomed to this sort of competition, "bristled at the invasion of his exclusive preserve as Nixon's mental baby-sitter and the number one choice of Washington hostesses as an honored guest."⁵

In 1972, Nixon considered Connally briefly as a potential vice presidential running mate in place of Spiro Agnew, the sitting vice president, and apparently the Democratic presidential contender Hubert Humphrey had done the same in 1968.⁶ Nixon also wondered whether Connally might be the right man to be appointed secretary of state to succeed the hapless William Rogers. In the end, however, Henry Kissinger managed to "prevail over the tall, suave WASP," despite Nixon's prolonged reluctance to offer him the post that Kissinger so desperately wanted.⁷

To the wider public, Connally had become known as a result of the severe wounds he obtained when as governor of Texas, he was riding in the same car as President Kennedy when the latter was assassinated in Dallas in November 1963.⁸ "Drifting in and out of consciousness for four days," the governor recovered, however.⁹ The former Democratic national chairman Robert S. Strauss referred to Connally as "one of the ablest men" he had ever known: "a man who had an uncanny ability to forget the transitory stuff and retain all the vital information in his head, year after year."¹⁰

Characterized by the *New York Times* as "handsome, personable," and "suave" with "a touch of the Eastern establishment," Connally also had a darker side.¹¹ Not only was he surrounded by an "aura of opportunism"¹² and generally regarded as "a most smooth politician."¹³ He also was a vigorous cold warrior who, it appears, did not shrink from recommending the use of nuclear weapons in the Vietnam War as well as the mining of Haiphong Harbor and the bombing of Hanoi.¹⁴ He was also well known for his outspoken comments and political ruthlessness. President Johnson reportedly said of him, "He can leave more dead bodies in the field with less remorse than any politician I ever knew."¹⁵

Johnson was Connally's mentor and long-standing friend; it was only three months after the former president's death in January 1973 that Connally formally joined the Republican Party. But by then, in fact as early as 1970, he had already been appointed to serve on Nixon's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, a role he relished. Grateful for Connally's support, in the same year, Nixon appointed him to membership of the President's

Advisory Council on Executive Organization (the Ash Council). Not least due to Connally's "consummate eloquence" and "always smooth, slick and articulate" presence did Congress agree to pass the council's recommendation that would in fact weaken the legislature's power to control the government.¹⁶

As Nixon's second secretary of the Treasury between February 1970 and June 1971, Connally adopted a rather ruthless and confrontational style when attempting to resolve the United States' economic and monetary problems. Initially, it led the Nixon administration to adopt a rather "extreme version of the policy politely referred to as 'benign neglect.'" ¹⁷ In an earlier age, this rather selfish strategy had been called the "policy of the ostrich."¹⁸ It resulted in a confrontation between US economic and monetary preferences with those of the European allies, who became increasingly furious about Washington's inability or unwillingness to do something about the deteriorating international financial situation.¹⁹ West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, for instance, told President Nixon in a letter that the monetary crisis had "created great difficulties" for his administration as well as for other European governments. Brandt emphasized the importance he attached to "the development of a European economic and monetary union." Presumably Brandt assumed that this would leave the Europeans much less exposed to what many people in Europe considered the United States' irresponsible financial behavior.²⁰

The Nixon administration fully realized that the US balance of payments position was "very precarious," and the White House was indeed determined to "recreate a proper balance in our economy."²¹ Nevertheless, and despite the production of a plethora of position and option papers,²² the administration shrugged its shoulders and looked the other way when faced with the United States' increasing payments and trade deficits and the ever greater instability of the dollar. This nonpolicy caused a good deal of currency volatility and greatly undermined the entire Western monetary system. Whether Connally was the best choice to deal with this complex situation is doubtful. In fact, as Federal Reserve chief Arthur Burns expressed it succinctly in his diary, Connally "knew nothing of economics and did not especially want to learn."²³ Connally himself felt he "had the capacity to understand what the economists were saying," though he "had really never studied monetary affairs." He thought of himself as "a conservative who believed in an active government."²⁴

While Connally's formal and fiscal qualifications to be Treasury secretary

were limited, it had not escaped Nixon's attention that in order to gain a second term in office in 1972, he needed to win the populous states of California and Texas. And Connally, the former democratic governor of Texas, was still highly popular in this key state, which recently had made a considerable turn to the right.²⁵ Nixon also liked the fact that Connally, still a registered Democrat, might work well with Congress. After all, throughout Nixon's years in office, both houses of Congress were controlled by the Democrats.

Both the president and his Treasury secretary were well aware that the US had reached an economic threshold. Nixon's statement in his inaugural address, "we have learned at last to manage a modern economy to assure its continued growth," proved to be mere wishful thinking.²⁶ Instead, just over two years later, Connally kept reiterating that the labor unions and the business world needed "to redress the decline in our competitive position and improve our economic position in foreign markets." Nixon chimed in. It was essential, he proclaimed to the nation's newspaper editors, that the American people would "regain their competitive spirit and moral strength and stay ahead in the race for world leadership."²⁷

In fact, the country's economic problems went much deeper and were much more profound than the Nixon administration cared to admit and could hope to overcome with imaginative arithmetic or similar political devices. And Connally fully recognized this. In an interview in August 1971, he frankly admitted, "we are at the end of an economic policy." US businesses and the labor movement, and presumably also the US government, would "have to get used to the idea of living within certain parameters."²⁸ Yet this was largely all talk. In practice, as we will see, Nixon embarked on rather different economic strategies to make the country economically great again. The Nixon administration's economic and financial strategies contrasted profoundly with Washington's sound monetary policies in the early postwar years. At that time, Washington had been keen on overcoming the depressed state of international trade relations by creating a genuinely open world economy for the postwar period.

Bretton Woods and the Postwar Economic Order of the 1950s and 1960s

A new postwar economic order had been hammered out at an international conference at the Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New

Hampshire, during the first three weeks of July 1944. This was the final stage of a drawn-out multilateral process begun in the early 1940s to fundamentally reorganize international monetary relations. The prewar system that had resulted in protectionism, competitive devaluations, and depression was regarded as beyond repair. The conference was dominated by two economic giants and their teams, Briton John Maynard Keynes, probably the world's most famous economist, and US Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Harry Dexter White. Both presented very different plans for reordering the financial world. This was hardly surprising, as Keynes was aware that Britain, as well as continental Europe, would have formidable deficits and needed to obtain access to international credit for reconstruction, while White realized that the US would be awash with large surpluses.²⁹

As could have been foreseen, Washington's ideas largely won the day at Bretton Woods. They consisted, as Michael Moffit writes, of a combination of "liberal idealism" and "the calculated interest of a great power" to achieve a new international system rooted in both "stability" and "flexibility."³⁰ The new system was also characterized by a large degree of predictability, which infused economic participants—both governments and businesses, large and small—with a healthy confidence in the lasting, rational, and stable nature of the new system. All this led to a "mind-boggling expansion of trade in the first postwar decades."³¹ To some extent, the Bretton Woods system was considered "to be engraved in stone," as it seemed to have overcome the world's monetary "stumbling and bumbling" during the first half of the twentieth century.³² It therefore was a profound shock when the system began to unravel in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

At the most basic level, the Bretton Woods agreements were meant to stabilize international monetary relations and improve international trade relations. The Bretton Woods system was also expected to avoid further economic warfare and thus contribute to preserving world peace.³³ A new global organization, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was entrusted with the new rules agreed on at Bretton Woods to prevent protectionism and deliberate currency depreciation—or competitive devaluation—as had frequently occurred in the interwar years. The traditional gold standard was abolished. It was believed that the limited availability of gold had put severe restrictions on governments' ability to expand the economy in order to prevent or overcome an economic downturn with the help of readily available "easy money."³⁴ Yet the link between the dollar and gold was not entirely severed; instead the US government promised to redeem foreign commer-

cial or private dollar holdings at \$35 per ounce of gold. When the gold pool collapsed on March 17, 1968, central banks still continued to trade gold with each other at \$35 per ounce, though the private market for gold was allowed to fluctuate.³⁵

The Bretton Woods system attempted to achieve monetary stability by creating fixed exchange rates among currencies with an acceptable margin of only one percent. Individual countries were only entitled to change the par values of their currencies if they were confronted with cases of “fundamental disequilibrium,” as the Bretton Woods rules expressed it vaguely. Yet this was regarded as a very last resort. While at heart this would be a political rather than an economic assessment, it still was meant to prevent the recurrence of the monetary warfare of the nineteenth century, when international monetary relations “resembled a merciless battlefield of national rivalries.”³⁶ The Bretton Woods system also offered countries faced with economic difficulties access to short-term credit as well as consultation and financial advice from the IMF.³⁷

Within this framework, “the overriding objective of U.S. exchange rate policy was the maintenance of a fixed par value of the dollar” to stabilize the world’s monetary structure. Tampering with international currencies became very difficult, if not impossible, and that was one of the main purposes behind the Bretton Woods conference. According to the Bretton Woods rules, a devaluation of the dollar could be achieved only if the dollar price of gold was increased while the price of gold in terms of other currencies remained unchanged. Although since the mid-1960s cautious revaluations of foreign currencies against gold and the dollar had been hesitatingly accepted, in principle currency devaluations remained a no-go area and had a very negative stigma of national incompetence attached to it.³⁸

Initially, however, the IMF proved to be much too small to stimulate the reconstruction of Europe. It was the 1948 Marshall Plan and the infusion of \$12 billion that terminated the postwar scarcity of dollars in western Europe and allowed the Bretton Woods system to begin functioning successfully. The US greenback, in practice still quite firmly linked to gold, quickly developed into the key global reserve currency. Not least due to the United States’ huge financial and military aid programs to western Europe, the country’s large trade surplus of the immediate postwar years began to turn into a regular and significant balance of payments deficit. Yet initially this was seen as a good thing. It enabled the Europeans to earn dollars and purchase US products, which in turn stimulated both the US and the Eu-

ropean economies. It resulted in an enormous expansion of world trade throughout the first twenty-five years after the end of World War II.

Still, the dollar glut and the US balance of payments deficit on which it was based had always been regarded as temporary and short-lived to enable the Western world to overcome a particularly difficult economic situation. In fact, this policy ran parallel to and was closely interconnected with US support for the unity of Europe. The trade discriminations that US products suffered at the hand of European institutions such as the Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and subsequently the EEC were also meant to be temporary. In view of the Cold War competition with Moscow and US aspirations to create something like the "United States of Europe," Washington was prepared to happily accept these discriminations until such time when the Europeans had got back on their feet and the international economic system based on the free market was working properly again.³⁹

Once the convertibility of most European currencies was achieved by late 1958, however, the United States' emerging balance of payments deficit began to cause a great deal of concern. It became clear, as already expressed in 1959 by the Yale economics professor Robert Triffin in testimony to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, that the US was faced with a vicious circle. As supplier of the world's reserve currency, the US had no choice but to continue running persistent current account deficits to supply the world with much-needed new liquidity to fuel an expanding global economy. This, however, Triffin argued, was bound to lead to persistent worldwide inflation. Moreover, the accumulation of dollar liabilities abroad would make foreigners wonder whether the US could maintain the convertibility of gold into dollars at \$35 per ounce for much longer or whether the country might be forced to devalue by raising the dollar price. As long as there was a link between the dollar and gold, the United States' balance of payments deficit was unlikely to be able to continue providing the world with new money forever, Triffin argued. The availability of gold was always severely limited by the restricted possibilities to produce more of the precious metal. The so-called Triffin dilemma proved to be a correct interpretation of the factors that would contribute to bringing down the Bretton Woods system.⁴⁰

The Western World's Financial and Monetary Woes

Already during the presidential campaign of 1960, a combined gold/dollar devaluation crisis occurred when rumors surfaced that the amount

of gold held by the Treasury was less than the amount of dollars available to foreign governments. It was assumed that this situation would lead to an increase of the price of gold and thus effectively to a devaluation of the dollar. When in July 1962 President Kennedy repeated a promise he had already made during his election campaign that the US would continue to uphold the gold pledge at \$35 per ounce of gold, the crisis abated for the time being.⁴¹ Still, the essential problem at the root of the system—the United States' increasing balance of payments deficit including the inflationary pressures that resulted from the dollar glut—could not be overcome in the course of the 1960s. President Kennedy's voluntary guideposts for limiting domestic wage and price increases as well as various attempts at multilateral trade negotiations were not successful on the whole. In fact, under the Johnson administration, the problem grew worse. Between 1965 and 1969, the US developed a serious inflation problem and an annual balance of payments deficit to the tune of \$3 billion; the previous five years, the country had only recorded an annual payments deficit of under \$750 million.⁴²

It was obvious that the cause of the worsening balance of payments deficit related to a relative decline of US economic power. After all, as David Calleo has pointed out, direct US investment helped to "rejuvenate European industry and gradually eroded whatever advantage American technology and management enjoyed after the war."⁴³ Much later, this turned out also to be the case regarding China after the US had facilitated the opening of the country by entering into diplomatic relations with Beijing in mid-December 1978.

More specifically, with respect to Europe, there were two main reasons for the gradual erosion of Washington's economic superiority. First, the US was faced with increasing economic competition from Japan and western Europe. The allies challenged US supremacy in particular in the world markets for cars, steel, and machinery; they also competed vigorously with US companies for market share within the US domestic market. Second, the Vietnam War proved to be rather expensive. Essentially the war was unaffordable without any dreaded tax increases, even for as rich a country as the United States. The Johnson administration instead resorted to the printing press to cover the growing budget deficit. The exception was the 1968 temporary tax surcharge, which, however, came too late to do much good.⁴⁴ Washington's shrinking trade surplus made it increasingly difficult to finance military spending abroad. In the second half of the 1960s, the United States'

overall trade surplus declined from \$9 billion in 1964 to \$3.4 billion in 1969. The United States' first substantial trade deficit occurred two years later.

The country's sharply deteriorating trade income also explained Johnson's huge pressure on the West German government, led by Ludwig Erhard, to honor the agreed offset payments to Washington referred to in chapter 3. These payments were essential for conducting the Cold War in Europe, as they covered to a substantial degree the United States' high cost of maintaining US troops and equipment on European (mostly German) soil.⁴⁵ But a good offset-deal was also important for the United States' balance of payment problem. Federal Reserve Chairman William McChesney Martin was of the firm opinion that "the stability of the dollar and our commitment to maintain the gold price is far more important than how many troops we have in Germany."⁴⁶ In the 1967 offset agreement, the Germans promised not to draw on US gold reserves by not converting their huge dollar holdings into gold. This was regarded as "by far the most important part of the 'offset' package." After all, it meant "that Germany, despite its huge and persistent payments surpluses, will put no pressure on U.S. reserves and thus reduces sharply the constraints generated by our payments deficits."⁴⁷ Difficult German-US negotiations also occurred during the early Nixon administration, until eventually a new agreement was reached in December 1970. As was customary, it covered the next two years, from July 1971 to June 1973, and continued the 1967 gold agreement.⁴⁸

Although Johnson managed to keep interest rates down, on the whole, his rather irresponsible financial policy contributed significantly to the steep inflationary spiral that occurred during his successor's tenure. Inflation grew from 1.9 percent in 1965 to 5.0 percent in 1969 and reached 6 percent in 1973 and more than 10 percent in 1974–75. The Vietnam War did indeed deal "the Bretton Woods system a blow from which it never recovered."⁴⁹

The situation in Europe was only marginally better, moreover. In the 1960s, most European countries also had severe balance of payment problems. Italy faced a serious balance of payments crisis at the beginning of the decade, and France toward the end. Britain's predicament was even worse. London was confronted by an almost continuous payments crisis throughout the entire decade. Here the 1960s "were effectively one long balance-of-payments crisis."⁵⁰ However, after the 1956 Suez humiliation, the maintenance of the exchange rate of sterling to the other main global currencies was seen as an important status symbol. Thus, for both Britain and France, there existed strong political imperatives not to devalue; a strong currency

and stable exchange rates were linked to national pride and postimperial confidence.

Eventually, however, devaluation could not be avoided. In the case of the pound sterling, it came in November 1967 in the midst of a serious economic crisis. It was a clear sign that Britain's economy was greatly underperforming and that London was overstretched regarding its external commitments. The country simply could not afford to maintain its many overseas obligations in view of its rapidly declining economic performance. With the difficult withdrawal from "east of Suez" (Singapore, Malaysia, and the Persian Gulf area) the year after, Prime Minister Harold Wilson drew the consequences, though the decision had been contemplated for the previous four years.⁵¹ It symbolized the end of Britain's claim to world-power status.

But the necessity of British devaluation in 1967 also indicated the fragility of the Bretton Woods system in an age of increasingly large cross-border currency movements. "If the second most important reserve currency, sterling, could be devalued, then the same fate might ultimately befall the dollar," the University of California economist Barry Eichengreen has argued.⁵² Two years later, on August 8, 1969, the French were also forced to devalue by 11.1 percent, despite being one of the main holders of monetary gold. The West Germans followed on September 30, 1969, in the wake of busy speculative flows on September 22 and 23, but they were forced to revalue their currency upward. For a short time, the West German mark even floated freely on the currency markets, until a new parity was agreed in October 1969.⁵³ As Eichengreen has persuasively explained, in an age of increasing capital movements, "the conflict between pegged-but-adjustable exchange rates and capital mobility could not be finessed."⁵⁴ In fact, there had been some pressure for a floating mark from within the German establishment since the early 1950s, when then economics minister Ludwig Erhard had first criticized the rigid par values of the Bretton Woods system that, he believed somewhat prematurely, would make the European integration process fail.⁵⁵

By the late 1960s, it became increasingly clear that upholding the Bretton Woods system, based on its gold pledge, was entirely unrealistic. After all, throughout the decade, Washington had only been able to tolerate and sustain an ever-growing balance of payments deficit as the dollar served as the world's reserve currency. The US was thus getting away with printing new money as it deemed fit and managed to "escape the normal discipline of staying in balance with the outside world."⁵⁶ This, one could argue, remained the case during the Cold War and indeed the post-Cold War years.

Yet the United States' allies were in a less fortunate position. Soon the European economies suffered the repercussions of Washington's policy. Above all, the US exported its inflation to Europe by causing excessively high money supplies in West Germany and elsewhere.⁵⁷ The high rate of inflation in the US reduced the purchasing power of the dollar and made US goods increasingly expensive for US consumers; domestic demand suffered, which further undermined the US economy and the country's financial stability. Foreign investors increasingly wondered whether Washington could honor its nominal obligation to exchange dollars for gold. US inflation also undermined the value of the huge dollar holdings that many European governments as well as Japan had accumulated. As the Bretton Woods system required the maintenance of fixed exchange rates with very little marginal flexibility, European and Japanese central banks had no choice but to intervene and purchase huge amounts of dollars when speculators began selling dollars in anticipation of a devaluation—or cheapening—of the US dollar. The inflow of these enormous amounts of dollars, however, caused major problems in Europe, for instance, by resulting in additional inflationary pressure on the continent.

Both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations had tried their best to prevent the growing instability of the Western monetary system, for example, by issuing so-called Roosa bonds (named after the undersecretary of the Treasury, Robert V. Roosa) and the creation of “special drawing rights” (SDRs), created by the IMF in 1969.⁵⁸ The latter was an artificial new global currency that was meant to reduce the amount of dollars swamping the international money markets.⁵⁹ But none of this worked, not even the direct governmental control of capital outflows from the US that had been briefly introduced by the Johnson administration in 1968. The US balance of payments deficit continued unabated, with dollars still swamping the international markets. It was obvious to many speculators that the devaluation of the dollar was only a matter of time. Yet, as noted, the fixed exchange rates of the Bretton Woods system did not actually permit the significant devaluation of the member currencies. Moreover, as all major global currencies were pegged to the dollar at certain fixed rates, devaluing the dollar could be expected to have a detrimental effect on all other Western currencies and the economies attached to these currencies. A major global monetary crisis would be all but unavoidable.

Clearly, by the late 1960s, the Bretton Woods monetary system showed definite signs of extreme strain. In view of changing economic and indeed

political realities among the leading states, the entire Bretton Woods system appeared to be doomed. The insurmountable conflict between fixed currency rates and hugely increased international capital flows was among the main reasons for the crisis of the postwar Bretton Woods system. Still, “the unwillingness of the United States to subordinate its domestic policies to the imperatives of exchange-rate stability and to invest in the survival of the system” also played a significant, if not decisive, part.⁶⁰

Nixon’s Economic Dilemmas

Throughout the global recessions and the two oil crises of the 1970s, the world’s leading economies found themselves increasingly exposed to the often contradictory necessities of “global interdependence, regional integration, and national self-assertion.”⁶¹ “The industrialized nations,” Treasury Secretary John Connally wrote, “were being brought together in a fellowship of pain.”⁶² In fact, the opposite was true. The transatlantic partners were not brought together but driven apart by the financial turmoil of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which eventually led to an entirely new Western monetary system. The crisis represented a particular shock to the United States, as the country was exposed to a double whammy: the very real economic difficulties caused and the psychological necessity of getting to terms with the end of the United States’ long-standing economic supremacy. The countries of western Europe could well remember their own economic *malaise* a mere twenty years before and were thus still somewhat prepared psychologically for the problems of the 1970s. The United States, however, had not encountered serious economic difficulties for almost thirty-five years, when President Roosevelt’s Keynesian rearmament program of the late 1930s and throughout the war years had eventually overcome the Great Depression.

And there were many other problems that preoccupied the country. The looming defeat in Vietnam, the deep rift in US society revealed by both the anti-Vietnam protests and the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and, soon, the unfolding and humiliating Watergate crisis were scratching deep scars into the US body politic. All this encouraged policy makers in Washington to indulge in navel gazing and concentrate almost exclusively on the United States’ own problems to overcome its deep identity crisis. Although the reasons were very different, overall there was a certain similarity with the situation the US of Donald Trump and his successor, Joe Biden, encoun-

tered. Among the country's political and business elite and beyond, there also existed a growing awareness of the United States' declining international competitiveness. To a considerable extent during the Nixon years, the latter was due to structural industrial problems in the US; it was not merely because of the overvaluation of the dollar, as was often claimed. In the early 1970s, this situation contributed to the development of an increasingly stronger, almost impulsive economic and political nationalism and the revival of isolationist and economic protectionist sentiments.⁶³

The erosion of the United States' international economic competitiveness and eventually the first oil crisis of October 1973, accompanied as it was by rising energy prices, meant that Washington's economic and financial position in the early 1970s was indeed much less secure than in the previous decades. The US, for instance, continued to accumulate a considerable overall balance of payments deficit during the Nixon era. While in 1970 there still had been a surprisingly large overall balance of payments surplus of \$2.603 million (in the previous two years, there had also been surpluses, though much-smaller ones), this was above all due to a short-lived recession, which reduced the inclination of US consumers to consume and purchase imported foreign goods. By 1971, however, a balance of payment deficit of \$2.260 million had accrued, which ballooned to \$6.416 million the year after. Small payment surpluses were once again achieved in 1973 and 1975. Yet, since the 1970s, a substantial balance of payment deficit remained a constant feature of the US economic performance for the following decades.⁶⁴

Not surprisingly in view of the balance of payments deficit, in 1971, for the first time for almost one hundred years, the country also recorded a substantial trade deficit with the outside world. This was painful. After all, the US had run a significant trade surplus since 1896. At its height in 1964, the traditional long-standing postwar US trade surplus had been over \$6 billion. Only seven years later, the US manufactured and exported increasingly less while becoming swamped by cheaper (and often better) foreign goods, not least from Japan and to a lesser extent from West Germany and other western European states. By 1971, the US had developed an overall trade deficit of \$1.3 billion. Although small trade surpluses occurred in the years 1973 and 1975, the country's global trade deficit developed into a persistent overall feature of the United States' economic performance. By 1976, the last year of the Republican Ford administration, the annual trade deficit stood at \$6 billion. And worse things were to come in the late 1970s and

throughout the 1980s. In the course of the Carter and Reagan years, the US trade deficit ballooned to unsustainable levels, reaching almost \$152 billion in 1987 before dropping a little.⁶⁵ In December 2019, during the Trump presidency, the United States' annual trade deficit with the outside world—almost two-thirds of it with China—stood at just under \$619 billion, though this was 1.7 percent less than during the previous year.⁶⁶

In the Nixon era, the country also faced serious inflationary problems. A 5 percent rate of inflation was recorded for the first time in 1969. After a decline to below 4 percent in 1972, due to the administration's strenuous efforts in this election year, inflation rose to over 6 percent in 1973. As noted, it accelerated to well above 10 percent in the last quarter of 1974 and the first two quarters of the following year.⁶⁷ By the end of the decade, it had reached an annual average of 11.3 percent, which climaxed at 13.5 percent in 1980.⁶⁸ Many experts held the "easy money" policy of Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns responsible. It took Paul Volcker, who became chairman in August 1979, almost a decade and painful years of austerity to contain this level of inflation. Volcker's recipe consisted of an increase of interest rates to ever-higher levels to force down consumption and investment demand and thus inflation. This policy caused massive unemployment and much misery and poverty in its wake. It contributed to Jimmy Carter's electoral defeat in 1980 and brought about the heyday of monetarism under Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.⁶⁹

Despite high rates of inflation, economic growth remained almost stagnant once Nixon had won the 1972 election. Economists found this situation—soon referred to as "stagflation"—rather baffling and inexplicable. Unemployment also kept rising persistently throughout Nixon's and his successor's terms in office. After an initial postwar unemployment peak of 6.49 percent in 1961, unemployment had been constantly falling. It reached a low of 2.79 percent in 1969. In 1970, this trend reversed. Unemployment rose to 4.18 percent in 1970 and peaked at an unprecedented 8.98 percent in 1975, when Gerald Ford occupied the Oval Office. Subsequently it only came down very slowly.⁷⁰

And of course the United States' economic dilemma was closely connected with the country's monetary woes and the position of the dollar. The White House continued to view the greenback as overvalued, making US goods unnecessarily expensive and therefore uncompetitive on the world markets.⁷¹ A much weaker dollar, it was assumed, would benefit the US export industry and help to improve or at least stabilize the balance of pay-

ment deficit, including the country's trade deficit. Yet the deterioration of the value of the US currency also led to further inflationary pressure on prices, undermining the savings of millions of ordinary Americans. It also made dollar investments much less attractive for the international business and banking sectors. By contrast, the reputation of many European currencies, in particular that of the West German Deutschmark, as solid "safe havens" for investors was becoming stronger. Currency speculators moved much of their investment portfolio to Europe, above all to West Germany, thus inundating the old continent with dollars.⁷²

Growing European Economic Independence

Disputes about monetary and economic issues, of course, had also contributed to shaping the transatlantic alliance throughout the 1960s. Yet, in that decade, the viciousness and nationalistic tenor that characterized the economic clashes of the following decade were mostly still absent. This only developed into a prominent feature in the early 1970s, when financial and economic issues, as well as energy concerns, came to dominate and seriously undermine transatlantic cooperation. It was hardly surprising that in this hostile environment, US support for the unity of Europe became all but extinct.⁷³

The Nixon administration continued to view the western European states predominantly as underlings and servile supporters rather than as equal partners and allies. The high-minded rhetoric employed during Nixon's trip to Europe in early 1969 and Kissinger's learned writings about the importance of transatlantic codetermination and European independence counted for little in practice.⁷⁴ Not surprisingly, the White House viewed the endeavors of the European Community in 1969–70 to develop a common European role in international affairs with suspicion.

At the summit in The Hague in December 1969, the EC heads of government had instructed their foreign ministers to develop an organizational tool that would help to give the EC a voice in international affairs.⁷⁵ This had been under discussion since the early 1960s, but as long as French President Charles De Gaulle was in office, not much progress had been possible. Eventually, in late October 1970, the EC foreign ministers adopted the Davignon report on the EC's future foreign policy. The report led to the establishment of European Political Cooperation (EPC). A committee of experts chaired by Viscount Étienne Davignon, a prominent Belgian politician,

banker, and businessman, had drawn up the report. Initially, EPC merely consisted of holding regulated meetings and informal consultations among the foreign ministers of the six EC member states as well as the UK and other applicant countries. The EC Commission was also entitled to voice its views. EPC was very much a loose intergovernmental instrument, based on consensus, rather than a supranational one or one based on majority voting. EPC was thus not incorporated within the EC structures.⁷⁶ Subsequently, the Declaration on European Identity, published by the EC's nine foreign ministers during the Copenhagen summit in December 1973, encouraged EC members to make a serious attempt to use the EPC forum for coordinating foreign policy positions among all EC countries.⁷⁷ EPC was further strengthened during the heads-of-government summit in Paris in December 1974 and by means of the Tindemanns report of November 1976.

Still, the EPC consultation mechanism was only the first cautious and tentative step toward a common European foreign policy, though it did not fully live up to its initial and always quite unrealistic expectations.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the Nixon administration viewed the development with great concern. In a televised address to the Executive Club of Chicago later in his presidency, the president referred to the EPC initiative as the European attempt to "gang up" on the United States.⁷⁹ The EPC issue only confirmed Nixon's resentment about Europe's increasing economic competition with the US. In his Chicago address, he also expressed his deep anger about the apparent fact that the Europeans believed that they could compete with the US on the economic and political fronts while still being entirely dependent on US protection and goodwill in the security field.⁸⁰ This line of thought often featured in Nixon's thinking. On an earlier occasion, the president had not hesitated to warn western Europe of a new wave of isolationism in Congress and cutting back his own support of NATO "if the Europeans took restrictive action against U.S. exports." In such a case, Nixon said as early as April 10, 1969, the Europeans "could forget U.S. political support" and would have to do without the continued presence of US troops on the European continent.⁸¹

This remark was made only a mere six weeks after Nixon's trip to Europe, during which he had repeatedly emphasized the importance of transatlantic partnership and cooperation. Clearly, "open fear and suspicion of European integration," as Youri Devuyt expresses it, had begun to drive the European policy of the Nixon administration only a few months after

having come to office.⁸² Notions of rivalry and competition began to overshadow transatlantic relations to an unhealthy extent. A return to the United States' traditional support for European integration was highly unlikely in this climate of mutual suspicion and resentment.

The EC's Werner report of October 1970 for the establishment of European monetary union was also viewed with unease in Washington. Within a decade, monetary union was to be achieved by means of three major stages, including the permanent fixing of exchange rates and the establishment of a single European currency. Like EPC, this vision had also originated at the 1969 Hague conference, during which the Luxemburg prime minister and finance minister Pierre Werner had been asked to draw up a plan for European economic and currency union in response to the repeated currency crises and monetary turmoil of the late 1960s. Still, the Werner report was regarded as too far ahead of its time to stand a realistic chance of implementation by EC member states. Only in 1971–72 did the EC begin to make a serious attempt at implementing the first phase of the envisaged plan for economic and monetary union. But renewed currency turbulence undermined any real progress. In fact, implementation of the Werner report was fatally wounded by the continuation and escalation of the monetary crisis of the late 1960s. In the last resort, it was the unwillingness of the US to do something about the monetary turmoil and Washington's reluctance to save the Bretton Woods system that killed the Werner plan.⁸³

Connally's Moment: European Resentment and US Economic Nationalism

By 1971, the Bretton Woods monetary system had become seriously unbalanced, not least due to the United States' balance of payments deficit, which had led to a formidable accumulation of unwanted dollars by several European central banks. The United States was living well beyond its means, but due to the dollar being the global reserve currency, Washington was able to resort to the printing press and offload US consumer debts as well as the economic burden of fighting the Vietnam War onto the taxpayers and central banks in western Europe and Japan. This caused a lot of resentment in Europe, not least in France. After all, it gave the United States the capacity, as a paper written by the State Department consultant Robert Osgood outlined in the summer of 1969, "to pursue its international political

and economic objectives without regard to the wishes of its allies, while they are nonetheless expected to finance these objectives by accepting and holding dollars in unlimited amounts.”⁸⁴

A few months later, French Finance Minister Valéry Giscard d'Estaing complained to Connally, his US counterpart, that the US did not seem to be able to keep inflation under control and that the country's serious balance of payments deficits would “imperil world confidence in the dollar and threaten the international monetary system.”⁸⁵ The US, however, was not happy with the situation either. It limited Washington's foreign policy flexibility and caused difficulties domestically. The Nixon administration resented having to keep the payments deficit in mind, for instance, when considering strategies to lower interest rates and decrease the level of unemployment in the US.⁸⁶ European leaders kept urging Washington to do something about the problem, but to no avail. “The dollar is our currency,” Connally told a visiting European delegation with a broad grin shortly after taking office in early 1971, “but it's your problem.”⁸⁷

Tall, meticulously dressed, and highly articulate, the Texan only cared about US interests. Nixon's Treasury secretary clearly had a particular knack for antagonizing the European allies with his abrasive and nationalist statements. In fact, Connally greatly disliked foreigners, believing they were competing unfairly against the US in the world markets. He had no sympathy whatsoever for European and Japanese difficulties to cope with the United States' balance of payments deficits. Initially, however, he appears to have made a positive impression on the Europeans; yet this did not last long.⁸⁸ Connally had little inclination to consult them or view the international economic situation from the perspective of the Europeans, not even on occasion.

But a more unilateral approach toward dealing with the United States' balance of payment problem had preceded Connally's arrival as secretary of the Treasury in February 1971. Already in March 1969, Kissinger's twenty-eight-year-old economic adviser on the National Security Council, Fred Bergsten, had concluded that “our preferred multilateral approach to monetary reform” was gradually being eroded by the Treasury, although any “unilateral steps” by the US would most likely be “seriously disruptive to the entire Atlantic Alliance.”⁸⁹ Presciently, Bergsten also argued that abandoning the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates and adopting floating rates “would represent a massive display of U.S. power and rupture all our efforts to forge a new partnership with Europe on the basis of greater equality.”⁹⁰

Two years later, when Connally had taken over as Treasury secretary, multilateral cooperation with allies had become an outmoded concept. Neither was Connally interested in a consultative relationship with other important economic players. For instance, on his first visit to the IMF headquarters in Washington, DC, he treated the venerable institution, set up in 1944 at the Bretton Woods conference, “as a museum in that everything that wasn’t already stuffed ought to be.”⁹¹ Perhaps Connally’s hostility had something to do with the fact that the IMF deeply resented any political interference in its business. The IMF also greatly objected to Connally’s considerations in the course of 1971 about the introduction of a more flexible international currency exchange regime and the abandonment of the Bretton Woods system.⁹²

Already in November of the preceding year, Arthur Burns, the Austrian-born chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, had recognized that “what the boys swarming around the White House fail to see is that the country now faces an entirely new problem—namely a sizable inflation in the midst of recession.” Until a short while before, this had been regarded as impossible; inflation seemed always to occur in connection with a flourishing economy. Burns, whom the equally outspoken West German minister Helmut Schmidt considered a “wise man” with a “shrewd economic discernment,”⁹³ believed that a “new medicine” was “needed for the new illness.” To rely merely on a “more rapid expansion of the money supply,” and thus on inflating the US currency, “cannot be the answer,” he thought. The latter, however, was exactly the policy Nixon came to pursue to obtain reelection in 1972. Burns reasoned, however, that above all, “confidence needs to be restored” through both fiscal reforms and the introduction of an active incomes policy, which largely meant a wage and price freeze, as already attempted during the Kennedy era.⁹⁴

Yet, until mid-1971, the Nixon White House remained strongly opposed to interfering in the workings of the market with an active incomes policy. Still, on occasion, Nixon already had second thoughts. In January 1971, Nixon even declared somewhat prematurely, “Now I am a Keynesian in economics.”⁹⁵ But early in his presidency, Nixon had not hesitated to quickly abolish President Kennedy’s voluntary wage-price guideposts that, however, had not been much used lately.⁹⁶ As late as the end of June—and thus less than two months before abruptly changing his mind—Nixon proclaimed during a Cabinet meeting that “there will be no wage-price controls.” At a press conference in early August 1971, the president still thundered that he

was “unalterably opposed” to “permanent price and wage controls,” leaving himself the option of perhaps introducing nonpermanent controls.⁹⁷

Despite this firm rhetoric, it was clear that the president wavered in the question. According to speechwriter Bill Safire, already in March 1971, Nixon had told his Cabinet that halfway measures in the question of wage and price controls were not on the table. “If and when we do it we’re gonna leapfrog ’em all.”⁹⁸ Moreover, in both June and July 1971, Federal Reserve Chairman Burns put additional pressure on Nixon by referring repeatedly, both in private and in public, to the necessity of a strong incomes policy. Much to the anger of Nixon, who began to regard Burns as a traitor to the cause of making the economy flourish in the election year 1972, Burns hesitated to print more money to bring about an economic boom, as this would undoubtedly burden the country with serious inflationary problems in due course.⁹⁹ Nixon was outraged, and Kissinger later referred to Burns as “a difficult personality to orchestrate in a coordinated policy.”¹⁰⁰

It was fairly obvious, however, that the US government as well as US consumers had to become accustomed again to living within realistic means, both domestically and regarding foreign politics. In July 1969, Nixon ordered a 10 percent reduction of all US overseas civilians employed by the government and certain military personnel abroad. This resulted in a reduced governmental payroll of almost fifteen thousand military and fifty-one hundred civilians.¹⁰¹ The 1969 Nixon Doctrine, elaborated on in chapter 3, was all about limiting US foreign policy responsibilities as global policeman. In practice, however, the Nixon Doctrine had very little impact and did not lead to any practical retrenchment. No significant financial savings were made either.

Nevertheless, Nixon was fully aware of the United States’ economic predicaments. And no president, Nixon reasoned, could expect to increase his popularity and be reelected on the basis of a dire domestic austerity message. While almost any country’s economic policy is strongly influenced by domestic political considerations, during Nixon’s first term in office, US economic policy became wholly subordinate to US domestic politics and the president’s strenuous efforts to win a second term.¹⁰² During a meeting with some of his advisers in September 1972, two months before the election, Nixon told them unambiguously: “Let there be no doubt that our position before the election is one of protectionism. We should not indicate that we are preparing any concession not in the interest of the US.”¹⁰³

At heart, Nixon was indeed an economic nationalist—or an “America

First” man, to use the old interwar-era phrase that became fashionable again more than four decades after he left the White House. Nixon “proved less willing than his predecessors,” the economic historian Allen Matusow concludes, “to subordinate American economic interests to allied harmony.”¹⁰⁴ At this crucially important juncture for transatlantic economic cooperation, Nixon seemed to speak “exclusively the language of national power and national advantage. International cooperation appeared to be suspect; international agencies futile.”¹⁰⁵

To win reelection, Nixon embarked on economic warfare against the United States’ closest allies by deliberately bringing down the Bretton Woods international monetary system, closing the gold window and thus devaluing the dollar to make US exports more competitive.¹⁰⁶ After some delay, the European allies and the fledgling EC bureaucracy in Brussels began to grasp what was driving Washington’s economic policy. They were not amused.

Growing Transatlantic Rivalry and Competition

President Nixon was not shy to denounce the European Community for unfair trade practices and demanded that the Europeans lower their tariffs and allow more US goods to enter the Common Market. In particular, his administration accused the EC’s protectionist Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of being responsible for the United States’ worsening trade deficit. Due to “curtailed market opportunities” and “subsidized European competition,” CAP was “seriously curbing agricultural exports from the United States and the rest of the world,” a July 1970 letter by Agriculture Secretary Clifford Hardin to Secretary of State Bill Rogers claimed.¹⁰⁷

CAP, which had come into force in 1962, was a sophisticated and complex program of direct and indirect subsidies to European farmers. Primarily it had two objectives. It was meant to provide European consumers with high-quality and reasonably priced food products and, second, to enable European farmers to obtain a decent standard of living in an era of declining agricultural prices. CAP had been the result of a hard-fought compromise between France and West Germany. The latter, at the time by far the largest net contributor to the Community’s budget and Europe’s most dynamic manufacturing country, would gain access to the large French markets. In return, the West German taxpayer would essentially pay substantial farm subsidies to those European countries, such as France, that had large agricultural populations.¹⁰⁸

Nixon was not wrong when he blamed the EC for unfair trade practices. In particular, US wheat, feed grains, and Californian citrus-fruit products suffered from the competition of the subsidized CAP. Moreover, both the EC and EFTA, the British-supported free-trade association set up in 1960, also discriminated against other nonessential US goods by imposing quotas and exchange controls and requesting import licenses.¹⁰⁹ Naturally, Washington was greatly displeased. Those countries that Washington had nurtured and brought back from starvation and destruction were now challenging the United States' economic well-being and indeed its international economic leadership position.

Still, the administration's criticism of CAP and other EC policies were somewhat overblown. While partially correct, it relied more on gut feeling and political animosity to the EC's subsidy strategy and concern about the Community's impending enlargement than on objective facts. The State Department, for instance, concluded in May 1970 "that the Common Market has been a boon to our industrial exports and investments." Unlike other government agencies, the State Department did not believe that the United States' "competitive position [was] eroding" or that the "enlargement and further deepening of the Community" with the envisaged accession of the UK, Ireland, and Denmark "will result in a number of autarkic measures aimed at the U.S. in both trade and investment."¹¹⁰ In fact, the State Department pointed out that its research had shown "practically no adverse effects to our industrial exports if the Community is enlarged to ten."¹¹¹

During a conversation with major US policy makers at Camp David in the same month, French Finance Minister Giscard unknowingly supported the State Department's view when he said that "the American people seem to think that the U.S. trade problem is with the Common Market." This, however, was totally incorrect. In fact, between 1958 and 1969, US exports to the EC had increased by 182 percent and by only 118 percent to the rest of the world.¹¹² A State Department paper a year later made clear that the United States' export problem extended above all to trade with Japan rather than with Europe. Washington's balance of payments and trade deficits with Japan were huge and "obviously the major problem." It might thus be possible and sensible, the State Department paper concluded, to "avoid invoking measures which would affect trade with the Europeans."¹¹³

And of course, within the context of the Cold War world and for economic and trade reasons, the US had little choice but to continue cooperating with its European allies in any case. In 1970, one-third of all US merchandise

exports went to western Europe, and 28 percent of US imports originated from the old continent.¹¹⁴ The administration also remained strictly opposed to any attempts by Congress, not least by Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, to reduce the number of US troops in Europe, despite the occasional use of this threat by the White House to make the Europeans more pliable to the United States' economic needs. There was in fact strong opposition from within the administration to cutting US troop numbers in Europe just for balance of payments reasons. One of Kissinger's economic advisers, Fred Bergsten, "was shocked" when he learned that the Council of Economic Advisers had proposed something like this.¹¹⁵

Despite all resentment and rivalry, Washington did not overlook entirely that the economic and political success of western Europe might also well lead to some real benefits for the United States. After all, policy makers in the US capital assumed that the European allies would come to play an increasingly important global role while largely continuing to be supportive of US foreign policy. In times of severe economic difficulties, it was perfectly understandable to become "persuaded," as Kissinger later explained, "that a Europe seeking to play an international role, even if occasionally assertive, was more in our interest than a quiescent Europe abdicating responsibilities in the guise of following American leadership."¹¹⁶ The US did not want to have merely European satellites. Too confident and too independent allies were not desirable either, however. Essentially, Washington wished to obtain economic and political (and if possible military) support from Europe while still being able to call the shots. In the 1970s, the deceptively fair and just phrase "equitable burden-sharing" neatly summarized the US requirements in both the security and economic fields and, as would soon become apparent, in the complex area of international monetary policy.¹¹⁷

This did not mean, however, that there was a more genuinely equal role on offer for western Europe. Ultimately, the Europeans were meant to support and assist Washington in these times of need without, however, being entitled to a genuine leadership role in transatlantic relations. In fact, this was not unique to the Nixon or indeed the subsequent Carter and Reagan years.¹¹⁸ More than four decades later, in similar trying circumstances, the Obama and Trump administrations also admonished the Europeans to increase their contributions to NATO and adopt less competitive economic behavior. Obama's first secretary of defense, Robert Gates, warned of the insufficient spending on defense in Europe, and Trump was even more dis-

missive, in particular regarding Germany, of the dismal European defense efforts and unfair trade practices. As noted, he even referred to the Europeans as “foes” with regard to trade relations.¹¹⁹

Already by the early 1970s, the development of a united Europe was seen in Washington as a vehicle for European economic rivalry and competitiveness. While this was not so much the perception of the State Department, it certainly was the strongly held view of the White House, the Treasury, and a number of other economic departments such as Agriculture and Commerce.¹²⁰ The diplomats at Foggy Bottom were opposed “to put[ting] the Europeans on notice” by threatening the withdrawal of US troops if the EC’s economic strategy did not change, as some agencies within the administration wished to do. Such a policy “would be interpreted in Europe as a clear reversal of the President’s position on European unity and on non-intervention in the process of unification,” the State Department concluded. “It would be read as a signal that henceforth we will put our economic and commercial interests above our political objectives.”¹²¹ This, however, was exactly what the Nixon administration had in mind.

Nixon’s Early Economic Policy: Gradualism

The United States’ financial difficulties slowly convinced the Nixon administration that the era of fixed exchange rates as agreed at Bretton Woods all those years ago needed to come to an end.¹²² However, this was not the view of Nixon’s Federal Reserve chairman, Arthur Burns, appointed in early 1970, nor was it a perception widely shared in Europe. For instance, Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, the West German and French finance ministers respectively, were firmly convinced that “a pegged currency exchange . . . was the best precondition” for maintaining free international trade and flourishing market economies.¹²³

The US president himself was unsure what to do about the economy. He had little economic expertise and even less interest in economic affairs. Still, the precarious state of the US economy posed a looming electoral danger. It forced Nixon to focus much more on monetary and fiscal issues than he had ever anticipated. And naturally the president had to dedicate his attention both to the health of the domestic economy and to the United States’ external performance with regard to the country’s rapidly growing external payments and current account deficits.

For the first period of his presidency, Nixon relied above all on the eco-

conomic advice of the so-called Quadriad: Federal Reserve Chairman William McChesney Martin and Treasury Secretary David Kennedy, a devout Mormon, as well as on Robert Mayo, the director of the Bureau of the Budget, and the chairman of the president's Council of Economic Advisers, Paul McCracken. Nixon's favorite economist, however, was Arthur Burns, who would become Martin's successor at the Fed in January 1970 after having first been offered the Treasury post, which he had turned down. Burns, an expert on business cycles, had already served as the chairman of Eisenhower's Council of Economic Advisers. As Nixon liked to have Burns around as an adviser, by way of an interim measure, he appointed him counselor to the president.¹²⁴ With the exception of Burns, Nixon had difficult and distanced relations with all of his economic advisers, not least with Federal Reserve Chairman Martin.

A Truman appointee, McChesney Martin was a fiscally conservative and rather stubborn man who was nearing the end of his tenure. He was the longest serving chairman in US history, working under five presidents from April 1951 to January 1970. Although he was once famous for his dynamism, his energy had mostly gone, and he disliked Nixon. His eventual successor, the white-haired and elegant-looking Arthur Burns, once referred to him as a "pathetic slob" when it became clear that Martin was not inclined to leave his post early, as desired by Nixon.¹²⁵ The president's other economic advisers, such as his first Treasury secretary, David Kennedy, who tended to keep a low profile and was hardly noticed, and even Paul McCracken, the chairman of the influential Council of Economic Advisers, never developed a personal relationship with Nixon either. McCracken was the main driving force behind Nixon's early economic strategy (the "game plan" of "gradualism," as it was called). Although McCracken was an excellent, if not outstanding, economics professor from the University of Michigan, Nixon hated to listen to his lengthy and detailed explanations. He was greatly bored by the man.¹²⁶

None of Nixon's main economic advisers had any particular global outlook or an understanding of the economic and financial pressures the Europeans were suffering from. Instead, Nixon's team reinforced the president's economic nationalism rather than offering him a different perspective. Nixon's other economic advisers, such as Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans, a major Nixon fundraiser, or young aides Peter Flanigan and Fred Bergsten, did not carry much personal weight with the president either.¹²⁷ There were two exceptions, however. Over time, a significant increase of

the professional authority of two advisers could be observed. The banker and economist Paul Volcker managed to build up an impressive reputation. From 1969 to 1974, he held the crucial position of undersecretary of the Treasury for international monetary affairs and later served as Federal Reserve chairman under Presidents Carter and Reagan. The other exception was Labor Secretary George Shultz. His standing with the president became so formidable that in 1971 Nixon made him the first director of the new and soon highly influential Office of Management and Budget (OMB). During much of the 1980s, Shultz was Ronald Reagan's long-serving secretary of state.

Shultz—"a pernicious and stultifying force,"¹²⁸ according to Arthur Burns's initial impression—was a free-market, "fanatical" monetary economist from Stanford who was a personal friend of the Chicago monetarist Milton Friedman.¹²⁹ Shultz was not averse to using a great deal of flattery to endear himself with Nixon. "George is not stupid," the envious Burns thought in the course of a Cabinet meeting in late December 1970, during which Shultz gave "an extended panegyric of the President's marvelous leadership" to a beaming Nixon. Burns concluded that Shultz "could not have meant half of what he said."¹³⁰ Helmut Schmidt, the formidable West German politician, also believed that Shultz rather exaggerated his loyalty to Nixon and the other presidents he worked for, though "intellectually and politically," Schmidt observed, "he is incorruptible."¹³¹ On another occasion, Burns referred to Shultz as an "ignorant ideologist" who "should know that he has not the slightest understanding of international economics or finance!"¹³² Gradually, however, Burns developed a much higher opinion of Shultz's talents. Although Shultz's influence with Nixon fluctuated, in mid-June 1972, he nevertheless became Treasury secretary, succeeding John Connally, whose pompous and flamboyant style and "forcefully articular and assertive" personality the somewhat reserved and quietly spoken Shultz had never warmed to.¹³³ Shultz quickly gained the confidence of President Nixon, who even offered him the use of a private office in the White House so that he could be close at hand.¹³⁴

Initially, the Nixon administration's main task in the economic field appeared to consist of cautiously reining in threatening runaway rates of inflation without, however, causing a recession and high unemployment by embarking on too-rigid anti-inflationary policies. This was not an easy task, and the president had no choice but to rely to a large extent on the conflicting advice of his economic advisers—a fact he would have found unaccept-

able in the foreign affairs realm. Nixon hesitatingly agreed with his economic team that the economy was overheating. Both the rate of inflation and wage increases were growing ever more rapidly. Johnson's tax increase of 1968—a 10 percent temporary tax surcharge that was meant to cool off the overheating economy—had not had much effect so far. Despite all the potential pain involved, the economy needed to be slowed down by a policy of “gradualism,” Nixon was advised. It was expected that a gradual slowdown of the economy would lead to a soft landing and prevent the development of too much unemployment and economic suffering.¹³⁵

After all, at the beginning of Nixon's presidency, excess demand had driven unemployment down to a surprisingly low 3.3 percent (4 percent was regarded as full employment), while inflation was to increase to more than 5 percent by the end of the year. The latter was regarded as highly dangerous. According to Nixon's advisers, inflation would lead to stock market speculation, undermine savings and investments, and, eventually, unfairly redistribute income. It might even lead to social instability. Shortly before Nixon's inauguration, the influential sociologist Patrick Moynihan, who would become White House counselor for urban affairs in 1969 (and much later senator for New York), had explained to him “that the great prosperity of the 1960s” was “the primary reason” why the US was able to weather the widespread anti-Vietnam and civil rights protests of that decade. To preserve internal social stability, it was therefore Nixon's “single most important task,” Moynihan argued, “to maintain the rate of economic expansion.”¹³⁶

In 1968, before Nixon was elected president, he himself had talked about the fact that inflation was “a source of frustration” that “penalizes thrift and encourages speculations.” For Nixon, inflation even had a moral dimension: “in the past four years of American life,” inflation “has ravaged our standards of behavior” by introducing a culture of greed and unreasonable desires.¹³⁷ This conviction was perhaps what made Nixon's old boss, former president Eisenhower, speculate that Nixon would be a one-term president if he managed to win the Oval Office. Eisenhower thought, “he's really going to fight inflation, and that will kill him politically.”¹³⁸ With the exception of his last two years in office, Eisenhower himself did not hesitate to embark on deficit spending in times of recession, though he then sold the stimulus program as necessary for national security and thus placated the many fiscal conservatives in the Republican Party. The historian Richard Hofstadter called this “military Keynesianism,” and it led to Eisenhower spending mas-

sively on the nation's defense policy, thus creating the military-industrial complex, which he then warned against in his famous farewell speech.¹³⁹

Perhaps it was only Nixon's lack of confidence in his own economic expertise and judgment that made him go along with gradualism, which, however, also had the strong support of the up-and-coming economist Milton Friedman, the father of monetarism. Friedman had advised Nixon during his 1968 campaign and subsequently remained one of the president's informal advisers. Monetarism was an economic theory that paid almost obsessive attention to bringing down inflation by means of the money supply, deregulation, and lowering of taxes. It also strongly favored floating exchange rates while mostly neglecting other factors such as interest rates and general economic conditions.¹⁴⁰ Friedman greatly favored letting the free market decide and spoke of the "tyranny of the status quo" and the establishment's deep but unwise attachment to the Bretton Woods system. The University of Chicago professor was firmly opposed to fixed exchange rates and came out strongly against a government-dictated incomes policy.¹⁴¹

Monetarism's heyday came in the 1980s, when a good number of President Reagan's advisers as well as the influential British prime minister Margaret Thatcher were guided by this train of economic thinking, though the theory was already of great influence in the 1970s. In fact, monetarism was quickly replacing Keynesianism as the predominant economic theory of the time, though Thatcher was the only European leader to pursue the policy vigorously. "Inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon," Friedman wrote for instance. "It follows that the only effective way to stop inflation is to restrain the rate of growth of the quantity of money."¹⁴² Within a few months, however, in the *Newsweek* issue of May 26, 1969—the issue that also featured an interview with Jimi Hendrix and displayed Janis Joplin on the cover—Friedman presciently recommended not to tighten money any further, as this might well lead to "a severe economic contraction."¹⁴³

Nixon fully agreed with this recommendation. After all, in his heart of hearts, the president realized that the voting public was much more opposed to rising unemployment and a potential recession than to rising rates of inflation.¹⁴⁴ A serious recession would also endanger the creation of a new Republican majority. Turning the GOP into the permanent ruling party was Nixon's grand domestic objective. He hoped to persuade the right-of-center, predominantly blue-collar Democrats who were increasingly unhappy with the liberal trend of the Democratic Party to transfer their votes

to the Republicans. In particular, Nixon targeted the powerful and quite conservative AFL-CIO labor union, headed by George Meany. This, the president believed, would bring about a perhaps permanent Republican "New Majority."¹⁴⁵ After all, the "ordinary working guy makes up two-thirds of the people in this country who never went to college," Nixon proclaimed. The educated ones, however, "the college types, the professors, the elite," they were the ones who were "decadent." Nixon jumped to the conclusion that "the more a person is educated, he becomes brighter in the head and weaker in the spine."¹⁴⁶ The GOP, therefore, needed to gain the electoral support of the working men and women in the land. Understandably, the president remained leery about inducing an artificial recession to slow down the economy; this might well have serious electoral consequences. "I remember '58," Nixon told his economic adviser Herbert Stein. "We cooled off the economy and cooled off 15 Senators and 60 Congressmen at the same time."¹⁴⁷

In fact, Nixon should have followed his instincts. Gradualism turned out to be a disaster, not least as the Federal Reserve under its chairman McChesney Martin sharply reduced the money supply available to the economy and pursued a policy of "tight money" for all of 1969. "I personally discount the threat of recession," Martin told Nixon in mid-October 1969 and refused to unfreeze or at least relax his tight-money-supply policy.¹⁴⁸ Nixon became desperate to see the departure of Martin, a nominal Democrat, who had been in office for almost two decades. Nixon had high hopes for Martin's successor, Arthur Burns. Nixon wanted Burns to inflate the economy. And indeed, throughout Burns's eight years as Federal Reserve chairman, he embarked on this very policy, leaving behind a legacy that gave the country an inflationary problem that was only overcome in the course of the 1980s.¹⁴⁹

By December 1969, the recession had begun, although Nixon's advisers disputed this, until by the spring of 1970, the statistics had become difficult to ignore. If that was not bad enough, worse was soon revealed. Inflation, the main target of the policy of gradualism, was not declining at all. Instead, and much to Nixon's horror, both inflation and unemployment began to rise steeply. The president realized that the recession needed to end quickly to avoid a devastating defeat of the GOP in the November 1970 congressional election.¹⁵⁰ Nixon repeatedly emphasized to his advisers "that our concern must not be inflation but recession." He explained that "he never heard of losing an election because of inflation, but lots were lost

because of unemployment or recession.”¹⁵¹ On another occasion, he pronounced, “We’ll take inflation if necessary but we can’t take unemployment.”¹⁵² Nixon strongly believed that a lack of economic activism by President Eisenhower in 1958–60 had made the recession of that period much worse. It mattered little that inflation was low, at 1.4 percent. As Eisenhower had cut neither taxes nor interest rates, unemployment increased. It was one of the main factors, Nixon was convinced, that made him lose the 1960 election to John F. Kennedy. The lesson learned was that it was imperative to bring the economy into line with the electoral cycle.¹⁵³

In early 1970, Nixon and Burns decided to expand and thus to inflate the US economy to overcome the recession. Suddenly the president had turned into a Keynesian. Nixon believed that ideologically he and Burns were on the same wavelength, which was largely correct, and that he would be able to tell him what to do, which over the years proved to be rather mistaken. When Burns was sworn in as Federal Reserve chairman on January 31, 1970, Nixon explained that he fully respected the chairman’s independence from the executive, though, of course, it was no secret that he believed the country needed low interest rates and an expansion of the money supply. Nixon continued by outlining his hope bluntly: “that independently he will consider that my views are the ones that should be followed.” Nixon interpreted the applause for Burns at the ceremony as a “standing vote of appreciation in advance for lower interest rates and more money.”¹⁵⁴ On a later occasion, Nixon instructed the chairman of the Fed, “You see to it: no recession.”¹⁵⁵ Until Burns began acting too unilaterally for Nixon’s taste, the president thought highly of him; he believed that Burns was discreet and “talks slowly but thinks fast.”¹⁵⁶

Burns, however, had a rather healthy self-confidence: “the President knows that I know my economics and that he has much to learn from me and that I am not ready to be either his pupil or his functionary.”¹⁵⁷ While he entrusted these thoughts to his diary, he was careful enough not to reveal them too clearly to Nixon, though soon enough the president resented Burns’s blunt way of talking to him and began dreading his long lectures.¹⁵⁸ “Four minutes with Pat [Moynihan] is worth four hours of Arthur Burns,” Nixon once remarked.¹⁵⁹ Burns’s break with Nixon came as early as July 8, 1971, when the president expected the Federal Reserve chairman to toe the line regarding the administration’s economic policy, while Burns recognized the lack of convictions and “true self-assurance” within Nixon. At a later point in time, Burns even talked about Nixon’s “dogged inferiority

complex.”¹⁶⁰ In July 1971, Burns also became suspicious about Nixon’s “imperial” manner and thinking, including the president’s seeming lack of understanding for the way democracy worked.¹⁶¹ But of course, Burns had his own flaws. Within the Fed, an institution that was proud of its strong sense of collegiality, he soon developed an autocratic and high-handed reputation.¹⁶²

Burns loosened the money supply in early 1970s, as he was told, and the recession, the mildest of the postwar period, was eventually overcome—though not before Nixon had worried for months that Burns was not relaxing the Fed’s traditional tight-money policy fast enough.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, much to Nixon’s despair, unemployment continued rising throughout the year. It reached a politically damaging 6 percent by late 1970, without, however, much slowing down inflation and rapidly rising prices. Unusually high wage settlements prevented this.¹⁶⁴

The Lessons Drawn from the 1970 Midterm Elections

It was not surprising, given the economic conditions, that Nixon and the GOP were defeated in the congressional elections in November 1970. Although the Republicans gained two seats in the Senate, they lost twelve in the House. Both houses of Congress remained dominated by the Democrats. In total, the Democrats were able to obtain 3 percent more votes than the GOP had received in the 1968 presidential election. It was perfectly clear that the poor state of the economy had been decisive for the Republican defeat. And a clear enough defeat it was, though Nixon disputes this in his memoirs.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, Nixon told new French president Georges Pompidou when he attended De Gaulle’s funeral in Paris in mid-November 1970 that the GOP had “gained 20 percent in the Senate and lost 20 percent in the House” and that “it was the Senate that counted in foreign policy.”¹⁶⁶ Still, as the president outlined to his chief of staff, Bob Haldeman, “a Republican administration with any kind of economic slowdown is a disaster.”¹⁶⁷

And yet Nixon also had been fortunate to some extent. After all, in the spring of 1970, Wall Street had feared not just a recession but a panic that could well have led, as many bankers expected, to a second Great Depression. Moreover, Nixon’s dramatic announcement in a major speech on April 30, 1970, that he intended to escalate the Vietnam War by invading Cambodia led to unprecedented turmoil across US cities and university

campuses. Mostly hidden from the public was of course the fact that the secret war in Cambodia had already been conducted mercilessly since the spring of the previous year. Yet the Cambodian offensive only succeeded in pushing the North Vietnamese communists much deeper into Cambodia, despite a total of 3,857 sorties flown, almost 109,000 tons of bombs dropped, and countless numbers of dead and wounded civilians who died in the US air attacks that altogether lasted until August 1973.¹⁶⁸

On May 4, 1970, National Guardsmen killed four protesting and unarmed students at Kent State University, Ohio. Ten days later, police opened fire on students at Jackson State College in Mississippi. Two students were killed, and twelve were wounded. Many university campuses across the country were on the brink of revolutionary upheaval, and the financial markets were close to collapse. Federal Reserve Chairman Burns indicated that it was "heresy," but he was even thinking of introducing wage and price controls. This, of course, was anathema to the United States' conservative bankers and businessmen, and the president himself had repeatedly spoken out against such a course of action that smacked of socialism and the authoritarian behavior normally associated with a communist country.

Nixon was fortunate that such drastic action would not prove necessary, at least not immediately. With the end of the summer semester, students went home, and most troops were soon recalled from Cambodia. The feared stock market crash never came. Instead, by late May 1970, Wall Street had rebounded, and the economy had begun growing a little, though both unemployment and inflation remained stubbornly high. The disconcerting bankruptcy of the Penn Central Railroad in June 1970 did not result in any contagion either, despite the fears of many of the United States' leading bankers.¹⁶⁹ Thus, under the circumstances, if social and economic turmoil had continued, Nixon's defeat in the congressional election of November 1970 could have been much worse.¹⁷⁰

The consummate politician Richard Nixon fully realized, however, that well before the decisive presidential election of November 1972, the economy had to improve greatly. He was convinced that he needed to change the administration's economic policy and appoint new economic advisers as a matter of urgency.¹⁷¹ The president believed, quite correctly, that on the whole he had received poor economic advice during the previous two years. If he wanted to be reelected, Nixon knew, unemployment needed to be kept well under 5 percent. He certainly did not "want to take any chance on screwing up 1972," Haldeman noted in his diary.¹⁷² It was perfectly clear

“that the President will do anything to be reelected,” Arthur Burns wrote in his own diary.¹⁷³

In early 1971, Nixon began to panic. And even later, when he had a decisive lead in the polls, “he continued to campaign at a hectic pace.”¹⁷⁴ At Nixon’s meeting with the Quadriad group of economic advisers on March 8, for instance, the president harangued his advisers, with McCracken being “visibly frightened,” and there were occasions when Burns felt during the meeting “that the President was going mad.”¹⁷⁵ Already in early February 1971, Nixon had begun to contemplate the introduction of a new monetary system instead of trying to mend the old Bretton Woods system. Due to considerable capital inflows and inflationary concerns, the Canadian dollar had already ended its fixed peg to the dollar and began floating.¹⁷⁶ Nixon instructed his economic adviser Peter Peterson and his team to embark on an “examination of the need for a new Int’l Monetary system.”¹⁷⁷

The administration remained convinced—as did Nixon himself—that the real problems for the United States’ international competitiveness were European and Japanese protectionism and trade discriminations and, above all, the overvaluation of the dollar. The dollar needed to be made weaker, it was reasoned in the White House, to make US products cheaper and more competitive again. Improving the US export industries would also give the domestic economy a huge boost, it was believed. Yet this was easier said than done. The obvious but rather cumbersome and time-consuming solution of the dilemma would have been the start of multilateral trade negotiations, including the discussion of monetary issues, on the model of the Kennedy and Dillon rounds of the 1960s. In 1971, the Nixon White House, however, was lukewarm about such a course of action.

By contrast, the State Department believed that “in the last analysis only by lowering the [European] Community’s barriers through reciprocal action will we reduce the incidence of discrimination which is inherent and inevitable in a customs union.” Moreover, such negotiations would also be helpful to maintain the EC’s “outward looking orientation” when being engaged “in the complex task of digesting the new members” that would soon join the EC (Britain, Ireland, Denmark).¹⁷⁸ While the diplomats at Foggy Bottom favored “a major new round of trade negotiations,” the White House and most of the economic ministries did not. Eventually, though rather belatedly, the US did embark on quite successful multilateral trade negotiations that led to the Tokyo round of 1973 to 1979, in which 102 countries participated and significant reductions of tariffs and customs duties were

achieved.¹⁷⁹ There were a number of influential voices that had urged the White House to adopt such an approach at a much earlier stage. Among the most influential was Kenneth Rush, the ambassador to West Germany, who was a personal friend of Nixon's; the two men went as far back as the mid-1930s, when they had met at Duke University, Rush as a newly appointed assistant professor of law and Nixon as a freshly enrolled student.¹⁸⁰

As ambassador to West Germany, Rush, the six-foot-tall former president of the Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation, had made a significant contribution to the quadripartite negotiations that led to the Berlin Agreement of 1971. Just over a year later, Nixon considered him briefly as a replacement for Bill Rogers as secretary of state.¹⁸¹ As a former industrialist and businessman, Rush always kept a careful eye on transatlantic economic relations. He was severely worried about the international economic climate of the early 1970s. Rush saw a "serious crisis" in transatlantic trade relations that posed "grave dangers" for the United States' "political and economic objectives in Europe and elsewhere in the world."¹⁸² While protectionist sentiments in the US also seemed to be increasing, the EC, Rush wrote in a lengthy telegram to the State Department, "remains steeped in its highly protective agricultural policies," and it was "pressing ahead with its proliferating system of preferences." Still, Rush reasoned that the US should be mindful of a potential trade war with Europe. This would not only damage the United States' commercial interests but would also have negative political repercussions for the conduct of Germany's *Ostpolitik* and the country's cooperation in monetary affairs. After all, "without German cooperation" to purchase huge amounts of dollars to keep the German currency within the permissible Bretton Woods margins, "several monetary crises in the recent past could have meant disaster for all."¹⁸³

On the whole, Rush recommended that the US ought to vigorously defend its "GATT rights" and "move against patently discriminatory" EC preferential trading arrangements with, for instance, various Mediterranean countries.¹⁸⁴ But the best approach would be to implement a "Nixon round of trade negotiations" to resolve transatlantic trading disputes regarding textiles and shoes, for example. Rush believed that such negotiations would significantly "reduce the danger that rival, antagonistic trading blocs might develop across the Atlantic," and, he argued, "the resultant trade links would bind us more closely to Western Europe, where our security interests are so intensely engaged."¹⁸⁵

Rush's sober and commonsense assessment, however, did not receive

much attention in the White House. The development of closer links with the obstinate western Europeans was hardly at the top of the administration's agenda. Moreover, going down the road of multilateral negotiations, even if successful, would simply not turn around the economy fast enough. The tight timetable of the presidential election did not allow this. By the summer of 1972 at the latest, in fact, by July 1972, as Nixon told John Ehrlichman,¹⁸⁶ the economy had to be booming, if the president wished to avoid seriously endangering his reelection prospects. Something dramatic and fast had to be done; the White House was certainly not willing to rely on the unpredictable outcome of multilateral trade negotiations.

Nevertheless, deteriorating transatlantic relations did lead to bilateral US-EC trade talks at the working level. The economic adviser Paul Cracken, for instance, told Nixon in a dramatic memorandum in July 1971, "we may be on the verge of a trade war with Europe and Japan," in particular with regard to textiles and agriculture.¹⁸⁷ About the same time, Fred Bergsten arrived at a similar conclusion. "We are treading on the brink of a trade war," he told his boss, Henry Kissinger.¹⁸⁸ "In several agencies of the Executive Branch," Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Affairs Nat Samuels concluded in August 1970, there existed "a deep-seated and widespread hostility toward the Community," with political considerations being ignored as "largely irrelevant" in favor of "short-term economic considerations in a manner out of proportion to our long-term interests."¹⁸⁹ The new US-EC bilateral talks were meant to overcome this dilemma. They would soon take place twice a year and become a useful permanent feature in transatlantic relations. On the EC side, they were chaired by the EC Commissioner for Research, Science and Education, Ralf Dahrendorf, a former West German minister.¹⁹⁰

In the context of the forthcoming presidential election, Nixon realized that he needed to address both the weakness of the US economy in real terms and the American voters' perception of US weakness. A devaluation of the dollar seemed to be unavoidable. But would the American voter not interpret this as a sign of US decline and humiliation? Nixon was convinced, therefore, that devaluation had to be brought about in such a way that voters would not interpret it as an admission of weakness but as quite the opposite. The White House was determined to achieve the almost impossible task of selling the required devaluation of the dollar as a political victory rather than a humiliating defeat. Nixon's advisers also believed that they should use the opportunity to undermine the competitiveness of the

United States' main economic rivals, the western Europeans. Nixon thus began to resort to "blunt dollar diplomacy" when he sought to "exploit the central role of the dollar in the world economy to nullify growing European and Japanese economic strength."¹⁹¹

This decision by the White House was somewhat flawed, however. Although to some extent the US was being priced out of the world markets, the declining competitiveness of US products was only partially due to the overvaluation of the dollar. Despite some extenuating circumstances that applied in the early 1970s, on the whole, exports must indeed be regarded as constituting "a good test of competitiveness," as French Finance Minister Giscard once told his US counterpart.¹⁹² The quality of many exported US goods had deteriorated, while European and Japanese companies had been able to close the transatlantic technology gap and greatly improve the quality of their goods in areas such as steel, cars, electronic products, and many other industrial wares. In addition, the US budget and payments deficit was caused to a large extent by the country's huge military expenditure abroad. The country was clearly living and above all fighting much beyond its means. And the US was only able to afford this within a dollar-based system. The image created by the Nixon administration of the US "struggling to remain solvent in a hostile trade and exchange rate regime was greatly exaggerated." In fact, Nixon and Treasury Secretary Connally resorted to the use of "aggressive nationalistic economic policies to try to restore a world that could not be restored."¹⁹³

This was a world of clear US economic but also political and military supremacy. In the meantime, however, much had changed. In the age of détente and rising European self-confidence and in view of the United States' overcommitment in Vietnam and declining industrial and economic prowess, US hegemony and supremacy had come under attack. The Nixon White House was loath to accept this reality—never mind Kissinger's scholarly insights about the desirability of transatlantic partnership and equality and Nixon's grand multilateral rhetoric early on in his presidency. Certainly, the administration would not give up US hegemony without a fight. And what a fight it was. The rapidly approaching 1972 presidential election, after all, needed to be won, and the American voter, it was reasoned in the White House, would only be impressed by the image of a powerful, proud, and indeed prosperous United States led by a strong and confident president. Americans wanted to have a leader, it seemed to Nixon, who was prepared

to take on the United States' foes in the form of the Soviet Union in the military sphere and the transatlantic allies in the economic realm.

On the Road to Camp David

The lingering monetary and economic crisis came to a head in the spring and summer of 1971. The US balance of payments remained "unsatisfactory, reflecting serious deterioration in [the] U.S. trade surplus from [the] levels of [the] early 1960's," a Treasury paper outlined. While the latter was primarily a problem with Japan and Canada, European agricultural policies and the United States' "continuing large military defense burden" posed the "threat of further deterioration." US unemployment had also "reached levels substantially higher than those experienced in Europe." The international markets, the paper concluded, therefore remained "highly sensitive and nervous."¹⁹⁴ In March 1971, the head of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Charles Coombs, argued that "the dollar was hopelessly overvalued." His preferred course of action was the suspension of the dollar's convertibility into gold, "which could be made effective by executive decision from one minute to the next without prior consultations abroad." He feared that "confrontational negotiations" would be even more disruptive to the foreign exchange markets.¹⁹⁵

Less than two months later, in early May 1971, the situation again deteriorated sharply, with several hundreds of millions of dollars flowing from the US into Europe due to the higher interest rates there. In view of the "loose talk of German politicians,"¹⁹⁶ including some innocuous remarks by West German Finance Minister Karl Schiller on May 3, speculators expected an upward revaluation of the Deutschmark and went on a buying spree of the West German currency. A few days later and contrary to the Bretton Woods rules, Germany and the Netherlands allowed their currencies to float; the German mark gained 4 percent in value against the dollar.¹⁹⁷ The official history of the Federal Reserve concludes, "the German decision to abandon the fixed rate system signaled dissatisfaction with U.S. policies."¹⁹⁸ This was rather an understatement. Still, the Nixon administration continued to downplay growing European frustrations, though Austria and Switzerland also revalued. Under Secretary Volcker considered suspending the convertibility of eurodollars into gold to preserve the US gold reserves.¹⁹⁹ "Eurodollars" referred to US dollar-denominated deposits at European banks or

at the overseas branches of US banks in Europe; later the term came to refer to US dollar deposits in any foreign country. However, the brief floating of the West German mark and a US statement on Washington's "adherence to a system of fixed parities" calmed the markets a little.²⁰⁰

European finance ministers, meanwhile, had all expressed their opposition to the US policy of "benign neglect" while proving incapable of agreeing on coordinated countermeasures.²⁰¹ Much to Federal Reserve Chairman Burns's surprise, French Finance Minister Giscard even agreed that the dollar was overvalued and suggested a conference of the five or six major economic countries to achieve a general realignment of currencies within three days.²⁰² While this was an appealing thought, the idea came to nothing. Treasury Secretary Connally had already decided not to interfere in the volatile situation. A Treasury paper dated May 9, 1971, after all, had reached the conclusion that "a moderate increase in the official gold price would be analogous to the 'Munich settlement,' it could quite likely last only a short time—perhaps less than a year." It would also lead to the presumption that the exercise would be repeated, which would give rise to new speculative pressures.²⁰³ Connally, thus, decided to let matters drift until the time was right to close the gold window, which might result in a free floating of the major currencies.²⁰⁴ This, of course, would constitute a major departure from Western monetary policy since the end of World War II.

On May 28, 1971, Connally addressed an international bankers association meeting in Munich. His forceful speech, written by Paul Volcker, was meant to both calm the markets and remind his largely European audience of the main tenets of the Nixon administration's economic policy. Washington's new economic nationalism and its unwillingness to further sacrifice US economic benefits for the common good of the Western world became rather obvious. While the speech was mostly couched in polite and gracious terms, Connally did not beat around the bush. In particular, toward the end of his speech, he bluntly emphasized, "No longer can considerations of friendship, or need, or capacity justify the United States carrying so heavy a share of the common burdens." Similarly, Connally informed his audience that "no longer will the American people permit their government to engage in international actions in which the true long-run interests of the U.S. are not just as clearly recognized as those of the nations with which we deal."²⁰⁵ In addition he emphasized that the US expected "more equitable trading arrangements" and hoped that both Europe and Japan would introduce "fresh initiatives in opening their markets to the products of others,"

not least to American agricultural products. He criticized that more than 30 percent of Japanese exports went to the US while both Japan and Europe restricted the inflow of American products into their markets.²⁰⁶

Connally also told the Europeans that they were expected to “share more fully in the cost of defending the free world.” After all, both Japan and Europe had become “strong and vigorous” again and benefited hugely from the US defense shield. They were thus required, Connally enlightened them, to share in the “cost of these responsibilities.”²⁰⁷ His audience was not impressed. The Treasury secretary’s words about the “outward orientation” of US economic policy and that Washington was “alert and responsive to the needs of others” did not fool anyone.²⁰⁸

Connally also used his speech in Munich to attempt to calm the international markets by proclaiming that the US was “not going to devalue”: “We are not going to change the price of gold.” However, internally, he had told Volcker tongue in cheek, “That’s my unalterable position today. I don’t know what it will be this summer.”²⁰⁹ He fully realized, Connally continued in his Munich speech, that the Europeans “are not willing to live with a system dictated by the United States.”²¹⁰ This, however, ran entirely contrary to the deliberations conducted in Washington.²¹¹ Throughout his address, Connally put the blame for Washington’s balance of payments deficit squarely on the economic misbehavior of the Europeans. His speech, therefore, was received with great hostility. Connally’s Munich address further added to his image in Europe of being a bull in a china shop.²¹²

Although in June 1971 the situation appeared to improve a little with the development of a similar level of interest rates on both sides of the Atlantic and lower rates of inflation in the US, there still was, as the journalist James “Scotty” Reston has observed, an internal “air of crisis.”²¹³ In Europe, “there was a feeling of real crisis,” according to Giscard.²¹⁴ Paul McCracken, the chairman of the president’s Council of Economic Advisers, told Nixon that “a decision has to be made urgently” on the future direction of the international monetary system. The US, after all, had just “muddled through another international monetary crisis.” There was the possibility either to move in the direction of more direct controls to support the Bretton Woods system or to develop “an internationally-agreed upon system of greater flexibility.”²¹⁵

In the US, however, the monetary crisis was temporarily overshadowed by the publication of the *Pentagon Papers*, which the *New York Times* began to serialize on June 13, 1971. As soon became clear, the former government

official Daniel Ellsberg was responsible for leaking the massive archive of documents. The *Pentagon Papers* consisted of almost seven thousand pages of classified documents that demonstrated that the Johnson administration had realized at an early stage that the Vietnam War could not be won and that the White House had lied to Congress and the public about the conduct of the war.²¹⁶ While all of the leaked documents stemmed from the Johnson era, the Nixon administration was incensed about the publication of highly confidential material. Kissinger and Ellsberg knew each other from the latter's student days at Harvard and when Ellsberg was a researcher at the Rand Corporation. Ellsberg had advised Kissinger when both visited Vietnam in 1965, and they had also shared platforms at several conferences and had had a number of confidential conversations.²¹⁷

The national security adviser was horrified about the likelihood that his analyses and recommendations on Vietnam as a consultant for Johnson might be revealed. Kissinger also believed that the *Pentagon Papers* could well endanger the top-secret back channel to Beijing, which had only just been established with great difficulty. The "massive hemorrhage of state secrets was bound to raise doubts about our reliability in the minds of other governments," Kissinger later commented.²¹⁸ The *Pentagon Papers* were a sensation and resulted in an outburst of anger and court-order requests from the Nixon administration to prevent their further publication. It also led to Nixon's deputy chief of staff, John Ehrlichman, giving his consent to an illegal covert operation—the burglary of the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist. This was an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to dig up damaging material about Ellsberg's personality by gaining access to his medical files. The episode became part of the Watergate scandal a couple of years later.²¹⁹

On June 28, 1971, on the very day that Daniel Ellsberg admitted that it was he who had disseminated the *Pentagon Papers* to the *New York Times* and seventeen other papers, Nixon met with his main economic advisers at Camp David. They discussed the poor economy and the danger to the United States' gold reserves if foreign countries should decide to convert their dollar holdings into gold, as was their perfect right. After all, US gold reserves had declined to \$11 billion (from \$17 billion in 1961), and liabilities to foreign countries were four times this amount.²²⁰ Still, Nixon's advisers were unable to propose any coherent new strategy to him and urged him to do nothing for the time being. Reluctantly, the president agreed to the "Four Noes": no increase of expenditures, no tax cuts, no controls of prices and wages, and no devaluation of the US currency.²²¹ During a press con-

ference the day after, Connally once again made a deliberately misleading statement by announcing that Nixon was not contemplating any changes to US economic and fiscal policies.²²²

In fact, Connally and the president had already decided that a dramatic new approach was needed, although they were not quite sure what exactly this new policy should consist of. Connally had tasked the so-called Volcker Group in the Treasury Department with working out a detailed scheme. The low-profile Volcker Group had been in existence since 1969, when National Security Study Memorandum 7 created the group to consider US monetary policy options.²²³ By June 1971, Nixon was of a mind to terminate the policy of “gradualism.” The president also had decided that “the Connally 1-man responsibility route is the best.” He rejected the idea that a larger group should develop a solution for the monetary crisis, as suggested by McCracken.²²⁴

Still, within all that doom and gloom, there also were positive developments on occasion. It was announced on July 2, 1971, that unemployment had decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 5.6 percent. While the administration wished to publicly celebrate this piece of modest good news, much to Nixon’s chagrin, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the drop in unemployment was merely due to a “statistical quirk.”²²⁵ More devastatingly, a week later, on July 10, it became known that the US trade surplus of \$2.7 million in 1970 had developed into an almost \$600 million deficit already by the middle of 1971. Worse still, “there was the looming prospect of the first year-long trade deficit since 1893 [*sic*].”²²⁶

The Volcker Group toyed with the idea of proposing to close the gold window and thus devalue the US currency. The Federal Reserve chairman however, did not like the idea; neither did Connally. Burns was not too impressed with Volcker in any case, regarding him as an “indecisive man, full of flaws and anxieties.”²²⁷ Connally had other reasons. He believed that a devaluation of the US currency would undermine US prestige and Nixon’s standing with the US public. The Treasury secretary, instead, was contemplating the introduction of a 10 percent surcharge tax or tariff on all imports flowing into the US. The new tax, to be levied at the US borders, would only be repealed if other nations liberalized their trade policies and rescinded trade and exchange restrictions. Volcker, however, was not persuaded by these considerations. After all, the whole matter smacked of protectionism, which in fact it was. A reduction of imports, moreover, would strengthen the US currency rather than weaken the dollar to support the US export

industry. Come July, Connally had developed second thoughts himself, but for largely domestic political reasons. The best way forward seemed to consist of both the introduction of a border tax and bringing about a devaluation of the dollar. The fate of the administration, after all, seemed to depend on achieving a decisive fall in the rate of unemployment as a matter of urgency. By comparison, matters of mere prestige appeared to be increasingly less important for Nixon's reelection prospects.²²⁸

Pressure from Congress catapulted the administration into action. On July 15, 1971, Nixon made his dramatic announcement during a news conference simultaneously held in Washington and Beijing that he would pay an unprecedented official visit to the People's Republic of China in February 1972. Prepared by Kissinger's secret visit to Peking the year before, the announcement caused a sensation in the Western world. Mao's "Long March" of the mid-1930s, the 1949 communist takeover of mainland China, and the subsequent isolation of the country had helped to shroud the world's most populous nation in deep secrecy and mystery, though intermittent and mostly unknown ambassadorial Chinese-US talks had been taking place since the mid-1950s.²²⁹

Nevertheless, a scheduled visit from congressional leaders to the White House for a briefing on Nixon's envisaged China visit quickly turned to the administration's economic policy, once Nixon had asked George Shultz, the director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to elaborate on the economic situation. This clearly was a sign of how concerned the legislators had become about the nation's domestic troubles. Afterward, Connally told Nixon in exasperation: "If we don't propose a responsible new program, Congress will have an irresponsible one on your desk within a month."²³⁰ On August 2, Nixon met several times with Connally, Shultz, and other economic advisers. According to Haldeman, this led to a "huge economic breakthrough."²³¹ Connally's own plan landed on Nixon's desk on August 6. It was a rather sweeping scheme. The Treasury secretary "urged, in effect, total war on all economic fronts," Nixon later wrote in his memoirs.²³²

Essentially, Connally's proposed agenda consisted of all the things that Nixon and the administration had always said they would not do, such as imposing mandatory price and wage controls, anathema to real conservatives, as well as tax cuts and the closing of the gold window. The Treasury secretary also wanted to go ahead with a radical border surcharge tax. In addition, he wished to reinstitute an investment tax credit for US businesses that would allow US companies to deduct 7 percent of capital spend-

ing from their tax bill when they purchased US-made goods; it essentially constituted an investment subsidy. Nixon had actually abolished this tax credit early on in his presidency. It had originated in the Johnson years and, together with Johnson's 1964 tax cuts, which had followed John Maynard Keynes's prescription, had initially proved quite successful by increasing both economic growth and tax revenues, while unemployment fell and inflation remained moderate. The economic foundation for Johnson's "Great Society" program seemed to be firm and solid at that time.²³³ Yet, due to massive spending on the war in Vietnam by the mid- to late 1960s, things had begun to disintegrate, and the US economy was increasingly exposed to the influence of faraway events and indeed foreign markets. Connally believed that all the sweeping measures he proposed would get the US "away from being the victims of the foreign governments that are arbitrarily floating their currencies and leaving us hanging."²³⁴ The president greatly liked Connally's thinking. Nixon was pleased that the Treasury secretary was also inclined to do something dramatic. He told him that "the economic program would be like the 'China thing,' totally unexpected coming at that particular time."²³⁵

While Nixon was considering the plan, first France and then Britain indicated that they might wish to convert some of their gold holdings into dollars. This would have pushed the US gold reserves hoarded in Fort Knox below the \$10 billion minimum requirement and might well result in a run on US gold. The British, however, never asked to convert gold to the value of \$3 billion, as is often claimed in the literature (and also in Nixon's memoirs).²³⁶ London only wished to convert \$750 million into gold but gave advance notice that more might be needed later. Still, it greatly scared the Nixon administration.²³⁷ The publication of the growing trade deficit in late July led to new upheaval. Speculators responded by dumping dollars; large-scale currency turmoil ensued. Foreign banks had to cope with the sudden influx of almost \$4 billion, which flooded the markets.²³⁸

Nixon and Connally had intended to announce their new economic package in early September, after Congress had returned from its summer vacation. In the midst of the currency turmoil of the summer of 1971, however, this appeared to be increasingly unwise. "There is a great deal of concern with the U.S. balance of payments and trade situation in general," two National Security Council experts commented.²³⁹ In fact, on August 12, Nixon phoned Connally in San Antonio and asked him to return to Washington from his Texas vacation, although he had only left the previous day.²⁴⁰ Back

in Washington, the Treasury secretary convinced Nixon to assemble his economic advisory team and call an emergency meeting at Camp David.²⁴¹ This, as Allen Matusow has written, was Nixon's "opening move in a historic offensive to correct the overvalued dollar and reorder the trading world to serve his political purpose, . . . which he hoped would keep the United States number one and help rally a New Majority in '72."²⁴²

The Camp David meeting in mid-August 1971 would indeed turn out to be a meeting of lasting historical significance. It would also have disastrous consequences for transatlantic relations.

Downward Spiral

MONETARY TURMOIL AND THE END OF THE OLD ORDER

THERE WERE A GREAT NUMBER of characteristics National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger shared with William Safire, one of President Nixon's special assistants. They were not only Jewish, highly intelligent, very articulate, and held in high esteem by the president; they had also both worked on Nelson Rockefeller's 1964 presidential campaign. But there the similarities ended. Unlike Kissinger, with his dry sense of humor and his unique charisma that, however unlikely, even elevated him at the top of his power and influence to the dizzy heights of an American sex symbol, Safire by contrast was a rather dour, gloomy, and somewhat disheveled-looking figure. He always appeared as if he had just gotten out of bed. Safire became a celebrated conservative-libertarian *New York Times* columnist upon leaving the White House in early 1973, but his first love always remained politics.¹

From 1968 to 1972, Safire was one of Richard Nixon's foremost speechwriters, composing many of the president's addresses on Vietnam and the economy. He also helped Vice President Spiro Agnew formulate some of his speeches. While working as a TV and radio producer and correspondent in the 1950s, Safire had become interested in national politics when in 1952 he joined the campaign to draft General Dwight D. Eisenhower as Republican presidential candidate. Spending the following two years in the army, Safire managed to work as a reporter for AFN in Europe part of the time. Upon leaving the military, he became involved in public relations work. It was in this capacity that he was in Moscow during Vice President Richard Nixon's attention-grabbing visit in 1959. Working as a press agent and representing US companies that had displays at the trade exhibition

held in the Soviet capital, Safire succeeded in steering Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev toward the heated “kitchen debate” about the inherent value differences between capitalism and communism. The two men were touring the exhibition and encountered each other inside the model of a US house with a modern kitchen. Standing close to the two fiercely debating politicians, Safire caught the camera thrown to him by a US journalist and snapped a picture of this unique occasion.² The image soon circulated globally and added to both Nixon’s and Safire’s fame. The vice president was delighted.

When subsequently Nixon asked Safire to become involved in his 1960 presidential campaign, Safire’s long connection with Nixon began. It only ended when he resigned his speechwriting post in the White House to join the *New York Times* as a twice-weekly political columnist from 1973 to 2005. During this time, the well-connected Safire won a Pulitzer Prize in 1978 for exposing the financial shenanigans of President Carter’s budget director Burt Lance. Twenty-four years later, Safire deplored President George W. Bush’s infringement of the privacy rights of US citizens in the aftermath of 9/11. Based on his bad experiences during the Nixon administration, Safire was greatly opposed to the president’s authorization of the wiretapping of US citizens with the help of the Patriot Act and the unfortunate, if not illegal, way the administration dealt with imprisoned “enemy combatants.”³ Previously, in the 1970s, Safire was an equally loyal supporter of Richard Nixon’s conservative policies. He only became rather disillusioned with Nixon when he found out that in the context of the leaks that had occurred with respect to the US-Soviet Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), he too had been a victim of Nixon and Kissinger’s wire- and phone-tapping frenzy. Safire was wiretapped for four months, and nothing was found.⁴ Writing in a 1973 column, he expressed his anger that he had worked for Nixon during many difficult years only to “have him—or some lizard-lidded paranoid acting in his name without his approval—eavesdropping on [his] conversations.”⁵

Paradoxically, Safire had appeared to enjoy the president’s great trust and confidence during his White House days. He also proved to be one of Nixon’s most talented speechwriters, who was capable of turning dry and complex economic matters into clear and simple prose. In mid-August 1971, Safire was invited to join Nixon’s economic advisers for an important meeting. In the middle of an unprecedented severe economic and monetary crisis in the industrialized world, Treasury Secretary John Connally had

suggested convening a meeting with the president's most important economic advisers at Camp David to do something decisive about the deteriorating situation. Nixon jumped at the idea. The two-and-a-half-day brainstorming session would lead to a dramatic reshaping of the Western world's approach to economic and monetary affairs, whose impact went well beyond the end of the Cold War. It also led to great upheaval and sowed much distrust between the US and its western European allies. Safire's colorful and entertaining account of the Camp David meeting in his 1975 memoir *Before the Fall* provides perhaps the most illuminating and detailed contemporary insight into the discussions and decisions taken at that crucial meeting.⁶

An Important Weekend

On the weekend of August 13–15, 1971, Nixon and his senior economic advisers met in utmost secrecy at Camp David. Apart from Treasury Secretary John Connally, there were George Shultz, the influential director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); Paul McCracken, the chairman of the president's Council of Economic Advisers; and Arthur Burns, the white-haired chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. Present also were Herbert Stein, McCracken's deputy; Paul Volcker, the important undersecretary for monetary affairs in the Treasury; Peter Peterson, Nixon's White House assistant for economic affairs; and Caspar Weinberger, who was Shultz's deputy director. Chief of Staff Bob Haldeman; Nixon's main domestic adviser, John Ehrlichman; and speechwriter Bill Safire had also been invited. Treasury Secretary Connally dominated the discussion, and it quickly became obvious that he and the president had already agreed on the main outlines of Nixon's "New Economic Policy" (NEP), as it came to be called.⁷ The existence of Soviet leader Lenin's 1921 policy of the same name was only belatedly noticed, and not without a degree of embarrassment.⁸

During the weekend at Camp David, it was Nixon's main objective to hammer out the complicated details of his new economic policy. He also wanted to make sure that all of his economic advisers supported his new policy and would not undermine any aspects of it, at least not in public. Still, the Camp David meeting "turned into a very heated discussion."⁹ When the debate shifted to European textile subsidies, which discriminated against US textile products, George Shultz even reminded Nixon that while nothing could be done under the trade acts, there "always was the

‘trading with the enemy act’—that will enable you to do anything.” Nixon, however, rejected this idea. “This smacks wrong from the point of view of international leadership,” the president replied, “and I don’t want to corrupt my national security power.”¹⁰

In the course of an initial discussion lasting almost four hours, Connally proposed a new unilateral US monetary policy and the abandonment of the Bretton Woods monetary system of fixed exchange rates.¹¹ Connally and Nixon elaborated on the main elements of the plan, which consisted of proposals aimed at the domestic side of the picture, including wage and price controls, and those that would only affect foreigners. The idea of imposing an almost “socialist” policy of temporary wage and price controls caused the arch-capitalist Peter Peterson’s jaw to drop in horror and surprise when all of a sudden Nixon mentioned it to the Camp David discussants.¹² Indeed, “it seemed to make a mockery” of Nixon and Connally’s professed capitalist values, though they “built some elastic into it,” as Connally later wrote, by, for instance, setting up wage and price boards consisting of representatives from business, labor, and consumers and establishing clearly defined appeals procedures.¹³

Not taken into consideration at all were the concerns that this new policy would undoubtedly cause the United States’ European and Japanese allies. Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns did not push for a more diplomatic approach, though he was the only one of those present who kept arguing in favor of not abandoning the Bretton Woods system.¹⁴ William Rogers, the secretary of state, and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger had not been invited to Camp David. The State Department’s important undersecretary for political affairs, U. Alexis Johnson, happened to be on vacation and, moreover, Volcker was informed, “need not be disturbed.”¹⁵ Their absence meant that there was hardly anyone among the participants who had any understanding or sympathy for the monetary dilemma of the Europeans. There was no one at the meeting who kept the foreign policy aspects of the Camp David decisions in mind. In fact, Kissinger, still Nixon’s most trusted foreign policy confidant, was rather out of the loop regarding all of the dramatic developments. Worse still, both Kissinger and Rogers were entirely unaware that the Camp David meeting was even taking place.¹⁶

Kissinger had only recently returned from his highly successful secret mission to Peking from July 9 to 11, 1971, to pave the way for Nixon’s envisaged state visit to China in February 1972, and he was about to leave on yet another secret mission to Paris for peace talks with the North Vietnamese.

He also had little interest in economic affairs. Only some time later would the national security adviser wake up to the fact that international financial and monetary issues were actually highly important foreign policy matters. Eventually, however, Kissinger would adopt German minister Helmut Schmidt's slogan: "Monetary policy is foreign policy."¹⁷

During the discussions, Connally once again made it unambiguously clear that the closing of the gold window "will make us more competitive in the world." "That's the purpose of doing it now, while we have a cover for it, so we should not wait a day or a week later, we should do it the same time we do wage/price and the other domestic actions," he explained.¹⁸ On the whole, Nixon and Connally were rather happy with the Camp David proceedings. Federal Reserve Chairman Burns, however, viewed the situation in a much more somber way. This was perhaps no surprise, as his point of view was largely defeated during the meeting.¹⁹ "The weekend confirmed my growing feeling that the President needs to act in a way that satisfies his hunger for drama and novelty, that he lacks true self-assurance and that [he] therefore requires some dramatic act to convince himself that he is a strong leader, and that his prejudices or shall I say principles?—will not survive clear evidence that the political winds require a change."²⁰

Despite some concern that the television series *Bonanza*, then at the height of its popularity, would steal the show, Nixon addressed the nation from the Oval Office at 9:00 p.m. on August 15, 1971.²¹ The president announced his New Economic Policy in a dramatic speech largely written by Bill Safire. The president's announcement became known as the "Nixon shocks." Neither foreign leaders nor the head of the IMF (or the chief of the New York Federal Reserve bank) had been given much notice of Nixon's speech. In fact, the marginalization of the IMF was quite deliberate. After all, the institution still favored a system of fixed exchange rates.²²

George Shultz, however, had broken ranks by confidentially informing West German Finance Minister Helmut Schmidt of Nixon's decisions. The free marketeer Shultz deplored the imposition of wage and price controls, which, he told Schmidt, had been decided on against his belief and against his advice.²³ Paul Volcker had "also violated strict instructions" and informed his Japanese counterpart, Yusuke Kashiwagi, by means of a confidential phone call as the Japanese markets were opening while Nixon was speaking.²⁴ John Connally in his memoirs defends the decision to surprise and even shock the United States' "principal trading partners" with the August 15 decisions. Any "advance notice," he declares, undoubtedly "would

have immediately resulted in stock and currency manipulations around the world.”²⁵

In Nixon’s TV address on August 15, he proclaimed that he was shutting the gold window by severing the link between gold and the dollar. He thus abandoned the pledge to convert dollars into gold at the rate of \$35 per ounce, whenever a foreign government asked for it. The US had been dangerously exposed to the conversion requests of foreign governments. “We can’t cover our liabilities, we’re broke, anyone can topple us,” Nixon had put it bluntly during the Camp David meeting.²⁶ With the closing of the gold window, gold was virtually eliminated from the international monetary system. Now the dollar, albeit weakened, would begin to float and, in due course, would once again rule supreme, more or less. Nixon also announced the imposition of a temporary 10 percent tariff on imports into the US to make these goods less attractive to the American consumer, which in turn, he expected, would give US-produced wares a shot in the arm. The surcharge would be 10 percent in the first year and decline to 5 percent subsequently.²⁷

The president also proclaimed a comprehensive package of wage and price controls that had been possible due to legislation initiated by the Democratic majority in Congress in February 1971. For two years, it gave the president authority to use the instrument of wage and price controls in an economic emergency situation. The Democrats had assumed that such legislation could be used to embarrass Nixon, as a conservative Republican president would never make use of it, in view of the GOP’s deep dislike of interfering with the forces of the free market. It clearly was a “cynical political move.”²⁸ For electoral reasons, the president, however, swallowed his great dislike of this sort of policy. At home, the voters were impressed by Nixon’s firm and decisive way of bringing the US economy out of recession. He had managed, it appeared, to protect the American worker from the onslaught of those unreasonable foreigners from Europe and Japan.²⁹ Yet the Nixon shocks were, in fact, an unambiguous admission of the weak position of the dollar and the US economy.

Nixon’s New Economic Policy symbolized the beginning of the end of the United States’ global economic hegemony, a hegemony that limped on for two or three more decades before it finally came crashing down with the “Great Recession” of 2008–12 and the escalating rivalry with China ever since. The coronavirus crisis in 2020–21 further damaged the United States’ global economic primacy and, not least, the country’s image of competency

and excellence. In August 1971, the Nixon shocks paved the way for a major devaluation of the US currency, as was eventually agreed in transatlantic negotiations toward the end of 1971. At the time, going down the painful road of devaluation tended to be regarded as a major political defeat that led to a period of introspection and humility. The “brilliance” of the Nixon shocks, however, consisted of “turning a dismal defeat into a triumph.”³⁰ The stock market on Wall Street rose immediately after Nixon’s address on August 15, and the president emerged as the champion of the little man who was ready to take on the fight against inflation and those greedy businessmen who kept increasing their prices. The three-month freeze of prices and wages was highly popular. Domestically, therefore, Nixon’s new economic course proved to be a considerable success.

The External Dimension of the Camp David Decisions on August 15, 1971

Not everyone within the administration and among the country’s financial elite, however, was happy with Nixon’s decisions. For instance, the young Donald Rumsfeld, counselor to the president and “general adviser and troubleshooter” for Nixon, was among those who greatly disliked this anti-free-market approach. “Imposing wage and price controls may have been politically expedient,” he later wrote, “but it was probably the worst policy decision the administration made.” It subverted the free market and did not enable consumers and producers “to determine the prices based on the laws of supply and demand.” No centralized planning vehicle or individual planners could replace the workings of the free market, Rumsfeld concluded, “no matter how brilliant.”³¹ Externally, Nixon’s New Economic Policy was even more controversial.

In fact, it caused great resentment among the European allies. The new policy faced a storm of criticism. Secretary of State Rogers’s polite letter to European heads of government that briefly outlined and explained Nixon’s NEP did no good.³² With only very few exceptions, the Europeans had not been informed prior to the Camp David meeting; the EC bureaucracy in Brussels had even less of an idea than their colleagues in Paris, London, and Bonn. In particular, the unilateral way the administration had arrived at the decisions and the abrupt way they had been announced caused much anger and distress.

The Europeans were deeply convinced that only the requirements of do-

mestic politics had guided Nixon. And right they were. During the Camp David meeting, Nixon had pronounced, “the gold window action is needed for domestic opinion.”³³ In a subsequent meeting on September 10, 1971, Nixon told Burns and Connally that “the mood of the country as evidenced by sentiment of Congress” made it necessary “to maintain import surcharges, to press foreigners for trade concessions, currency realignment, and defense-burden sharing.” Nixon was in no hurry to obtain a transatlantic settlement. Such a settlement, he said, should perhaps be delayed until after the election, “unless, of course, we got truly major concessions” from the Europeans.³⁴

Not everyone in the US establishment, however, was convinced that Nixon’s new economic strategy was the right course to embark on. There was skepticism in the State Department and in the think-tank world. The former Kissinger aide Fred Bergsten, who had recently joined the Brookings think tank in Washington, DC, believed the NEP “could easily lead to the first real international trade war since the 1930s.”³⁵ Bergsten concluded in an article published in *Foreign Affairs* that Nixon’s New Economic Policy was “an extremely high-risk strategy.” It represented “a straightforward effort to export US unemployment to other countries.” The conclusion was obviously that the US believed that it needed “a large trade surplus to maintain its international power.” Moreover, the president himself seemed to have “made protectionism respectable.”³⁶

It was indeed disconcerting from the point of view of transatlantic harmony that the participants at the Camp David discussions had been fully cognizant of this “extremely high-risk strategy.” It was not something that merely happened by default. During the discussions, Under Secretary Volcker had warned about the imposition of a sudden and unprecedented flat border tax, as this would clearly be interpreted abroad as a nationalistic and aggressive course of action. Connally and Nixon, however, had brushed this argument aside. “The border tax is not too damned aggressive, just aggressive enough,” the president opinioned.³⁷

Federal Reserve Chairman Burns was the only participant who had strongly argued against closing the gold window, but he found no support among the other Camp David guests; even Volcker came out supporting Connally and Nixon’s arguments hesitatingly. Connally dismissed Burns’s point that the European allies might well retaliate. “So the other countries don’t like it, so what?” he exclaimed. “What can they do?”³⁸ “We had a right,” he wrote in his memoirs years later, “to expect and even demand

fairer trade arrangements, and more help from our allies in bearing the cost of their defense.”³⁹ “Later that night . . . Nixon talked about the spirit of the American people which needed to be raised,” he believed. “Let America never accept being second best,” the president declared grandly. “We must try to be what it is in our power to be.”⁴⁰ Nixon’s sentiments clearly foreshadowed President Trump’s nationalistic “America First” approach to global affairs many years later.

Connally’s and also Nixon’s thinking about floating rates and American greatness were reminiscent of Milton Friedman’s arguments for abandoning the Bretton Woods system in favor of the free market. Already in a 1967 statement, for instance, Friedman had argued that with the introduction of floating rates, the United States once again “could behave in foreign trade like a great nation, not like a mendicant, by unilaterally moving towards freer trade without having to be concerned about our balance-of-payments problems.”⁴¹ A year later he repeated that “a system of flexible exchange rates completely eliminates the balance of payments problems.” Letting the dollar float, he advised Nixon already before his inauguration, would depreciate the US currency, which might well lead to a trade war, but for such a war to “spread and last is equivalent to water flowing uphill.” Ignoring the tense relations with the transatlantic allies that would undoubtedly result, Friedman explained that in the end there would “be only gains and no costs” from a dollar float.⁴² In August 1971, Nixon may well have been influenced by Friedman’s convenient beliefs. “We are a great nation,” Friedman had smugly explained in his 1968 book. “The dollar is the leading currency in the world. We should behave like a great nation, not engage in demeaning and niggling negotiations to get other countries to agree to ‘let’ us depreciate by x per cent vis-à-vis this currency, by y per cent vis-à-vis that currency.”⁴³

In the wake of Nixon’s speech on August 15, stock and currency markets in Europe remained closed for several days. When the foreign exchange markets reopened on Monday, August 23, they fell significantly. Although with the address on August 15, 1971, Nixon seemed to have “done nothing less than declare economic warfare against America’s allies, in particular West Germany and Japan,” a transatlantic trade war was avoided.⁴⁴ Unlike, for instance, the tense developments and partial retaliation after the imposition of tariffs on European steel and aluminum exports in June 2018 by the Trump administration, in 1971 the European allies displayed a surprising degree of restraint. The US administration was indeed fortunate that

Nixon's "abrupt turn toward economic nationalism" did not lead to retaliatory measures.⁴⁵ While this was seriously considered in European capitals, wiser counsel prevailed. Both the French and the Germans avoided "retaliatory or compensatory measures," as they were aware of the protectionist dangers inherent in such an approach.⁴⁶ The Europeans, however, soon began to push for "urgent negotiations as quickly as possible," as "Europe was on the edge of a distinct slowdown in economic activity, if not a recession." It would become increasingly difficult for European governments, the Federal Reserve chairman warned, to revalue their currencies upward as part of any multilateral solution, once the recession had fully kicked in.⁴⁷

In particular, European countries were most annoyed about the imposition of the 10 percent temporary surcharge on imports (the border tax). The closing of the gold window was regarded as less important, though there was significant concern about its financial implications. Nixon's hoped-for realignment of currencies and the expected increase of US exports at the expense of the European allies were meant to turn the annual US payments deficit of \$9 billion into an annual surplus of \$4 billion.⁴⁸ The US thus pursued an "adjustment goal" of \$13 billion within one to two years, largely on trade. Within the Department of State and in particular among the Group of Ten (G-10) finance ministers, however, this was regarded as much too ambitious.⁴⁹ The Europeans, in any case, were essentially expected to foot the bill for the US attempting to overcome its payment deficit problem.

Explaining Nixon's Rationale

Immediately after Nixon's speech on August 15, 1971, he sent Under Secretary Paul Volcker to London and Paris to pacify the allies and explain the president's rationale to them.⁵⁰ This was a difficult task. After all, the Bretton Woods system had been "sacrosanct" for Volcker, and now he had just participated "in the overthrow of all he held permanent" and was even asked to defend it.⁵¹ In his talks with ministers and experts in Europe, Volcker adopted a conciliatory approach to obtain their understanding for Washington's decisions. "In the end," he explained, "our view is that after years of deficits, the U.S. is entitled to run surpluses." The US did not want to have a grand new Bretton Woods conference but hoped to resolve the situation at negotiations of the Group of Ten.⁵²

The Europeans made it clear that they were particularly upset about the imposition of a temporary 10 percent surcharge. Otmar Emminger of the

German Bundesbank asked, "How long was 'temporary'?" He feared that it might become a permanent fixture of the system. Volcker repeated that the US needed to have a period of balance of payments and trade surpluses. But there were also "questions of financing the defense shield and some trading arrangement," including "agricultural arrangements in Europe," which resulted in immense problems for the US. Volcker rejected the notion that the US should devalue the dollar by raising the price of gold; this was not in the cards, he explained, despite the contrary considerations made in Washington.⁵³

The day after in Paris, French Finance Minister Valéry Giscard d'Estaing expressed his fear "that we were in effect moving from a system of fixed parities to one of floating parities." The French government, he outlined, "was concerned that everything that the U.S. had achieved over the past twenty-five years in terms of monetary stability and free convertibility would be lost." Volcker recognized this danger, but he explained to Giscard that if the Nixon administration had not done anything to stop the "further erosion of our external position," there was "an even greater danger of growing protectionism in the United States," not least in Congress, a development that needed to be prevented under all circumstances.⁵⁴

At a meeting of EC finance and economics ministers in Brussels on August 19, 1971 (and subsequently on September 3 in Paris), the participants again greatly deplored the border tax and the closing of the gold window but also Nixon's 10 percent cut in foreign aid and the announcement of an export subsidy for US companies. The export subsidy to be financed by the American taxpayer had been given the wholesome name of "investment tax credit." As in the past, the EC ministers, however, were unable to agree on any common counteraction.⁵⁵ Soon the Europeans temporarily gave up on the Bretton Woods system. They stopped intervening in the foreign exchange markets and allowed their currencies to float.

Still, the economic difficulties caused by the United States in the early 1970s, as seen from Europe, made the EC even more motivated than hitherto to embark seriously on European cooperation to develop a common European monetary and indeed foreign policy.⁵⁶ The EC began to put more effort into further developing European Political Cooperation (EPC). Brussels also cautiously moved toward setting up a structure for European monetary union, as envisaged by the Werner report of October 1970. The transatlantic allies had drawn their own conclusions from the unilateral economic behavior of the Nixon administration. The EC was still too divided

internally, however, for any of these activities to come to practical fruition at this stage. Many EC countries also still held greatly differing views about relations with the US. In particular, the West Germans continued to do their utmost to prevent open economic and trade warfare with Washington, though they were highly dissatisfied with Nixon's new course.⁵⁷ The German currency, after all, had appreciated noticeably, by more than 11 percent, since August 15, and together with the import surcharge and the "discriminatory aspects of the tax credit," this "amounted to an embargo of German machinery exports to the U.S.," German Finance and Economics Minister Karl Schiller told Connally. And Germany, the former economics professor explained, "as the country which had helped the U.S. the most" in the previous monetary crises, "was being hurt the most."⁵⁸

Nixon himself felt good about his affirmation of US power and self-confidence. "August 15, 1971," Federal Reserve Chairman Burns later wrote, "was a definite and decisive turning point in the President's state of mind."⁵⁹ It also was a turning point for the country's approach to the international economic system. George Shultz, a firm monetarist and convinced "free currency floater," would write that the decisions taken at Camp David on August 15 were "designed to be a signal that the United States was seeking a fundamental change not only in existing exchange rates but also in the monetary system itself."⁶⁰ A "patchwork solution" was to be avoided in favor of a comprehensive new systemic solution. It was recognized within the administration that "the relative economic position of the United States in the world has changed even though we remain in a position of strength and leadership." The US hoped that a solution "mutually arrived at" could be reached to restore "basic equilibrium to America's balance of payments."⁶¹

In the next few months, US negotiators repeatedly emphasized to the Europeans that profound changes in the realignment of currencies, trade restrictions, and the sharing of the Western world's defense burden needed to be achieved, if the surcharge and the other external measures that Nixon had announced on August 15 were to be rescinded.⁶² In fact, the US seemed to resort to blackmailing the Europeans in order to obtain a fundamental reform of the Western monetary system. It was little wonder that this less-than-subtle strategy led to a great deal of resentment. In the late summer and fall of 1971, the allies made a strenuous effort within the G-10 and IMF frameworks to find a negotiated compromise solution. But transatlantic trust had taken a severe knock by the currency turmoil and the intense dis-

putes over the collapse of Bretton Woods. James Reston has expressed it succinctly: "August 15 marked the official end of the 'Marshall Plan psychology' in postwar economic history."⁶³

August 15 was indeed a "bombshell" that finally destroyed the long-standing ethos of transatlantic economic cooperation, transparency, and mutual trust and understanding. Nixon's bombshell had long-lasting consequences; it severely undermined the close and cooperative transatlantic alliance, as it had been known in the previous decades. Now an ever-greater element of mistrust crept in on both sides of the Atlantic. This certainly had devastating consequences for Washington's policy toward the integration of the European continent. It was unlikely that the US would once again begin to support this development. The best the Europeans could hope for was that Washington would continue to pursue a policy of noninterference and leave it entirely to Europe whether or not progress with the creation of a united Europe was made.

With the help of a good dose of pragmatism, the transatlantic allies attempted to overcome the crisis of August 1971 to achieve some sort of new realignment of Western currencies. They seemed to have little choice, after all. Despite the rise of monetarism as the leading economic theory of the age and its preference for floating rates, most experts remained convinced that Western and global economic growth required the existence of stable international currency exchange rates.⁶⁴ The first multilateral discussion of how to overcome the crisis situation took place at Lancaster House in London on September 16, when Connally explained the US position to the assembled finance ministers from Europe and Japan. Once again, he referred to Europe's "restrictive trade practices" and the necessity of "defense burden sharing." Due to the continuing Cold War, the US, after all, "devoted 8.9 percent of its GNP and 36 percent of its budget to defense, and no other industrial nation came close to those magnitudes."⁶⁵

Robert Hormats, a young member of Kissinger's NSC staff, who decades later would rise to become undersecretary for economic affairs in the Obama administration, commented on the meeting in London: "Connally's handling of the situation has not as yet realized any tangible results, but disaster has not yet befallen us."⁶⁶ Connally's "ineptness in dealing with foreigners," however, increasingly worried the administration.⁶⁷ By September 20, 1971, the US concluded that the "shock effect of August 15" was wearing off, and as other countries were formulating their strategies, "defining where we want to go becomes increasingly essential."⁶⁸ A short while later, further

discussions took place in the context of the joint annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank in Washington, DC.

Relations between the IMF managing director, the Frenchman Pierre Paul Schweitzer, and the Nixon administration remained fraught with tension. Schweitzer was a French war hero, Resistance fighter, and survivor of the Buchenwald concentration camp near the East German city of Weimar. He also was a nephew of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Albert Schweitzer. Nevertheless, Burns regarded him as “pathetic” and “a damned fool.”⁶⁹ Still, Schweitzer was not shy to put public pressure on Connally to return quickly to fixed exchange rates and agree to a devaluation of the dollar. The Treasury secretary, however, insisted on rescinding the 10 percent border tax only if the United States’ trading partners would liberalize their trade practices, allow their currencies to float freely, and thus stop supporting the European currencies’ artificially low values against the dollar. No compromise could be reached, though Schweitzer was invited to meet with Nixon, which helped to improve the atmosphere a little.⁷⁰

Connally, as well as Deputy Defense Secretary David Packard, the co-founder of the Hewlett-Packard company, had actually voiced the opinion during a Cabinet meeting prior to the IMF / World Bank annual conference that time was on Washington’s side. After all, “foreign trade was vastly more important to foreign countries than to us and they therefore could not afford to resort to discriminatory or retaliatory measures.”⁷¹ Nixon was unsure whether this was quite true, though he continued referring to the domestic political advantages of maintaining the border tax.⁷²

Kissinger vs. Connally

Throughout the remaining months of 1971, Connally was as brusque and direct as always. Not surprisingly, Henry Kissinger, still the president’s national security adviser, became increasingly concerned about the consequences of Washington’s unilateral economic policy as announced on August 15, 1971. Initially, as he later wrote in his memoirs, “I had sympathized with Connally’s view that without a measure of confrontation our trading partners would avoid the hard choices implicit in a major realignment of the grid of exchange rates.”⁷³ Yet it slowly dawned on Kissinger that the allies needed to be treated much more sensitively and that Connally’s “tough ‘not-an-iota’ stance” had perhaps gone too far.⁷⁴ The influential financier and Kissinger mentor David Rockefeller also feared that the US “risked losing

our friends.”⁷⁵ In conversation with the Japanese ambassador about Nixon’s New Economic Policy, Kissinger admitted that “he knew nothing about economics” and that he “thought economic leaders were usually ‘political idiots.’”⁷⁶ Perhaps this was the reason why Kissinger felt he urgently needed “to soften the effect of the August 15 shock,” rein in Connally, and, he wrote, “give us a running start for a new period of cooperation once we had surmounted the present crisis.”⁷⁷

Kissinger’s rivalry with Connally clearly contributed to this line of thinking. If the tension with the Europeans and the absence of a monetary settlement continued much longer, Kissinger feared, a recession in both Europe and Japan could no longer be ruled out. The allies would definitely, and rightly, blame Washington for this, and the repercussions for transatlantic relations, not to speak for the world economy, would be dire. A number of European politicians were bound to encounter serious domestic and electoral difficulties. And of course, the European allies and Japan could be expected to “retaliate in a bout of economic nationalism.” Kissinger had become alarmed when he was shown a list drawn up by Arthur Burns about the “retaliatory measures planned by our major trading partners which, he explained, would produce an outcome on balance highly disadvantageous” to the US.⁷⁸

Burns feared, after all, that “considerations of domestic politics” in the United States “would delay and distract serious efforts to rebuild international monetary order.” Nixon might well go down in history as a president who “was taking a chance of ushering in an era of growing restrictionism, trade wars, currency wars, and the like.”⁷⁹ While not specifically saying so, it must have occurred to Kissinger that the Soviet Union would not be slow to exploit any prolonged transatlantic rift and the perceived collapse of capitalism. This would not augur well for Nixon’s envisaged grand summit with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, to be held in Moscow in May 1972.⁸⁰

Kissinger advised Nixon that a trip to Europe by a special ambassador such as former Treasury secretary David Kennedy might be helpful. A little bit of “‘hand-holding’ on trade and finance problems with the Europeans” could do no harm and might well “be useful from an economic point of view.”⁸¹ Peter Peterson agreed. He told Nixon, “a sympathetic and soothing ear right about now on their trade and monetary problems with us” is something that David Kennedy “does . . . very well.”⁸² Nevertheless, Kissinger continued to view the situation with much concern and blamed himself for having been too passive while leaving the initiative to the economic experts,

who had made a mess of it. Kissinger was convinced that he needed to become much more involved. Eventually, in late September 1971, he sent Nixon a long memorandum, presumably drafted by Robert Hormats, in which he assessed the situation critically while not forgetting to also praise Nixon for his wise statesmanship.

True to form, Kissinger began his long letter in a rather flattering way by writing that Nixon's "shock treatment" may well have "created an extraordinary opportunity for constructive improvement in our political/security/economic relations with our major allies." He went rather over the top when praising Nixon that with his speech on August 15, the president had put the US "in a position of great tactical strength." Still, the administration "needed to play its hand carefully regarding objectives, strategy and tactics," and the president's "guidance and instruction" were very much needed. After all, "as you anticipated," Kissinger wrote to Nixon mischievously, the president's New Economic Policy "has also brought with it some extraordinary dangers," as trade and monetary affairs had a much greater domestic importance for European governments than for US statesmen. For the former, "these issues are a matter of political survival."⁸³

In the course of the memorandum, Kissinger even spoke of "a deteriorating situation of economic cold war with Europe," if things went really badly. He believed that Washington's "1-12 months objective" ought to be "a gradual upward float of the yen, mark, etc. vis-à-vis the dollar." But "a quick repegging" of the allied currencies "would of course provide more dramatic evidence of the success of August 15." But the latter would be asking too much, as European politicians might feel that they were committing "political suicide in response to U.S. pressure." Kissinger concluded that "a slow float up, over many months, is much more likely to get us safely to the exchange rates we want."⁸⁴ Nixon's national security adviser was clearly worried that for domestic political and electoral reasons the president would try to put too much pressure on the Europeans and Japan to revalue their currencies and consequently damage relations with the allies irrevocably.⁸⁵

What Kissinger was really concerned about became clear toward the end of the first part of his rather-long memorandum to Nixon. He told the president, "the stakes go far beyond mere economics." Kissinger was deeply worried that if the dire situation were allowed to continue, it would strengthen "the Mansfield-Symington forces on troop withdrawals" from Europe." He dramatically explained, "if things go badly over the next several weeks, it is not difficult to envisage a general political deterioration in the Atlantic and

vis-à-vis Japan that would unravel much of what the United States led in building since 1945.”⁸⁶

Just in case this warning should not prove sufficient, in the second part of his memorandum, in which he mostly outlined alternative courses of action, Kissinger once again made sure to drive his points home by emphasizing the terrible state of transatlantic relations. He explained to Nixon that the current US posture had “a curious double quality.” The Europeans seemed to “increasingly believe that we are asking for the moon” and that the administration was “using the surcharge as blackmail to get it.” But also the friends of the United States on the European continent “who want to cooperate are baffled by the absence of signals from Washington about the terms of a reasonable bargain.” Kissinger argued that “we have in effect put a gun to their heads” and that the United States’ “public posturing will tend increasingly to drive out responsible statesmanship” in Europe.⁸⁷

“Remaining on the present course may work,” Kissinger believed; but it was a “highly risky” course, and the US ought to “recognize the magnitude of stakes if things go wrong.” Kissinger was in favor of an “early removal of the surcharge” and “the ‘buy America’ provision of the investment credit.” He asked Nixon to give him authority either to look into “the potential risks of retaining our present posture on the international monetary front” or to give him permission “to develop alternatives to the present position in light of the larger foreign policy and security position of the United States.” This could possibly happen within the NSC system and with the help of other key people such as Peterson, Shultz, and perhaps Burns.⁸⁸

It was clear that Kissinger favored the latter option. And Nixon gave him the go-ahead. During the month of October 1971, Kissinger’s informal group met on a weekly basis. In particular, Shultz and Burns were made responsible for working out the basic scheme for a settlement as it was eventually put into practice.⁸⁹ Yet, while such a plan was being developed, Nixon himself made the situation worse by referring twice within a week, on September 16 and 23, to the likelihood of the permanence of the surcharge. He indicated that lifting the surcharge required not only a reform of the monetary system. Nixon also turned issues such as burden-sharing transatlantic defense expenditure and the abolition of trade restrictions into preconditions for getting rid of the surcharge.⁹⁰ Connally made similar remarks when, for instance, visiting Japan in November. The allies were both confused and annoyed.⁹¹

Nevertheless, Kissinger’s long memorandum had clearly struck a chord

with the president. After all, by the late summer of 1971, Connally's nationalistic and aggressive position was viewed increasingly critically within the international world of finance and, more importantly for the Treasury secretary, within the Nixon administration. Although Connally had made monetary reform the centerpiece for rescinding the surcharge, he continued to delay making a concrete monetary-reform proposal. Kissinger thought that Connally believed that he "had not yet in his view squeezed the maximum out of the situation."⁹² This indeed was also Burns's impression; and most European and Japanese leaders also suspected this. Connally, for instance, refused to see Jelle Zijlstra, the respected head of the Dutch central bank and former Dutch prime minister, who was on a secret mediation trip to attempt to find a compromise solution to the monetary crisis. Rebuffing a European effort to overcome the crisis, however, was bound to have dire transatlantic repercussions. Kissinger's intervention persuaded Connally to see the Dutchman after all.⁹³

The president himself also became increasingly impatient with the prolonged crisis and Connally's evident unwillingness to do something about it. Not only Kissinger but also Peter Peterson, for instance, was urging Nixon "to take positive steps" in order "to try to resolve the situation constructively." Embarking on "a serious negotiating process," Peterson told him, did not mean "caving in" or accepting "a bad deal."⁹⁴ By mid-November, the US embassy in Paris informed the State Department that the French no longer thought that the monetary crisis could be resolved within an acceptable time frame. France was "likely to move from protective measures to outright retaliation" in the near future.⁹⁵

Kissinger also continued to receive alarming reports about Connally's tactics, which he did not hesitate to pass on to the president. On November 1, Robert Hormats told him that Connally appeared to have departed from a more "cooperative line" by emphasizing in a speech to the American Bankers Association in San Francisco that the "surcharge is going to stay on for a while because it frankly is to our advantage to keep it on for a while." Hormats, however, believed that the surcharge was becoming a liability, as "other nations institute countermeasures" and "become less disposed and less able to cooperate with us to bring about the changes we desire." The young adviser recommended "that our economic, foreign policy, and security interests will best be served if we move promptly to negotiate conditions which will allow us to remove the surcharge *by the end of the year*."⁹⁶

"Maybe we will need to change our position," Nixon thought aloud by

late October. Not doing so “may be having undesirable political effects.”⁹⁷ This insight, and his continuing concern about a diminishing US money supply, which, however, was largely founded on an unrealistic reading of the situation, were all influenced by the presidential election that was only a year away. “The President’s preoccupation with the election frightens me,” Arthur Burns wrote in his diary in early November 1971. “Is there anything that he would not do to further his reelection? I am losing faith in him, and my heart is sick and sad.”⁹⁸

Yet Nixon also had another concern in his mind. He wished to have European support for his forthcoming summit diplomacy: his envisaged dramatic visits to Peking (February 1972) and Moscow (May 1972). Nixon certainly did not wish to undermine his negotiation basis by arriving in the communist capitals as head of a fractured transatlantic alliance that was in deep crisis and torn asunder by monetary and economic divisions. Kissinger fully recognized, as he later told Arthur Burns and Robert Hormats, the “reason I could become involved . . . was that we were moving toward the Summits, and that imposed a need for a solution to the monetary problem. Also, I could tell the President that unless we did something we were clearly headed for a crisis.”⁹⁹ Eventually, during a late-morning meeting with Connally and Burns on November 24, 1971, Nixon emphasized firmly that some progress needed to be made at the forthcoming G-10 meeting in Rome. The president was clearly getting rather exasperated by the continuing crisis. He explained that he wished “to wrap up this whole thing” during his summit meeting with the French president in the Azores in early December that had just been announced.¹⁰⁰

The Treasury secretary’s performance at the G-10 meeting in Rome between November 29 and December 1, 1971, would be decisive for his political future.¹⁰¹ And Connally was aware of it. He became ready to compromise.¹⁰² At the meeting in Rome, Connally caused profound astonishment when all of a sudden he proposed a dollar devaluation of 10 percent, much more than the Europeans had been pressing for. The US would also eliminate the 10 percent surcharge and the investment tax credit. A resolution of the crisis by means of an agreement on the realignment of Western currencies, possibly with margins of 3 percent, seemed to be just around the corner. Connally viewed the G-10 meeting as a huge triumph for his political skills.¹⁰³ However, he had told the Europeans bluntly that the US “also would be demanding that their countries increase their own defense spending and reduce trade restrictions with the US,” on which the assembled

Finance ministers “pleaded lack of authority.”¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the US embassy reported back to the State Department that European leaders were full of praise for Connally’s “masterful display of leadership.”¹⁰⁵

Burns was not convinced. Already prior to the Rome summit, he had dryly commented on the situation as it had occurred to him in the course of a White House meeting, “Here we were—Kissinger, a brilliant political analyst, but admittedly ignorant of economics; Connally, a thoroughly confused politician, suppressing his desire to punish foreigners in view of the President’s moving away from narrow domestic political considerations; Shultz, a no less confused amateur economist; I, the only one there with any knowledge of the subject, but even I not a real expert on some aspects of the intricate international problem! What a way to reach decisions! No one from the State Department there, no technical experts to aid us!”¹⁰⁶

A Temporary Solution: The Smithsonian Agreement and After

As Nixon had decreed, the real solution was negotiated at a meeting on an island in the Portuguese Azores between himself and French President Georges Pompidou on December 13 and 14, 1971. Pompidou was a rather shrewd man who enjoyed the domestic advantages that a bilateral meeting with the US president would give him. The sixty-year old Pompidou had been De Gaulle’s prime minister between 1962 and 1968, the longest-serving prime minister of the Fifth Republic. The meeting with Nixon took place in a hotel on Terceira Island in the Azores rather than on the US or Portuguese military airbases on the island. The Franco-American summit began rather well, as Nixon was fascinated by the Concorde, the supersonic jet, which Pompidou used to travel from Paris to the Azores.¹⁰⁷

Initially Kissinger had proposed to Nixon to arrange a summit of Western leaders; however, as Pompidou objected, a series of bilateral meetings was convened. The organization of the various negotiations and their coordination with the G-10 talks proved to be rather a nightmare.¹⁰⁸ The most important of these meetings was the one with the French president, who, the White House decided, should be given the opportunity “to establish a position of leadership in Europe by negotiating the terms of settlement with us.”¹⁰⁹ Much less crucial meetings with British Prime Minister Heath in Bermuda (December 20–21) and West German Chancellor Brandt at Key Biscayne (December 28–29) followed. During the meeting with Heath just

before Christmas, Nixon officially announced the termination of the import surcharge.¹¹⁰

During the Azores meeting with Pompidou, Connally as well as French Finance Minister Giscard were pushed to the sidelines. In any case, the French president and his finance minister did not seem to be particularly close, to put it mildly. On the US side, Kissinger had successfully managed to marginalize Connally. It was therefore Nixon himself as well as Henry Kissinger who conducted most of the financial negotiations with Pompidou, a former banker, despite their lack of economic and financial expertise. It was in fact quite extraordinary that both countries' finance ministers only participated in the very last round of talks, when the essential details had already been agreed.

Throughout the two days of Franco-American negotiations, it became obvious that the two presidents expected the talks to result in a spectacular success. Nixon wished to settle the whole matter quickly. "He wanted a solution," Kissinger wrote later, "not a discussion of exchange rates," as he was hardly on top of the complex monetary issues involved.¹¹¹ Kissinger viewed himself probably quite correctly as "the senior official most convinced that the political costs of the economic crisis were growing prohibitive, and that the Europeans were prepared to settle on reasonable terms."¹¹²

Nixon and Pompidou were indeed soon able to arrive at a framework agreement on monetary and trade issues. The French president impressed Nixon with his pragmatism, which confirmed US ambassador Shriver's early impression that Pompidou was more like "a Rothschild banker than . . . a Sorbonne professor of economics."¹¹³ By agreeing to increase the price of gold from \$35 to \$38 an ounce, Washington essentially signed off on a devaluation of the dollar of 8.6 percent. Moreover, much to French relief, a freely floating monetary system had been rejected. Instead, a return to a somewhat more flexible but still fixed exchange-rate system at new fluctuation margins of 2.25 percent was agreed on (this was up from the 1 percent allowed under the old Bretton Woods system and slightly lower than the 3 percent that had been envisaged at the Rome meeting). The deceased Bretton Woods system seemed to have been resurrected partially. The conversion of dollars into gold, however, remained suspended, and, as it turned out, gold convertibility was dead; it had been abandoned for good.¹¹⁴

It was indeed quite "extraordinary," as Kissinger wrote in his memoirs, that during the Azores meeting, "France and the United States should have taken it upon themselves to work out the exchange rates for every one of the

world's important currencies.¹¹⁵ Still, the other allies needed to give their formal agreement. And West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, for instance, was not happy with the bilateral Franco-American Azores agreement. "Some nations" had "ganged up" on the Federal Republic, he felt, "and placed before the Germans some already-agreed-upon decisions."¹¹⁶

The final chapter was written at the Smithsonian Institution on the National Mall in Washington, DC, on December 17–18, 1971. In this red sandstone building with its eight turrets and spires, which make the building resemble a fake medieval castle, the G-10 countries hammered out the so-called Smithsonian Agreement. During two days of complex and difficult negotiations, Germany and Japan were persuaded to accept the Azores agreement between Nixon and Pompidou and revalue their own currencies upward (16.9 percent for the yen and 13.57 percent for the Deutschmark). New currency rates with the other, much-less-affected nations were achieved too, and, eventually, on the evening of Saturday, December 17, a new general realignment of Western currencies was agreed on.¹¹⁷

The dollar, once again, became fixed as the central element of the system. It was pegged to the currencies of the other industrialized countries at central rates with permissible fluctuation margins of 2.25 percent; the price of gold was raised from \$35 to \$38, and, depending on the calculation weights chosen, the dollar was devalued at between 6.5 and 7.75 percent against the currencies of all countries and at approximately 10 percent against the G-10 currencies.¹¹⁸ The transatlantic allies, in fact, had attempted to save the old Bretton Woods system by amending it and making it slightly more flexible. It was also agreed that multilateral trade negotiations would take place. To honor the participants, Nixon appeared in person at the end of the conference. He grandly pronounced that the Smithsonian deal was "the most significant monetary agreement in the history of the world," but, of course, this proved to be a huge exaggeration.¹¹⁹

After all, with the suspension of the convertibility of the dollar into gold, and thus into US reserve assets, Washington had put the world on an almost pure dollar standard. This symbolized the wholesale collapse of the Bretton Woods system. The old order, however, had merely been replaced by an "unstable and unviable" new system of great volatility. The Smithsonian Agreement of December 1971, it would soon become apparent, only provided a temporary respite. It did not represent a lasting solution to the prolonged monetary crisis that was still shaking the Western world.

Nixon, however, had achieved his objectives with the August 15 decisions

and the Smithsonian Agreement of December 1971. The subsequent months, which culminated in the presidential election on November 7, 1972, were characterized by a time of rising business prosperity and declining unemployment in the US, though inflation kept growing stubbornly. Just in time for the presidential election, the US economy grew by 6 percent in real terms in 1972, and unemployment dropped to 5.1 percent from 6.0 percent the previous year.¹²⁰ The president's belief, however, that with the Smithsonian Agreement "we got things settled for a while" and that he would not have a "goddamn" monetary crisis on his hands every few months proved to be rather mistaken.¹²¹

In fact, in the course of 1972, there occurred "renewed and persistent crises, frequent runs on the dollar," and the greenback was further depreciated. On the whole, "an accelerating erosion of confidence around the world in the basic fabric of international economic cooperation" could be observed.¹²² Once again, something would have to be done about the deteriorating situation.

By this time, Connally had left the government. He resigned as Treasury secretary on May 16, 1972, as he had become embroiled in the so-called milk scandal for allegedly having accepted a bribe of a mere \$10,000 (in two installments) from a lobbyist for the milk producers. Connally had been helpful in getting milk subsidies increased, which led to a \$500 million increase of the annual income of the nation's dairy farmers. The milk producers had promised a \$2 million contribution to Nixon's reelection campaign in 1972, and this fact got the whole issue mixed up with the Watergate scandal. In the milk trial three years later, Connally was found not guilty, but by then his political reputation and his prospects for the 1976 presidential race had been ruined.¹²³

Although the dollar had been substantially devalued in December 1971, what was left of the Bretton Woods system continued to disintegrate. While the US balance of payments position improved a little in early 1972, it still showed substantial overall deficits. The devaluation of the dollar proved to be much less advantageous to rectifying the US balance of payments deficit than expected. Instead of achieving an "adjustment goal" of \$13 billion on trade, as anticipated by the administration, the effect on the trade balance would be only \$8 billion.¹²⁴

Inflation improved too initially, but it still ran at 3.3 percent by mid-1972. A year later, it once again began to increase substantially, soon exceeding the rate of inflation in West Germany, which had been close to 6 percent in

1972. International capital flows continued to grow significantly. This was greatly influenced by both the differences between transatlantic interest rates and speculative ambitions. Speculators clearly expected a further devaluation of the dollar.¹²⁵ Indeed, the new Smithsonian currency margins did not provide much additional room for maneuver. And Connally's successor, new Treasury secretary George Shultz, was opposed to a fixed-rate exchange system in any case. As a loyal disciple of Milton Friedman, Shultz strongly believed in the forces of the free market and a new monetary system based on freely floating currencies.¹²⁶

French President Pompidou, by contrast, had been greatly annoyed when he realized in early 1972, and thus less than two months after the Smithsonian deal had been reached, that Washington was forecast to run even higher payment and budget deficits than in the previous years. The US clearly did not seem to be inclined to do anything to defend the new currency alignment as decided at the Franco-American Azores meeting and formally agreed at the Smithsonian.¹²⁷ Eventually Pompidou sat down at his desk in the Élysée Palace and composed a strongly worded letter to Nixon. He told his US counterpart that the economic report, which accompanied Nixon's message to Congress on January 27, 1972, indicated "a growing consensus in favor of greater flexibility in exchange rates." Pompidou explained, "this does not seem to conform to the undertakings that were reached between you and me." Dismissively, he told Nixon that the report did not even "correspond to a clear analysis of the present situation." The French president informed his US counterpart, "it would be disastrous for the international monetary system and thus for the entire free world should the accords of December, whose historic character you yourself noted, become only a precarious pause along the path towards a new crisis."¹²⁸

Continuing Monetary Turmoil

President Pompidou got it right. His prediction was exactly what happened. "We have a first class crisis on our hands," Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Kissinger's confidant on the NSC, commented, "involving both the actual situation of the dollar and the President's relationship with Pompidou."¹²⁹ And a solution was difficult to reach. After all, a loosening of exchange rates and a further weakening of the dollar would help the competitiveness of the US export industry and thus the domestic employment situation; naturally this was of particular importance in an election year. Nixon had no inten-

tion to stall the flourishing US economy and abandon his expansionary economic policy in order to please the French and the Germans. When in the course of 1972 the White House began to fear that the US economy was overheating, some countermeasures were implemented, though rather cautious ones. The American voters needed to remain convinced that the country was on a strong trajectory of growth.¹³⁰ Sonnenfeldt was correct when he wrote that this was a “perplexing” situation “since the solution involves major domestic economic measures which would conflict with the President’s economic goals.”¹³¹

In Nixon’s reply to Pompidou in mid-February 1972, he frankly admitted that his economic policy was guided by the forthcoming election. “The new forecast of a higher deficit this year,” he told the French president, “is the result of a purposeful acceleration of Government expenditure to provide some needed impetus to nudge the economy on to a more satisfactory recovery path.”¹³² He nevertheless rejected Pompidou’s accusations that the US did not adhere to the Smithsonian Agreement. Instead, Nixon pointedly referred to the fact that the EC seemed to have decided not to give greater access to US exports in the agricultural field and that therefore “the normal competitive benefits of devaluation will be denied to us.” Nixon also emphasized the fact that the monetary and trade areas “cannot be disassociated from each other,” thus not so subtly hinting at a *quid pro quo*. Washington would be prepared to do more in the monetary area by, for instance, consolidating its dollar balances, if the Europeans were making trade concessions.¹³³

Nixon also told Pompidou that obviously the Smithsonian Agreement was by no means the last word with regard to the flexibility of exchange rates. The president expressed his surprise that Pompidou may have thought so: “since I believe we both recognized this question would need to remain an open issue for the planned discussions of the future of the international monetary system.”¹³⁴

Pompidou was not pleased with Nixon’s response. In fact, French and indeed European criticism of the US continued; there was still widespread suspicion that Washington did not wish to do anything to defend the Smithsonian exchange-rate agreement. Eventually the Europeans felt forced to take the initiative. With the help of the so-called currency Snake (“Snake in the Tunnel”), invented in April 1972 by means of the Basel agreement among the EC countries, the Europeans attempted to isolate their currencies from the unpredictable fluctuations of the dollar. Essentially they wished to “recreate the Bretton Woods system on a regional basis” in order to achieve

exchange-rate stability among themselves and also price stability and low stable rates of inflation.¹³⁵ Still remembering the galloping inflation of the 1920s, the West Germans in particular were obsessed with keeping down inflation. The vision was of a stable and predictable “European snake slithering through the Smithsonian tunnel,” the latter still dominated by the dollar.¹³⁶ It clearly demonstrated a European aspiration to become more independent of the United States. The economist Robert Solomon interpreted the invention of the Snake quite rightly as the “revival of the move toward monetary union in the EEC.”¹³⁷

Each member of the Snake was meant to limit the fluctuation of its currency regarding the other members’ currencies at a margin of plus or minus 2.25 percent. While the European currencies were thus meant to fluctuate very little against each other, there was, however, no limit on fluctuations against the US dollar or other international currencies.¹³⁸ Much to the displeasure of Washington, there also was another dimension to the Snake that confirmed general EC philosophy. It was expected that internal trade within the EC would be stimulated by the currency stability provided by the Snake, at the expense of the trading volume with the outside world, including the US.¹³⁹

In the summer of 1972, Western politicians continued to attempt to salvage the Smithsonian Agreement, albeit with very different levels of enthusiasm. A great number of position papers were written, and several transatlantic negotiations took place to overcome the “fragility of the foreign exchange parities.”¹⁴⁰ In July 1972, Helmut Schmidt, who had just succeeded Karl Schiller as West German minister of both economics and finance,¹⁴¹ put it rather bluntly in a conversation with Henry Kissinger in Washington, DC: “The Germans are saying to the US,” he outlined, “that either you defend the Smithsonian agreement by intervention of your own to strengthen the dollar” or the German government would defend it by introducing strict financial controls regarding the influx of dollars in the country. The US had always opposed the introduction of such controls. Schmidt also made it clear that the Europeans were increasingly annoyed about US reluctance, if not unwillingness, to discuss the reform of the monetary system in a constructive, multilateral way.¹⁴²

In Schmidt’s characteristically straightforward way, the German minister did not hesitate to tell Kissinger that the Nixon administration had handled the Europeans badly during the 1971 monetary crisis. “Financial and economic matters should be taken out of the hands of men like Connally,

Giscard and Schiller and put into the hands of statesmen.” Presumably Schmidt was referring to himself and his host. Kissinger thought highly of Schmidt. In a later conversation with Nixon, he explained that the German minister was “an intelligent guy and a good guy” and someone who listened “to reasonable argument.”¹⁴³ The national security adviser tried to defend Connally half-heartedly. Texans like Connally were “used to dealing with problems in a forceful way,” he said. Connally was “a strong, able, and attractive man.” Schmidt was not convinced. “With billions of dollars floating around, the monetary crisis of 1971 can easily repeat itself.”¹⁴⁴ And this was precisely what happened; it “made it extremely difficult” for the European countries, Schmidt later informed Martin Hillenbrand, the new US ambassador in Bonn, “to believe that the US really wanted to adhere to the Smithsonian Agreement.”¹⁴⁵

On June 23, 1972, speculative forces pushed the British pound sterling out of the Snake; the pound began to float freely on the currency markets—temporarily, as the British authorities announced. The pound depreciated as expected but without the drama that accompanied a forced devaluation within the framework of a fixed exchange-rate system as in the past. In the wake of the floating of the pound, Nixon and British Prime Minister Heath agreed that “radical reform” of the monetary system was necessary that went “beyond a simple patching up of the Bretton Woods system.”¹⁴⁶ The Nixon administration’s relations with the British were good on the whole. Washington strongly supported Britain becoming a member of the EC for political reasons. The president continued to believe, however, as he told his advisers in a September 1972 meeting, that the enlargement of the EC and also the EC’s ambition to conclude preferential trade agreements with Mediterranean countries was “damaging to our trade interests.” Although this ran entirely contrary to the earlier conclusion of his own State Department, Nixon remained convinced of the truth of his statement anyway.¹⁴⁷

Altogether, Nixon’s new economic course proved a considerable domestic success, and it clearly contributed to his impressive election victory in November 1972.¹⁴⁸ Nixon carried forty-nine states and gained 60.7 percent to Democratic candidate George McGovern’s 37.5 percent of the popular vote.¹⁴⁹ Prime Minister Heath called and congratulated Nixon on a “tremendous triumph” and “a great personal achievement.” Nixon told him that he had “noted with interest” Heath’s “moving on the, uh, wage and price control front,” as he had done in the US. “I just wish you the very best of it. It’s a, it’s a tough . . .” Heath agreed. “It’s been a battle,” he sighed.¹⁵⁰

Domestically, in view of Nixon's huge election victory, he obtained what he had intended to achieve with his August 15 shocks. The American voter did not make the Nixon administration but the Europeans and the Japanese responsible for difficult economic times. The closing of the "gold window" was interpreted as Nixon's successful attempt to defend the interests of the American worker. The administration had also managed to reduce the level of inflation without causing another recession. After his "defense" of the US economy on August 15, 1971, Nixon's reelection by a landslide was probably never in doubt. It was only his paranoia that made him believe he had no option but to resort to illegal means to ensure victory in the 1972 election. This misguided conviction ended in the Watergate crisis and Nixon's resignation, which came almost exactly three years after the Camp David meeting of August 1971.

The Necessity of Radical Reform

British Prime Minister Edward Heath was at the peak of his political career when together with Ireland and Denmark his country became a full EC member on January 1, 1973. While this was generally welcomed in Washington, among the United States' European allies, the British were suspected of still being much too close to the US. Both Nixon and Kissinger had developed a certain esteem for individual European leaders on the continent, such as Helmut Schmidt and also to some extent Pompidou and Giscard. As an old, established ally of the US, Britain continued to enjoy particular respect in the White House, independent of the personality and quality of its prime minister. In the Nixon era, this applied in particular to a conservative government, despite Edward Heath's well-known pro-European inclinations.¹⁵¹ Heath's support for the so-called Christmas bombing in Vietnam in late 1972 confirmed the reliability of the British for the Nixon administration. The president regarded Heath as "an ally and a friend."¹⁵² In early February 1973, Heath was the first foreign leader who was invited to visit the White House and Camp David at the beginning of Nixon's second term in office. It was the US president's way of expressing his gratitude to Heath for his public support of Nixon and Kissinger's Vietnam policy.¹⁵³

Still, by early 1973, Lord Cromer, the British ambassador in Washington, had become rather exasperated by Kissinger's style, not least now that "Kissinger was becoming more involved in international economic affairs." But "with so many balls in the air," Cromer wrote to London, "one or other of

them may come down with a nasty crash.” The ambassador also reported that apart from the UK and the Chinese, everyone else was severely criticized by Kissinger. When listening to Kissinger’s words in his strong German accent, Ambassador Cromer wrote, he always had an “uneasy feeling” that he “may commit some error which will bring down the Headmaster’s censure.”¹⁵⁴ Lord Cromer also noticed that Kissinger spoke as “lucidly and confidently” as always, but there “appeared to be an underlying element of strain and perhaps emotion beneath his outwardly calm exterior.” Perhaps this was due to the fact that Kissinger was “taking an ever-widening interest in all issues of US policy and this must undoubtedly increase the strain upon him.”¹⁵⁵

These were indeed very stressful times, and not just in the monetary realm. In domestic US politics, the Watergate crisis increasingly dominated the attention of the embattled president and his White House. The months April to July 1973 brought the unprecedented scandal ever closer to Nixon personally, as further detailed in chapter 6. Nixon began to realize that he was fighting for his political survival. Clearly, the president and his administration found it difficult to focus their attention on the complex matter of transatlantic monetary affairs.

By early 1973, Paris had begun to agree with Nixon and Heath’s view of the need for a “radical reform of the monetary system.” Having rejected a simultaneous float of the French franc with the Deutschmark during the previous two years, in early 1973, the French president came around to accepting a joint European float. US indifference to the international monetary situation and Washington’s violation of the Azores agreement, as viewed from the French capital, seemed to present France with no other option. France remained convinced that the US was still following a policy of “benign neglect” and appeared to be “indifferent to [the] fate of the dollar,” as US ambassador Arthur “Dick” Watson expressed it in a dispatch from Paris.¹⁵⁶ The US was “not living up” to its obligations, Giscard complained bitterly to Under Secretary Paul Volcker.¹⁵⁷

This perception of US indifference would continue to be widely shared in Europe, despite the attempts by the Treasury and the Fed to emphasize that Washington was “not neglecting” the situation.¹⁵⁸ The European impression was right, however. In a meeting with Treasury Secretary Shultz and Burns in early February 1973, Nixon, for instance, merely shrugged his shoulders saying, “Like we were going to defend the Smithsonian rates. Yeah.”¹⁵⁹ Shultz brought the real economy back into view. He pointed out

that the “speculative flurry” was based on “reality,” and the reality was that “we have a gigantic trade deficit, and we have a very large balance of payments deficit, however one wants to measure it.”¹⁶⁰

Under the circumstances, it was little wonder that the Europeans, including Pompidou, began to support a joint European float and the establishment of a European Monetary System (EMS), as it tentatively came to fruition toward the end of the decade.¹⁶¹ By 1973, however, the French president was already suffering from the cancer that would kill him a year later (on April 2, 1974), though he remained in charge of his government until almost his last day in office. In the spring of 1973, when both Pompidou and also West German Chancellor Willy Brandt (who would resign in May 1974 in the context of a domestic spy scandal) were still firmly established in Paris and Bonn, speculation about a European float rapidly intensified. Germany and Japan felt obliged to intervene and purchase enormous amounts of dollars. The West German central bank in Frankfurt took in \$2.7 billion, and EC countries in total purchased \$3.5 billion.¹⁶² In January and February, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York also intervened heavily, selling German and Dutch currencies, without much effect, however.¹⁶³

Then, on February 12, 1973, the US government decided to devalue the dollar for the second time within only fourteen months.¹⁶⁴ Washington raised the official price of gold from \$38 per ounce to \$42.22 per ounce. This meant that against all G-10 currencies, the overall depreciation of the dollar was approximately 15.50 percent on a trade-weighted basis. Officials from the G-10 countries assumed that this would be enough to take care of the US balance of payment problem.¹⁶⁵ European governments had been discussing a joint European and Japanese float, but they were content with the US decision to embark on a formal devaluation of the dollar. The German finance minister, however, was skeptical whether this would put an end to the monetary upheavals of the preceding few years. The occurrence of yet another monetary crisis, Helmut Schmidt proclaimed, might well lead to a joint European float after all.¹⁶⁶

The markets remained unconvinced by the dollar devaluation of February 12, 1973. Speculation against the dollar continued almost unabated. While the new official dollar price of gold was just over \$42.00 per ounce, gold was still selling at more than \$100.00 per ounce on the free market.¹⁶⁷ A further depreciation of the dollar seemed to be likely; it could certainly not be ruled out. Most EC currencies, however, were appreciating fast. It did not

help that to all intents and purposes US authorities continued their policy of “benign neglect” by making clear that they would not intervene to defend the new parities. Speculation became ever more rampant. It was a sign of desperation when the European exchange markets temporarily closed in early March.¹⁶⁸ “The market waits on no man, no President and no Prime Minister,” Japanese Minister of Finance Kiichi Aichi reminded visiting Under Secretary Paul Volcker.¹⁶⁹

“None of the mechanisms for encouraging the coordination of national economic policies had teeth,” Helmut Schmidt concluded.¹⁷⁰ Schmidt, a notorious chain-smoker who suffered from a heart condition, was particularly impatient about the neglect of monetary-reform negotiations. If negotiations commenced too slowly, he claimed with an air of superior knowledge, “we are like the chain-smoker who decided to give up smoking—but only after his next heart attack.”¹⁷¹ Presumably Schmidt was not referring to himself but to the IMF’s Committee of Twenty, which had been tasked with working out plans for the reform of the monetary system, including a consideration of international trade and investment relations. The committee, however, had made very little progress. Federal Reserve Chairman Burns spoke of a “leisurely pace of international discussions.”¹⁷² The IMF Committee of Twenty had been established in July 1972, as Washington distrusted the G-10 and believed it was prejudiced against the US.¹⁷³

Preventing a Common European Policy

By early 1973, the EC countries were growing impatient with the situation. They revived their interest in moving toward a joint European float of their currencies against the dollar. It confirmed the anti-European suspicions of the White House. Only a few weeks later, by early March, the dollar was yet again exposed to severe financial-market pressure. Kissinger, in particular, was most upset about the EC moving ahead in the monetary field without consulting Washington. On March 3, 1973, the president held a lengthy meeting with his economic advisers, including Treasury Secretary George Shultz, Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns, and Under Secretary Paul Volcker. Afterward, Nixon consulted Kissinger. The national security adviser appeared to be in a foul mood. He was convinced that the envisaged joint European float was against the United States’ interest. As the US would have to go along with this and let the dollar float too, it in

effect meant that only “three weeks after devaluing” the greenback in February, “we are getting it devalued again . . . and it doesn’t make us look strong, either domestically or internationally.”¹⁷⁴

Kissinger very much argued from a power-political point of view. Treasury Secretary Shultz, by contrast, was much less concerned about the general float. He believed that letting the dollar float would be in the United States’ interest, even if it meant a further devaluation brought about by an appreciating Deutschmark, as it would benefit the country’s export performance.¹⁷⁵ Ignoring Federal Reserve Chairman Burns’s doubts, George Shultz believed that the US should “try a flexible type system, and we should keep pushing forward.”¹⁷⁶

Kissinger, however, never was ready to view the situation from a purely economic and monetary point of view. The national security adviser was upset above all about the European tendency not to consult the United States and to act as if the EC-Nine were a fully independent and closely intertwined bloc of countries. Kissinger told Nixon, “the time has come where we must make clear to the Europeans that they cannot take a common position without consultation with us on a matter that vitally affects our interest and buy us off in currency of abstract European integration, and that sort of thing.”¹⁷⁷ The latter was a reference to West German Chancellor Willy Brandt’s letter to Nixon dated March 2, 1973. Kissinger took great exception to the letter, in which the chancellor had talked about sorting out the West’s monetary problems in order to strengthen the European integration process. “I don’t like the letter,” Kissinger pronounced. “I think it sort of assumes that we’re idiots that can be paid off by phrases.” Kissinger also suspected British Prime Minister Heath of hedging his bets, not wishing to antagonize the continental Europeans. “I don’t like the fact that Heath isn’t in touch with us at all,” Kissinger complained to Nixon.¹⁷⁸

In further conversation with the president, Kissinger repeatedly mentioned that the Europeans “ought to have consulted” the US. He emphasized “that European integration was never seen as a substitute for Atlantic or world cooperation,” and therefore a decision like a joint float “should be taken in full consultation with the United States.”¹⁷⁹ Kissinger even went so far as to tell the president that he was “no longer so sure that European integration is all that much in our interest.” And Nixon warmed to the idea. “Oh, I am not so sure of it at all,” he replied. If that was so, Kissinger wondered aloud, “mightn’t [it] be better for Atlantic unity” if the US managed to “force them to deal separately with us”? This, Nixon said, “basically, would

mean not to intervene" in the envisaged common European float. But Kissinger had meant it just the other way around. "No," he said, "that might mean to intervene" and as a consequence interrupt the European integration process. Mischievously, he explained that if the US intervened to undermine the joint float, "you must do it with the Germans. The Germans would be breaking ranks . . . with the others, isn't that right?"¹⁸⁰

In the Nixon White House, the West Germans were regarded as an easy pushover as well as a weak link in the Western alliance. In view of their joint border with the communist world and divided Berlin being situated right in the middle of communist East Germany, the Bonn Republic was dependent on the US security umbrella as no other country was. With just a little bit of pressure and some ominous remarks about the potential withdrawal of US troops, the West Germans could be easily convinced to support US schemes. Yet, as the Soviet Union was effectively in charge of the GDR and thus held hostage a large part of German territory, Washington did not fully trust Bonn. "The minute it is free for the Germans to cooperate with the Soviets you will see bargaining over."¹⁸¹

Washington's suspicion became blatantly obvious when for the best part of two years Kissinger attempted to undermine Chancellor Brandt's new policy of rapprochement with the East (*Ostpolitik*). He regarded it as a competitor for the administration's own superpower détente with Moscow; it might even be the start of Bonn adopting a neutral stance between the two Cold War blocs.¹⁸² The US always feared that the Soviets might persuade the West Germans to leave the Western camp in return for obtaining the unification of their nation. As late as November 1973, Kissinger was still telling the British ambassador, "the Germans were unreliable." He ominously told Lord Cromer, "the US had hair-raising intelligence on what the Germans were saying to the Russians."¹⁸³ The Bonn Republic, therefore, needed to be watched closely, the White House concluded, while the divided country's insecurities could also be conveniently exploited, if needed.¹⁸⁴

Shultz, however, expressed his doubts about attempting to divide the Europeans. He also wondered whether this would actually succeed. Still, Kissinger steamed ahead and could not be stopped from developing his thoughts further. "If the intervention works," he outlined, "it will delay at least for a bit—make it harder to get a common European monetary system." The Treasury secretary, on the other hand, was not too worried about such a system. Shultz pointed out the very problems that came to light four decades later, in the course of the global financial and economic crisis (the

Great Recession) that began in 2008, when not only most of the world's leading economies but also the euro were in deep crisis. The euro is the single European currency that became functional in 1999. Back in 1973, Shultz believed that for the Common Market, "it is a logical objective . . . to try to have a common monetary system." But getting there was a rather difficult endeavor. "I think it's a real question," Shultz explained, "whether they can have one [economic system] that ties together Italy on one extreme, Britain on the other extreme, and so on." Presciently, he concluded, "there's tremendous amount of heterogeneity there that's going to be difficult to hold in one place."¹⁸⁵

Nixon was uncertain about the whole issue. To some extent, he agreed with Shultz and was clearly much less convinced than Kissinger that for the Europeans to get together in a closer financial and monetary way would spell economic doom and gloom for the United States. Kissinger, however, remained convinced that it was a matter of life and death for both the Atlantic community and US leadership in the alliance. "Doing absolutely nothing . . . not only forces the Europeans together but enables them to develop whatever policy they want and pay us off in a constitutional currency; that is, it was integration and bye." Nixon pondered this. "Um-hmm," he said, further remaining on the fence in the issue.¹⁸⁶ Soon Kissinger was in full flow once again and could not help but express his strong anti-European sentiments. He did not believe that the US "should accept" this monetary development, "because if that works here," he thundered, "they'll apply it across the board, and increasingly, while demanding from us that in those areas where we have freedom of maneuver, we consult them. And that isn't—that is one of our big NATO—that's one of our big Atlantic crises." Kissinger suggested to Nixon, "at a minimum, at—in any event, I think you should write a letter" emphasizing Nixon's desire "of maintaining Atlantic unity."¹⁸⁷

In the course of the lengthy discussion, Kissinger, however, gradually became persuaded by Shultz's argument that a joint float might not actually be that detrimental to the United States' interests. Having calmed down a little, Kissinger now explained, "[If the Europeans come] with a proposal on the common float that we can live with, and we think it's constructive, and we then accept it—that I wouldn't think is bad for us." But he once again emphasized that the issue of nonconsultation was unacceptable. "What I don't think we can accept is that they make a major decision, just send you a pappy letter by one guy [Brandt], the other fellow [Heath] doesn't say any-

thing, and then tell us, 'Here it is.' That I think is unacceptable for us. . . . And also I think we can maneuver with the Japs a little bit, too." Nixon became enthusiastic. "Yeah. Yeah. Yeah," he repeatedly said in response to Kissinger's strong words,¹⁸⁸ perhaps remembering his younger years, when the songs of the Beatles were in vogue.

Flattering Nixon, Kissinger said that the president's suggested course of action was "a perfectly responsible exercise of leadership." Nixon was won over. He certainly favored "the use of a more positive leadership role," whether or not this meant intervention, "in order to serve our interests in keeping the Europeans apart; keeping them from developing a united policy against us." He wondered, however, if this was really feasible. Still, he encouraged Shultz to put his "mind to it in a different way" than he usually did: "you can't think of this, basically, as an economist."¹⁸⁹

Nixon then outlined his view: "The whole European relationship is in a state of, I think, very profound change at this point. And to the extent we can, we should use our economic and monetary stroke to try to affect that change in a way that will be—will serve our interests."¹⁹⁰ Kissinger could not have put it in finer words. For him, the whole matter went far beyond mere monetary and economic issues. It was power politics par excellence. "We've always been for integration. I've said it to you, and we've practiced it," Kissinger informed Nixon. "But we've always seen it as a step towards Atlantic cooperation. And in this case, moreover, it's world cooperation. And we've never interpreted European integration to mean that Europe takes unilateral decisions . . . that affect us and, in this case, affect even the Japanese . . . without prior consultation."¹⁹¹

Reflecting on Washington's past politics toward European integration, Kissinger explained, "we have worked ourselves for twenty years into the position where we have fostered European integration in the area where it's against our interest and have discouraged it in the area, mainly defense, where it is in our interest." The national security adviser believed this had to change; "the priorities have been totally wrong." After all, the US had "made the Europeans depend on us in defense, which even works against our economic interest, and given them a free hand in the economic field," which ran against US interests. "You really got it on the head there. I agree with that," the president responded.¹⁹²

Still on the same day, March 3, 1973, Nixon sent strong and similarly worded letters to both Brandt and Heath. In his message to Brandt, he outlined that "European integration should also be seen as a step towards in-

creased Atlantic cooperation.” He hoped that “before any proposals are made final” in the monetary question, the US would be given “an opportunity to express [its] views.”¹⁹³ In his letter to Heath, Nixon felt he could be even more straightforward. He told the British prime minister that it was not a good idea “to proceed unilaterally on a matter of fundamental concern to the other.” In fact, the president outlined that it was “a bad precedent for allies if they confront each other with a *fait accompli*.” Dealing with the “present currency crisis” could only work “on the basis of full consultation with countries whose interests are involved—including especially the United States and Japan.”¹⁹⁴

Of course, the very fact that Washington felt the need to insist on being consulted illuminated the decline of US authority within the Western alliance and the increase of a feeling of independence among the European allies. Until then, it had always been the Europeans who had been upset about a lack of consultation and had complained bitterly about this. For once, roles had been reversed, and it was the US that felt the need to insist on full consultation.

What also had become glaringly obvious by early 1973 at the latest was the fact that the Nixon administration had lost all interest in supporting the European integration process.¹⁹⁵ It was on March 10, 1973, that Nixon referred to the EC as having become a “Frankenstein monster.”¹⁹⁶ In a memorandum to Henry Kissinger, Nixon thundered, “The way the Europeans are talking today, European unity will not be in our interest, certainly not from a political viewpoint or from an economic viewpoint.”¹⁹⁷ Instead, the president predicted, “Europe will be in increasing confrontation with the United States rather than joining with us to present a united front against Soviet encroachment.” Nixon clearly felt the need to prevent the Europeans from moving toward a more integrated continent. “What matters now is what we do and we must act effectively and soon or we will create in Europe, a Frankenstein monster, which could prove to be highly detrimental to our interests in the years ahead.” He added, “needless to say, these thoughts must not get into the bureaucracy and must also not be discussed in any public forum.”¹⁹⁸ Europe had morphed into a monster, the US president had become convinced, that to all intents and purposes had begun to compete vigorously with the United States.¹⁹⁹

This also remained Henry Kissinger’s understanding. He and William Simon, the deputy secretary of the Treasury, agreed on March 14 that “a unified European monetary system” was not in the United States’ interest.

Kissinger even explained deviously, "I basically have only one view right now which is to do as much as we can to prevent a united European position without showing our hand." Kissinger pointed out to Simon that his "reason's entirely political," but he would "rather play with them individually" than as a coherent bloc. What had been decisive for him, he told Simon, was an intelligence report he had received "that made it clear to him that all our enemies were for the European solution": "that pretty well decided me."²⁰⁰ In a telephone conversation with Simon only a few hours later on the same day, Kissinger once again drove home his opinion: "You know, my basic view is that at this stage we should not bring about any further European integration until we—I'd even pay a certain price if necessary [for] intervening, if it's done for National currency." Kissinger was convinced that "a common float if it works, is going to lead to a common monetary system."²⁰¹ And such a development continued to greatly alarm him, despite George Shultz's best endeavors to convince him of the contrary.

The day after, Kissinger once again asked Simon if the decision to launch a common European float would "drive the Europeans together." Kissinger informed him, "we couldn't bust the Common float without getting into a hell of a political fight." Still, he said, "we should create conditions in which the Common float is as hard to work as possible." Considering the United States' at times almost overbearing predominance within the Atlantic alliance, he arrived at the somewhat surprising conclusion, "from now on we have to throw our weight around to help ourselves." Like a schoolboy who wishes to be at the center of attention but feels neglected when this is not the case, he added, then "they'll start paying attention to us again." Kissinger told the deputy Treasury secretary, "[I have] come to that view with reluctance but once you move, I think you have always to move strongly."²⁰²

Not the support of the European unity process but *divide et impera* seemed to have become Washington's new European strategy. The Nixon White House had concluded that European economic and political unity was directed against the United States, whether intentionally or by default. The US, therefore, seemed to have no option but to interfere to prevent the development of European unity by undermining the European integration process. No longer was European integration regarded as a worthwhile objective in principle; at best, the White House wished to limit its remit to enhanced cooperation in the North Atlantic area.²⁰³ This was also one of the main themes that featured prominently in Kissinger's Year of Europe scheme, which was launched only a little over four weeks later.

The president himself continued to express his “opposition to any solution that brought the Common Market countries closer together.” Kissinger agreed. “What we had to do,” he told Nixon, was “to throw a monkey wrench into the Common Market machinery, for European unity in the economic area would definitely work against U.S. interests.”²⁰⁴ Arthur Burns and George Shultz expressed their strong doubts about this course of action. They were alarmed about Nixon and Kissinger’s envisaged attempt “to corrupt the monetary system because of some scheme of theirs, not clearly thought through, of breaking up—or at least causing difficulties for the Common Market.”²⁰⁵ In any case, the future of transatlantic relations looked dire.

A New Monetary Age

In the midst of speculative turmoil, the end of the old monetary system came in March 1973. Heavy financial-market pressure on the dollar increased almost on a daily basis. On March 11, 1973, six European countries (West Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Denmark) agreed to tie their currencies together and let them float jointly. They decided on a joint float of their currencies against the dollar and all other currencies with effect from March 16.²⁰⁶ The major European currencies had finally abandoned shoring up the remnants of the Bretton Woods system. With this decision, soon approved by the G-10, the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates was abandoned for good in favor of a system of unpredictable floating exchange rates. This system is still in place today; it remains volatile.

The Nixon administration had hesitated to take the initiative itself to let the dollar float freely. It was feared that such a course of action, in the words of Arthur Burns, “would be regarded as economic belligerence on our part against everybody else.” It was “too much of a ‘To hell with the rest of the world’ policy ‘for a country like us.’”²⁰⁷ Burns was convinced in any case that “a floating world is not a good world.”²⁰⁸

Nevertheless, after March 16, the major European currencies and the dollar began to freely float against each other on the international currency markets, as Nixon and Connally had envisaged all along during the Camp David discussions almost eighteen months earlier. Speculative market forces had become too strong. Intervening in the currency markets had developed into a rather costly and exasperating exercise. Treasury Secretary Shultz,

however, felt it wise to indicate to the Europeans that the freely floating currencies were merely a temporary arrangement until a return to pegged rates was achieved.²⁰⁹

Both the Germans and the French, after all, continued to prefer a fixed-rate system. Ever suspicious, the Nixon White House believed that it was exactly such a system that had enabled Bonn and Paris for years to maintain an undervaluation of their currencies, thus making their exports cheaper and unfairly competitive. More important for the European attachment to a revised Bretton Woods system, however, was the fact that France and West Germany (as well as Federal Reserve Chairman Burns) remained deeply convinced that fixed exchange rates made for a much more stable and predictable international monetary system. But by March 1973, they too had no choice but to recognize the way the markets were moving. The EC countries finally caved in by deciding not to inflate further their own economies by “making massive dollar purchases . . . to support dollar parity.” They reluctantly agreed to implement the much-talked-about joint European float, which effectively resulted in yet another devaluation of the dollar.²¹⁰ The US currency quickly sank from 3.22 German marks to 2.83 marks and then, by the summer of 1973, to 2.58 marks.

When embarking on the joint float, the EC countries also terminated the Smithsonian Tunnel. It had become obvious that the Smithsonian currency margins could no longer be defended. The Six, however, agreed to uphold the maximum spread of 2.25 percent between their own currencies. The European currencies therefore remained fairly fixed against each other. The German mark was revalued upward toward the other Snake currencies by 3 percent. Thus, the Snake continued to live on but without the Tunnel. The Snake had become a “floating snake” toward the outside monetary world. The forerunner of a European currency bloc had been created.²¹¹

Still, the Snake soon showed all the weaknesses that had plagued the later stages of the original Bretton Woods system. In addition, rising oil prices after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had imposed an oil embargo in October 1973 led to steep rates of inflation and deteriorating balances of payments in most EC countries. Aside from the dropout of the British in June 1972, less than two months after the creation of the original Snake, in particular the departure from the system of Italy (February 1973) and France (January 1974 and March 1976, after it had rejoined) demonstrated a crucial fact: a regional European Bretton Woods system had no future either. Only the Germans remained a member of the

Snake throughout its lifetime, though ever since the departure of the Italian lira, the Snake had appeared to be lingering on its deathbed. After it had largely become a Deutschmark zone two years earlier, in 1979, the Snake was finally put out of its misery and formally gave way to the European Monetary System (EMS), with France and Italy rejoining the system.²¹² In practice, there were also many other technical continuities between the Snake and the EMS.²¹³

The basic problem was perhaps that the various European governments had not put their full strength behind the survival of the Snake. Similar to the reasoning that prevailed in Washington, the EC countries' domestic priorities, such as keeping the rates of inflation and unemployment down, clearly took precedence over the requirements that would have ensured a certain exchange-rate stability. The respective European "governments did not have the stomach for the austerity measures needed to defend their parities," Barry Eichengreen contends.²¹⁴

Throughout 1972–73, the French and the West Germans had been greatly disillusioned with the continuation of Washington's "benign neglect" policy. US economic policy continued to be almost exclusively guided by domestic US concerns. From a European point of view, this looked indeed like a highly selfish and egotistic policy. It contrasted profoundly with Washington's European strategy prior to Nixon's arrival in the White House. The United States' traditional policy of "enlightened self-interest" that had dominated almost the entire first three postwar decades had given way to a nationalistic and protectionist policy that just over four decades later would be referred to as an "America First" policy.

The Europeans kept reiterating their strong belief that the United States' hegemonic position came with certain obligations. It gave Washington the responsibility "not only to look out for its own interest but the interest of the free world," as French President Pompidou conveniently believed. The French were particularly resentful about the United States' ability to exploit the monetary predominance of the dollar for its own political and economic purposes. For both Paris and Bonn, "a good international monetary system" was one that provided "stability without rigidity."²¹⁵ Although Nixon preferred the setting up of an entirely new monetary system, it was not active US sabotage, however, but the economic and monetary market realities at the time that undermined the Snake. Still, there had been a good deal of *Schadenfreude* in Washington, DC, when both the Snake and the Smithso-

nian Agreement collapsed for good in March 1973, resulting in the free floating of the major global currencies.

It was somewhat puzzling that the EC countries decided on the joint European float on March 11, 1973, and thus almost a week before a prearranged meeting with the United States and other major powers on March 16. The economist Robert Solomon concludes persuasively that the six EC countries “wished to take an initiative that expressed their aspirations for European unity instead of appearing, once again, to be reacting to American decisions or lack of them.”²¹⁶

And indeed no less than French Finance Minister Giscard had pointed out to Paul Volcker in mid-February that a joint European float, if it came, could be interpreted “as a European effort to construct its own monetary system after a breakdown of the dollar.”²¹⁷ A few weeks later, on March 2, Chancellor Brandt even explained in his aforementioned controversial letter to Nixon that the EC countries were “making every conceivable effort to find a way out” of the “alarming new currency crisis.” But he emphasized that the solution the EC preferred was one “which strengthens European integration.” Such a solution, he was convinced, would also stabilize the “world political situation,” as “a weakening of the Community by separate action would be harmful to all.”²¹⁸

The US was not impressed. Volcker believed, for instance, and Nixon agreed, that looking for a “European solution is a euphemism for saying, ‘Let’s leave the United States out of the world . . . and go our independent course.’”²¹⁹ Burns explained the situation to the president. “Underlying it all,” he believed, was the fact that the Europeans “have come to view the U.S. as a locus of unsettling forces in the monetary world for years.” The EC countries held the strong view that in the monetary realm, “you can’t rely on the U.S.” Burns believed that it was quite likely that “the Europeans may now move to construct a new monetary system of their own.”²²⁰ This, however, was a somewhat premature conclusion. Despite the 1979 creation of the EMS and the limited European currency regime of the 1980s,²²¹ a single European currency for practical, everyday purposes was only created with the introduction of the euro in 1999. It was the emergence of such a real-world currency, which might one day rival the dollar as the global reserve currency, that the Nixon administration feared, albeit quite unrealistically.²²²

But not just the West’s monetary and financial problems troubled the US administration a great deal. Nixon and Kissinger had also become increas-

ingly alarmed about a general anti-US trend among the European allies. One of the main reasons why the US had not been particularly interested in the success of the Snake and the joint European float was the widespread belief in Washington that these measures would only further cement the EC as an economic fortress hostile to outsiders. The Nixon White House had become convinced that the EC member states were about to create a united European bloc that would further intensify economic and political rivalry among the allies on both sides of the Atlantic. Not least, it might well turn the EC into a serious competitor for US hegemony in the Western world.²²³

Nixon's policy as adopted on the advice of Henry Kissinger at the beginning of his presidency, that it was up to the Europeans to decide whether or not to move forward toward the "ever closer union" of the European continent, was quietly abandoned. Given a chance, the US now wished to interrupt the European integration process. This became quite clear when Nixon's and in particular Kissinger's anti-European sentiments and considerations became acutely obvious in the course of the Year of Europe debacle in the spring of 1973 and the Yom Kippur War in the fall.

Turning Point

THE UNITED STATES AND THE END OF “BENIGN HEGEMONY”

THE THIRD EARL OF CROMER, Lieutenant Colonel George Rowland Stanley Baring, was the epitome of a gentleman of the declining British Empire. Cromer represented both the old and the new. He personified the financially secure, aristocratic aloofness of bygone times and the savvy, business-oriented era of a hands-on postwar generation that had come of age during World War II or shortly thereafter. In 1970, Prime Minister Edward Heath appointed Cromer ambassador to the United States, at a time when for lack of better options the UK reorientated its foreign policy toward the EC while the US was becoming increasingly “gloomy” and “fatalistic” about its relationship with Europe.¹

Unwittingly, the appointment of the Earl to the ambassadorship in Washington reflected the crisis of identity and belonging that the UK and the entire (western) European continent found themselves in. Britain was still grasping for a new role in world affairs, as Dean Acheson had put it so aptly more than ten years previously.² The continental Europeans were attempting to push for a united continent and greater independence from the United States. Of course, at the same time, they did not wish to endanger the security and economic well-being that their link with the US still provided. Yet the European allies were worried about US policy. The Nixon administration came across as unreliable in global monetary and trade affairs and seemed to be mostly preoccupied with achieving a cease-fire in Vietnam. Any energy left in DC appeared to be consumed by the Watergate crisis and détente with Moscow and Peking.

Britain's new ambassador in the US was thus faced with the difficult task of having to remind the prickly ally in Washington of the importance of relations with the UK while not giving Britain's new European partners the impression that London was not serious about working with them for the creation of a united Europe. Cromer's boss, Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home, believed that the UK ought to benefit from the best of both worlds. We "should try to eat our cake and have it," he told the ambassador, "and maintain as much influence in Washington as we can" while giving "priority" to Britain's new "European commitment as far as possible."³

The US and the UK under Edward Heath

Cromer, a personal friend of Heath's, served at the British embassy until 1974 and thus for almost the entire length of Heath's difficult and tense time in office.⁴ As a former banker, IMF executive director, and governor of the Bank of England, his financial expertise came in handy when attempting to persuade the US authorities that British accession to the EC would be beneficial rather than detrimental to the important trade relations between the two countries. While Cromer was a shrewd and observant ambassador and shared the Nixon administration's conservative convictions, he never managed to develop particularly good relations with the White House. He certainly would never be taken into Kissinger's confidence as much as unexpectedly his predecessor, the Labour politician John Freeman, had been. Instead, "Kissinger would be formal, cool, and sometimes frosty, notwithstanding the fact that Britain had long been the most reliable ally of the U.S."⁵

Yet, based on the perception in the White House that the UK still had a somewhat more global view in comparison to the continental Europeans, Cromer and Kissinger developed a decent relationship over time. The commonality of the English language was also helpful, though Kissinger's native tongue, of course, was German. There even was the occasional banter: "You are getting suspicious in your old age," Cromer once pointed out; Kissinger, aged fifty, retorted, "I'm getting experienced."⁶ Affectionately, Kissinger referred to the Earl of Cromer by his nickname, Rollie.⁷ Privately, however, Kissinger believed that regarding Washington's cooling relations with the British, "Lord Cromer is of no help, although he is well meaning."⁸ And Cromer was somewhat intimidated by Kissinger's penchant to sharply criticize almost anyone he ever had to deal with.⁹ In a letter to the Foreign

Office about Kissinger's growing self-importance, Cromer did not hesitate to mention the national security adviser's "astonishing intellectual arrogance" and the "highly devious nature of Kissinger's intellectual make-up." Cromer was noticeably shocked about the disparaging way Kissinger referred to the Europeans. "I found his general scorn for 'the Europeans' (perhaps springing from some repressed feeling of guilt that he has deserted his intellectual heritage?) particularly disturbing," he reported to his superiors in the Foreign Office.¹⁰ Cromer also referred to Kissinger's "almost unbelievable display of prima-donnish behavior."¹¹

The ambassador, not a great Europhile himself, was a discerning person. He had spotted what was indeed an increasingly anti-European attitude in the White House. Cromer also fully realized, as had his predecessor, that his own government, "Labour or Conservative," was regarded as "a waning power" and had much less influence in the US capital than it used to have. It was not the remnants of Britain's role in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere in the world but its influence in Europe that was seen as most important for the US.¹² Over time, however, Prime Minister Heath's perceived aloofness toward Washington proved unacceptable to the White House. It annoyed and exasperated the Nixon administration. Kissinger raged, for instance, in the context of the October War that "Heath really has no emotional commitment to the U.S. He has an intellectual commitment, but not an emotional one. He is really more inclined toward the French."¹³

On February 1 and 2, 1973, right at the beginning of Nixon's second term in office, Heath was nevertheless the first foreign head of government who received an invitation to visit the White House and Camp David.¹⁴ Nixon viewed the prime minister's visit as "enormously important" and intended to spend "more time" with him than with many other visitors.¹⁵ According to Kissinger, "Heath was one of the few leaders in Europe the President really likes."¹⁶ Clearly, Heath did not go out of his way to distance his government from Washington, as is sometimes claimed in the literature. He was, however, much more enthusiastic than any other British prime minister had ever been about making the UK part of the EC. Participating in the joint European endeavor of a more unified EC foreign policy, Heath believed, was the right way forward for his country.¹⁷ Britain's place, Heath wrote in a 1988 article, "is in Europe. Our policy must be European." Throughout his premiership, he believed that his country "must no longer try to ride both horses at the same time." Instead, Britain ought to "make a success of the power we can use, which is that of Europe."¹⁸

Growing Transatlantic Rifts

In the early 1970s, Kissinger and his president were becoming ever more hostile to the Europeans' attempt to organize themselves into a common body. They were suspicious when within a few years, European Political Cooperation (EPC), a forum created in 1970 to coordinate the EC countries' foreign policies, became "a surprisingly dynamic tool" with the potential even to develop into a common European foreign policy.¹⁹ At the important first EC-Nine summit in Paris in October 1972, it was unexpectedly announced that all six member states, and the three new ones that were to join in the next few months, wanted to bring about European unification and "achieve the economic and monetary union." Rather unrealistically, the assembled luminaries envisaged "its completion not later than 31 December 1980."²⁰

In January 1973, three new countries joined the EC: the UK, Ireland, and Denmark. The Common Market, as the EC was still called in the Anglo-American world, seemed to develop an increasingly anti-US objective. At least this was the perception in the White House, although the three new EC members were all rather pro-US. Some observers even expected that in particular the UK might act as a "Trojan horse" for the US.²¹ Already in a September 1972 meeting with some of his advisers, Nixon had asked rhetorically, "Will the new EC be lined up against us?" The president then pontificated about the fact that "nationalism in Europe is stronger than nationalism in the US and its damned strong here." Nixon believed that the Europeans "enjoy kicking the US around. Eighty-eight per cent of all the European media is violently anti-US."²² This, of course, was mostly due to Nixon's controversial Vietnam policy.

Nixon, however, was unable or perhaps unwilling to recognize that the hostile attitude of many Europeans to the US had a lot to do with Washington's brutal war in Southeast Asia. Instead, he was convinced that the Europeans were prepared to "cut their own throat economically to take us on politically." In September 1972, the president did not hesitate to paraphrase Treasury Secretary Connally's statement from a year earlier that "European leaders want to 'screw' us" and that the US also wanted "to 'screw' them in the economic area."²³ Still, Nixon was hopeful that in the last resort the Europeans simply could not afford to be at loggerheads with the US for any length of time. The continuing realities of the Cold War and the necessity of US and NATO protection for the continent would make the Europeans

come to their senses.²⁴ By the spring of 1973, US skepticism and indeed outright hostility to European integration reached unprecedented levels. And this was not just a passing fancy. In fact, the Nixon era and the administration's lukewarm, if not hostile and antagonistic, European policy represented a decisive turning point in US policy regarding the unity of Europe. The transatlantic problems were structural in nature, though Nixon's and Kissinger's personalities also contributed their fair share.

Nixon, after all, was a highly distraught, tormented, and insecure man who felt unfairly treated and persecuted by almost anyone. In particular, he believed he was hounded by the liberals in US society and "the Jewish cabal" that was "out to get" him. The US president held deeply anti-Semitic views. Already in July 1971, he had informed his chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman: "The government is full of Jews. Second, most Jews are disloyal. You know what I mean? You have a Garment and a Kissinger and frankly, a Safire, and by God, they're exceptions. But Bob, generally speaking, you can't trust the bastards. They turn on you."²⁵ Nixon also felt persecuted by the press and the media and not least by the East Coast elite. "The establishment is the enemy," he raged. "The professors are the enemy. Professors are the enemy. Write that on the blackboard 100 times and never forget it."²⁶ The unfolding Watergate crisis only helped to deepen Nixon's paranoia.

The Shadow of Watergate

With the revelations that "Deep Throat" kept passing on to the *Washington Post* throughout 1973, the Watergate scandal was never far from dominating the nation's news headlines. It was only over thirty years later, in 2005, that it was revealed that the former FBI associate director Mark Felt had been the secret informant for much of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's reporting on the plot. By April 1973, the shocking scandal was moving even closer to the president himself. White House counselor John Dean began talking to prosecutors about the June 1972 burglary of the Watergate complex and the efforts of the White House to cover the tracks. He also told them about the 1971 burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist to find discriminatory information on the military analyst. In March of that year, Ellsberg had leaked the Pentagon papers on the Vietnam War to the press.²⁷ In mid-April 1973, the president fired Dean,²⁸ and on April 30, during an emotional meeting at Camp David, Nixon felt he had no choice but to ask for the resignation of his confidants Haldeman and Ehrlichman.²⁹

Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst resigned too; he had only been in office for less than a year. The administration was rapidly disintegrating. Nixon was becoming mentally unstable and living “in the stunned lethargy of a man whose nightmares had come true,” as Kissinger put it in his memoirs.³⁰

The US public was dumbfounded. Almost daily revelations continued and became ever more dramatic. Nixon attempted to jump ahead by claiming that the White House itself had been investigating thoroughly all the wrongdoings of some loose cannons in the administration. “There can be no whitewash at the White House,” he declared, but few were won over.³¹ On May 17, 1973, the Senate Watergate Committee began its public hearings. This investigation into the break-in at the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee in June 1972, its cover-up, and other illegal activities was broadcast live to millions of American households for two long weeks. Two days after the beginning of the hearings, special prosecutor Archibald Cox was appointed to investigate the president.

Despite the bright sunshine and sweltering heat in Washington, July 1973 was a particularly gloomy month for the Nixon administration. The president’s former assistant Alexander Butterfield revealed to the Senate that Nixon had given orders to secretly tape conversations in the Oval Office and other offices in the White House, the Executive Office Building, and Camp David by means of a sound-activated system. It was a “pivot point in the Watergate crisis.”³² The beginning of the end had come. Butterfield revealed that the system was active between February 1971 and July 1973. The tapes soon provided proof that Nixon personally had endorsed, if not initiated, as many people believe, the two burglaries of the Democratic Party campaign headquarters at the Watergate Hotel before the 1972 presidential election. The tape of June 23, 1972, revealed clearly that the president was involved personally in the coverup of the burglary by doing his best to block the judicial investigation of the whole matter. Nixon had attempted to obstruct justice. Other tapes revealed a number of erasures that gave rise to further speculation about the president’s personal role.³³ Nixon’s impeachment by Congress seemed to be all but inevitable.

Even Kissinger’s viewpoint began to change. Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns noted in his diary that Kissinger’s “attitude toward Nixon is very plain. He considers him devious, guilty of what happened at Watergate, etc. He sees no future for him, since most Americans ‘regard him as a felon.’”³⁴ Kissinger thought that Nixon had become unfit to run the coun-

try and should resign, though he was cautious enough not to mention this to the president.³⁵ By early March 1974, Kissinger informed Burns “emphatically that he thought Nixon must resign.” The president “was no longer attending to business” and had “destroyed” his influence, which also undermined Kissinger’s “effectiveness” in the foreign policy area.³⁶ More than three months later, Kissinger claimed that he “despise[d]” the president, who was “doing absolutely nothing in the area of foreign policy.”³⁷ By the summer of 1974, even loyal Republican senators were no longer able to help Nixon save his political skin.³⁸

A New European Initiative and a New Atlantic Declaration

During the stifling climate of suspicion, paranoia, instability, and, as the White House saw it, daily persecution by a hostile media, the president and also Kissinger became convinced that the Europeans too were “ganging up” on Washington and had become seriously hostile to the United States. On March 11, 1973, the six EC countries had decided to let their currencies jointly float against the dollar. With this decision, the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates was abandoned for good in favor of a system of floating and rather unpredictable exchange rates.³⁹ An entirely new monetary age began. In Bonn and the other European capitals, it was quickly realized that “a completely new climate, a new era” had commenced “with the end of the system of pegged currency rates.”⁴⁰ To most economic experts in Europe, such as West German Finance Minister Helmut Schmidt, it appeared obvious that Washington’s global leadership position had been compromised by this development. The US was no longer prepared to accept restrictions on its own monetary policies by adhering to a pegged exchange-rate system. Washington, Schmidt recognized, had in fact “surrendered the leadership of monetary policy, and thus in practice some of its de facto leadership of the West.”⁴¹

Nixon was aware of this development. While he doubted that the Europeans were able to act as a bloc, he fully realized that “a major shift in the world balance of power” was taking place, “particularly among ourselves, the Russians, the Chinese, and the Japanese.”⁴² Nixon also believed that the US was “in a watershed period with regard to our relations to Europe,” though he never tired of expressing his skepticism regarding the ability of the Europeans to unite in a politically meaningful way. Nixon was indeed prescient about the future role of a more united Europe. He thought it quite

possible that Europe would unite within ten to twenty years, but he believed nevertheless that the Europeans “aren’t going to be a major factor, because they’re never going to have the domestic opinion to have the punch-crunch power in a military sense that will make them a major factor.” And the Europeans knew it, the president thought. What really mattered in the future was what the US “says to Russia, and 10 years from now what we may say to China.”⁴³

Most of Nixon’s advisers in the White House were not quite so sure. They wondered whether a decoupling of western Europe from the United States was just around the corner. Henry Kissinger was certainly worried. Already in late 1971, when he had battled with Treasury Secretary John Connally in the wake of the August 15 decisions and the “Nixon shocks,” Kissinger had been troubled by the poor state of transatlantic relations. More than eighteen months later, in early 1973, US-European relations were still in deep crisis—and not only in the monetary field. Almost every area of transatlantic relations was affected. In fact, relations seemed to have gone from bad to worse.⁴⁴ President Nixon also became rather concerned about this state of affairs.

Already in the fall of 1972 Nixon began thinking about the foreign policy agenda of his potential second term in office; overcoming the dismal state of transatlantic relations featured high on his agenda.⁴⁵ “It is vital that we strengthen, not weaken, the alliance,” he explained. “Europe is still the geopolitical target of the Kremlin.”⁴⁶ Nixon thought it would be useful to draw up a “new Atlantic Charter” to provide the transatlantic alliance with a strategic and political compass, as Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had done all those years ago, in August 1941.⁴⁷ He also considered a grand tour of the most important European countries along the lines of his successful trip in February 1969. It was only after this trip, Nixon thought, that he had become preoccupied with other pressing foreign policy issues and started taking the Europeans for granted.

On November 18, 1973, only eleven days after Nixon’s impressive election victory, which gave him a second term in office, he issued National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 164 and ordered “the preparation of a basic study of our relations with Europe, with particular focus on Western Europe.” The report was to be completed by January 1. Both its existence and content needed to be treated sensitively, he advised.⁴⁸ The Europeans were apparently not meant to know about it. Nixon deemed the study “of prime importance.”⁴⁹ Exactly a month later, on December 18, the requested

report was submitted, and on January 29, 1973, two days before a major NSC meeting to discuss it, Hal Sonnenfeldt handed his analysis of the study to Kissinger. Sonnenfeldt, who like his boss had left Germany as a teenager in the 1930s, though he first was sent to school in England, was still one of Kissinger's closest and most formidable assistants.⁵⁰

Yet on this occasion, Sonnenfeldt's report contained few surprises or deeper insights.⁵¹ Instead, Sonnenfeldt told Kissinger what he already knew. "Europe's integration is greatest in the economic area, where our interests are most often challenged," he outlined, "and least in the political and military sphere, where our interests would best be served by integration." Sonnenfeldt concluded, "the unevenness of development in the two spheres accounts for the ambivalence of our approach to European integration."⁵² Of particular interest was perhaps Sonnenfeldt's overall recommendation. It clearly contradicted Kissinger's emotional response to the increasing monetary unity among the Europeans. "While we may eventually find that a loosening of [the transatlantic] relationship will come about," Sonnenfeldt explained, "to adopt it as a deliberate policy holds many uncertainties and dangers."⁵³ This was exactly what George Shultz and Arthur Burns had told Kissinger in the aftermath of the August 1971 monetary disputes. In any case, in late 1972 and early 1973, there were much more pressing issues of war and peace that needed to be dealt with.

On December 13, peace talks between the US and North Vietnam had collapsed. On December 18, Nixon ordered the brutal "Christmas bombing" (Operation Linebacker II), which was meant to bomb Hanoi back to the negotiating table in Paris. Congress was out of session and enjoying its Christmas vacation. It made sense for Nixon to act before Congress was back and might decide to interfere or ask inconvenient questions.⁵⁴ The bombings lasted a terrible two weeks. Giant B-52s roared over Hanoi and the Haiphong area in North Vietnam, and in more than thirty-four hundred sorties, they dropped well over twenty thousand tons of bombs. Close to two thousand civilians were killed, and severe housing and infrastructure damage occurred. Kissinger advised "total brutality," once the bombing raids had begun. Nixon was confident that the average American "doesn't give a damn" about any collateral damage, such as the killing of innocent civilians.⁵⁵ The vicious, sudden attacks were the largest heavy bomber strikes by the US Air Force since the end of World War II.

The Vietnamese, however, put up stiff resistance, and in just eleven days, their antiaircraft defense systems managed to shoot down a significant num-

ber of US aircraft, including ten B-52s. Five more of the giant planes were damaged and crashed in Thailand and Laos.⁵⁶ On December 29, Hanoi and Washington agreed to resume the peace talks on the basis of the draft treaty already tabled in early October. Both sides no longer insisted on including additional conditions for a cease-fire. It remains uncertain whether it was the Christmas bombing or Washington and Hanoi's readiness to go back to the October draft treaty that was instrumental for the resumption of the talks. The majority of the US public was convinced that the North had been bombed into submission. Nixon was delighted; that kind of "strong man" image was precisely the impression he wanted to create, whether or not it was true.⁵⁷

The final horrible bombing campaign of the Vietnam War had a most negative impact on US-European relations. Both the US and the European media outlets were full of highly critical comments. Nixon told his assistants—as would President Trump many decades later—"never forget, the press is the enemy."⁵⁸ Indeed, neither the US media nor the European press held back. The middle-of-the-road French weekly *L'express* wrote, "Mr Nixon is no longer, and will never again be a respectable man. That is, if he ever was one." Even the conservative *Times* of London commented, "Nixon ordered the most pulverizing saturation bombings against the wretched Vietnamese people. . . . This is not the conduct of a man who wants peace very badly." The German weekly *Die Zeit*, a liberal paper, agreed. Nixon's bombing campaign, the respected newspaper wrote, was "nothing but terror and torture; torture with a method in order to make the North Vietnamese pliable. The bombs fall on military targets, but they also hit hospitals and schools, women and children. . . . Even allies must call this a crime against humanity. . . . The American credibility has been shattered."⁵⁹

European politicians were also greatly distressed. Still, Willy Brandt, the West German chancellor, kept quiet for the sake of German-US relations. He was particularly concerned about the future of his *Ostpolitik*, which remained controversial in Washington. "I swallowed my grave doubts and held my tongue where it might have been better to make my opposition explicit," he later said.⁶⁰ Perhaps Kissinger was not too far off the point when in a different context he once said that Brandt did not "have the guts for ultimate confrontations."⁶¹

The Swedes were more courageous. As early as December 19, Swedish Foreign Minister Krister Wickman had called the bombing "blind and brutal." Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, a close friend of Brandt's, was so

upset that he issued a lengthy statement four days later. He spoke of the US conducting “a form of torture” in Vietnam. “There can be no military justification of the bombing,” he announced. “A nation is being tormented in order to humiliate it, to compel it into submission by force. That is why the bombing is an outrage.” Palme even compared the Christmas bombing to other “such outrages” at Guernica, Katyn, Lidice, Sharpeville, and Nazi concentration camps such as Treblinka.⁶² The reference to the Treblinka concentration camp threw Kissinger, after all a German Jew himself, into a rage. The outgoing Swedish ambassador was called in but merely responded that if the prime minister’s remarks upset the American, the Swedes were upset about the bombing. The US did not allow its chargé d’affaires to return to Sweden from his vacation, and Stockholm was told not to bother sending a new ambassador to the US.⁶³

The outrage in Europe continued unabated, however. Even the cautious Labour politician Roy Jenkins, former British home secretary and chancellor of the exchequer and future EC Commission president, spoke of “brutality on a vast scale.”⁶⁴ Nixon did not take kindly to this sort of stark criticism. He was furious. He seethed and raged about negative US and European coverage. His view of the old continent soured further. Among the major European leaders, only British Prime Minister Heath refrained from criticizing Nixon publicly, receiving an invitation to the White House in return.⁶⁵

The Vietnam negotiations commenced again in early January, but it took almost three weeks before the Paris Peace Accords materialized. Kissinger and Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho agreed on a cease-fire on January 23, 1973; they signed a peace treaty at the Hotel Majestic in Paris four days later. On the same day, Nixon announced in a major TV address to the US nation that the war in Indochina was over and that the United States had achieved “peace with honor.” All remaining US troops would be coming home soon. The last US ground troops left Vietnam on March 29, 1973.

Nixon and Kissinger, however, were fully aware of the fragile state of South Vietnam with its weak and scared military and corrupt government. They hoped that Saigon’s almost inevitable collapse would not occur before a “decent interval” had taken place, so that the blame for the end of the South Vietnamese Republic would not be pinned on the Nixon administration. More than one hundred thousand North Vietnamese troops remained in the South, and throughout the summer of 1973, there were frequent cease-fire violations. When Nixon’s chief of staff, Al Haig, asked how long the Saigon government might survive, Kissinger told him, “if they’re lucky they

can hold out for a year and a half.”⁶⁶ He was right. On April 30, 1975, renewed North Vietnamese attacks led to the fall of South Vietnam and the dramatic evacuation by helicopter of the last remaining Americans (and a few South Vietnamese) from the roof of the US embassy in Saigon. Vietnam became a united, communist-run country. After almost a decade and a half of intense fighting, the US had lost its first foreign war, and communism had taken over a US-protected, semidemocratic country. Among Washington’s allies and foes, however, US credibility did not noticeably weaken, contrary to what Nixon and Kissinger (as well as the Johnson White House) had always claimed to explain the administration’s Vietnam policy.

The Origins of the “Year of Europe” Speech

While in Paris in late 1972 for what turned out to be the almost final leg of the Vietnam peace negotiations, Kissinger continued to be deeply concerned about the worsening relations with Europe. In the Élysée Palace on December 8, during a conversation with the aloof President Pompidou, who insisted on talking French to his American visitor, Kissinger explained gravely, “after the war was over we intended to give more emphasis to Atlantic relationships.” Perhaps it might make sense to convene a major summit meeting. Europe and North America had made “no serious effort” for a long time, Kissinger pontificated, “to chart their larger common purposes.”⁶⁷

The French president “was avuncularly encouraging,” as Kissinger put it in his memoirs.⁶⁸ Yet Pompidou, at heart a Gaullist with a conciliatory bent rather than a radical tendency, certainly had “a vision of the grandeur of France.”⁶⁹ In an interview with the *New York Times*’ Jim Reston a few days later, he jumped the gun and referred to the necessity of a transatlantic meeting “at the highest level” to “clarify” economic and political relations. No doubt Pompidou wished to be seen as the originator of such a summit meeting.⁷⁰ Kissinger, in turn, attempted to share responsibility with the French for what would become the long-drawn-out Year of Europe saga when claiming in his memoirs, “the ill-fated Year of Europe was born in the office of the President of the French Republic.”⁷¹

Subsequently Kissinger also discussed his “nebulous ideas” with British officials and even asked them to help him out by preparing a “conceptual framework” assessing the future of transatlantic relations.⁷² Feeling obliged to follow up on Washington’s request, British officials soon submitted a report, though they kept their distance from Kissinger’s scheme. The prime

minister had insisted on this. In case their cooperation on the issue was leaked, it was important, Heath believed, to avoid the impression that Britain was ganging up with the Americans against the other Europeans.⁷³ Heath had realized that Kissinger attempted to make the UK a coconspirator in his European initiative.

A similar case of the White House trying to draw the UK back into its orbit and divide the Europeans in the process occurred in the run-up to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev's visit to the US, June 18–25, 1973. The US asked for confidential British help when they began drafting the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War that Nixon and Brezhnev eventually signed on June 22. The agreement was based on a Soviet proposal not to use atomic weapons against each other. Kissinger quickly recognized that it might well render useless the US nuclear security guarantee to western Europe. The agreement needed to be drafted very carefully. The British called it "Operation Hullabaloo," and one of their most senior Foreign Office officials and foremost Soviet experts, Sir Thomas Brimelow, participated in preparing the agreement. Although the British, French, and Germans were allegedly "kept informed at all stages of the negotiations," the latter two were aware of some kind of British cooperation but did not know that a British official had actually written the final agreement.⁷⁴ Brimelow, it seems, "drafted 90 per cent" of the final text.⁷⁵ The Treaty with Moscow was viewed skeptically in Europe in any case, as it smelled of superpower collusion, exclusive Anglo-American cooperation, and the deliberate attempt to sideline the rest of the alliance in the process.⁷⁶

The White House certainly had not given up trying to dislodge the British from the other Europeans. In a talk with Ambassador Cromer in late November 1973, Kissinger expressed his "sadness" that "the special relationship was collapsing." Britain's EC membership, Kissinger explained, "should have raised Europe to the level of Britain. Instead it had reduced Britain to the level of Europe." Kissinger became very gloomy. "Up until the end of July this year, the U.S. had not treated Britain as a foreign country." Instead the US "relied on them as a bridge to Europe." But this had changed. "Now it was different."⁷⁷

Still furious about European criticism of the Christmas bombing, Nixon emphasized during a press conference on January 31, 1973, that the US had indeed "been paying attention to the problems of Europe." Now it was time that "those problems will be put on the front burner." After the US had dealt extensively with Vietnam, China, and the Soviet Union during the preced-

ing few years, “we now must turn to the problems of Europe.” Although he would “not take a trip to Europe” or for that matter anywhere else outside the US during the first half of the year, “there will be great attention paid to Europe.”⁷⁸ A few hours later, Nixon explained to visiting Prime Minister Heath that the Christmas bombing had delayed his envisaged European initiative.⁷⁹

The expected US initiative on Europe was widely discussed, though it was long in coming. Brandt and Pompidou met in Paris on January 22–23, 1973, and agreed on the urgent need to conduct transatlantic talks to improve cooperation across the Atlantic in a great number of areas.⁸⁰ Similar meetings with and among other European leaders also took place in the following weeks and months. With the exception of the suspicious French, in principle they were all well disposed toward a constructive US initiative. In Washington, however, there never seemed to be any time to focus on Europe. And even after the Paris Peace Accords had been signed in late January 1973, no transatlantic initiative occurred. This time Nixon had become fully occupied with the Watergate crisis. Nixon slept badly, drank too much, was easily excitable, and had frequent temper fits. Clearly he was hugely distracted by his domestic travails.⁸¹ As he was in no position to make a major speech on transatlantic relations, it was left to Kissinger to pick up the pieces.

Kissinger’s Speech and the EC’s Response

To the utter surprise of many people, in April 1973, Kissinger grandly announced the Year of Europe to put transatlantic relations on a new footing, though of course still under firm US leadership. In his speech on April 23, 1973, at an Associated Press luncheon in New York’s luxurious Waldorf Astoria Hotel, Kissinger proposed a new comprehensive Atlantic Charter for “setting the goals for the future” and reinvigorating “shared ideals and common purposes.” The new grand charter would be signed by the president, Kissinger announced, during Nixon’s envisaged visit to Europe in the fall.⁸²

Kissinger did not hesitate in his speech to emphasize that the US had global responsibilities, while the EC countries only had to deal with regional problems. He also insisted on a greater degree of military burden sharing, as only Europe’s economic contribution would guarantee the fur-

ther functioning of the United States' security umbrella.⁸³ Both points but particularly the "quid pro quo" linkage between economic and security concerns led to severe difficulties with the western Europeans. Kissinger was quite right regarding the provinciality of Europe's regional concerns, though no one in Europe wished to admit it. His speech, therefore, went down like a lead balloon.⁸⁴ Kissinger had actually argued along very similar lines in his scholarly writings.⁸⁵ This, however, had largely been forgotten. Instead, on the old continent, his Year of Europe proposals were received with both alarm and astonishment. Kissinger later defended himself by claiming that he had been misunderstood; he would be glad to see Europe develop into a global player. Yet the damage had been done. Besides, Kissinger did not really believe that the EC would become a global power anytime soon. "The Europeans are conducting a domestic but not a foreign policy," he remarked toward the end of the year. "De Gaulle had a foreign policy," but Pompidou only "has an economic policy."⁸⁶

Kissinger also maintained that he had not intended to put pressure on Europe by casting doubts about Washington's defense commitment to the continent. In his speech, he indeed emphasized that "America remains committed to doing its fair share in Atlantic defense" and that Nixon was "adamantly opposed to unilateral withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe."⁸⁷ The American people, he added, however, had a right to expect a "rational defense posture, at the safest minimum size and cost, with burdens equitably shared." Kissinger continued by saying that "when this is achieved, the necessary American forces will be maintained in Europe." This indeed sounded like a conditional offer. In not-so-subtle words, he had also stated bluntly, "an unbridled economic competition . . . can sap the impulse for common defense."⁸⁸

At the same time, Kissinger attempted to come across as a strong supporter of the unity of Europe. The transatlantic alliance, he outlined, had "been the cornerstone of all postwar foreign policy" and "the stimulus for an unprecedented endeavor in European unity." He even claimed that "no element" of US foreign policy had been "more consistent than our support of European unity," though Washington "knew that a united Europe would be a more independent partner." The US, according to Kissinger, believed that the common transatlantic interests "would be assured" nevertheless. "We expected," he said at the Waldorf Astoria, "that political unity would follow economic integration and that a unified Europe . . . would ease many

of our international burdens." The US, he stated, would "continue to support the unification of Europe," but European unity remained "not an end in itself but a means to the strengthening of the West."⁸⁹

The Europeans begged to differ. For the EC-Nine, European unity was a value and an objective in its own right. It was not meant merely to serve to strengthen the West or to be part of a more superior or important Atlantic superstructure. Kissinger and Nixon, it appeared, remained caught in Cold War thinking, in which the coherence and unity of the West under US leadership was the ultimate objective. Everything else was secondary. The Europeans were looking well beyond the East-West conflict, which by the 1970s seemed to be gradually dissolving in any case. It is no wonder they were not impressed by Kissinger's status quo speech. "Our priorities in the FRG are for Western European integration and for Transatlantic partnership," German Foreign Minister Walter Scheel told him later in the summer. "This definitely has priority over East-West matters."⁹⁰

Despite his jovial exterior and lighthearted manner, Scheel was a political heavyweight and one of the driving forces behind détente in Europe. He negotiated the final drafts of the reconciliation and nonaggression treaties with the Soviet Union and Poland in 1970.⁹¹ To him and his countrymen and the other Europeans, it was quite obvious: "The policy of détente is impossible without European integration and Atlantic cooperation."⁹² Possessing an excellent baritone voice, Scheel, known for enjoying "cigars and a night on the town,"⁹³ recorded a well-known folk song: "High Up on the Yellow Wagon." It became a surprise hit just before Scheel was elected German president; the song stayed in the German charts for fifteen weeks, climbing to number 5 in early January 1974.⁹⁴ That this had happened, *Time* magazine commented, "was about as likely as Henry Kissinger's warbling 'On Top of Old Smoky' with choral accompaniment by Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians."⁹⁵

Toward the end of Kissinger's April 24 speech at the Waldorf Astoria, he emphasized "the necessity to articulate a clear set of common objectives together with our allies." His speech, he said, was "an appeal for a joint effort of creativity" for building "a new structure of international relations for the decades ahead." He was convinced that "a revitalized Atlantic partnership" was "indispensable" for this endeavor.⁹⁶ It was obvious: the unity of Europe was secondary for Washington. It was all about giving the US-led Atlantic alliance a new dynamic, no more, no less. Kissinger's speech did not lay out a vision that went beyond merely updating and reenergizing the Cold War status quo in transatlantic relations.

There was widespread disappointment on the continent. The reaction to his speech “was not very elevated,” as Kissinger expressed it euphemistically a few months later.⁹⁷ The Europeans strongly disagreed with the deeper substance of the speech, although in the following weeks, European complaints focused on nonconsultation and Kissinger’s patronizing tone. Kissinger’s NSC staff had not told Secretary Rogers and the State Department about the speech. The State Department thus could not offer any soothing explanations when inquiries about the speech came pouring in. Prior to the speech, Nixon himself had consulted the eminent John McCloy, the former US high commissioner in Germany. Both men agreed that the development of an even more united Europe was not advantageous to the US.⁹⁸ In March, McCloy had already told Kissinger that he “was scared to death” by the prospect of European unity, which was “developing now in an anti-American direction.” Kissinger agreed. He informed Nelson Rockefeller, his old mentor, during a phone conversation, “we can’t maneuver among them if they’re unified.”⁹⁹

While it had been clear for many months that the White House was contemplating an initiative on Europe, it had not been self-explanatory that this would take the form of a major speech by the national security adviser. And the United States’ allies “only received twenty-four hour notice of the actual text,” as Kissinger admitted, due to US “bureaucratic requirements.”¹⁰⁰ Kissinger and his aides had only informed the EC-Nine in a somewhat perfunctory way by means of a number of brief bilateral sessions about the national security adviser’s intention.¹⁰¹ Most European leaders, therefore, professed that they had not been consulted, though this was somewhat disingenuous, as in particular the French and the British governments had been told in general terms about Kissinger’s planned European address.¹⁰²

The Europeans, in any case, resented the patronizing approach of the US administration. Prime Minister Heath described Kissinger surprising the Europeans with the announcement of a Year of Europe this way: “[It was] rather like my standing between the lions in Trafalgar Square and announcing that we were embarking on a year to save America!”¹⁰³ The Brussels-based US official James E. Goodby commented later that it was all “quite condescending” and “created a rather bad impression.” It seemed that Kissinger felt that “the Europeans were getting out of line and they had to be brought into some kind of disciplined, more monolithic position.”¹⁰⁴

Kissinger would have been surprised by these words. He was utterly taken aback by the hostile reaction his speech received. He had hoped that

spurred on by his “visionary” speech, Nixon and Pompidou would begin the process of drafting a new transatlantic treaty during the forthcoming Franco-American meeting in Reykjavik in late May 1973.¹⁰⁵ A grand new declaration could then be signed during a presidential visit to Europe in the fall.¹⁰⁶ While at the core of Kissinger’s Year of Europe idea was the genuine intention to breathe new cooperative and constructive life into the transatlantic relationship, in the last resort, the Year of Europe scheme intended to keep the old transatlantic relationship alive under clear US leadership.¹⁰⁷ It was an initiative to revive and extend the life of the United States’ “benign hegemony” over the Western world and to undermine any European moves toward the creation of a United States of Europe. Kissinger, after all, had never liked the establishment of a European pillar in the transatlantic relationship. For him, bilateralism meant bilateral relations between the US and the individual European countries. It did not mean a bilateral US-EC relationship, which, in his view, would only develop into an adversarial relationship. Europe and the US, he felt, were already opposing each other in too many international questions as it was.¹⁰⁸

The hostile reception Kissinger’s speech received in Europe was at least partially due to this stance of his. This is often misunderstood. The Europeans were miffed about the lack of straightforward consultation and Kissinger’s conceited tone, as they perceived it. But they were deeply angry about Washington’s all-too-obvious attempt to prevent the development of a more united Europe. This was at the heart of the criticism of the Year of Europe speech. All EC leaders were well aware of the main drift of Kissinger’s words. They also feared that Kissinger intended to get a greater degree of “burden sharing” out of the European allies without, however, granting them more influence.¹⁰⁹ While this was disconcerting, it was the US attempt to undermine the unity of Europe and instead push for a strengthening of the Atlantic framework that turned Kissinger’s Year of Europe into such a controversial issue on the continent.

The Aftermath of the Speech

Transatlantic difficulties continued in the aftermath of Kissinger’s speech. It took the Europeans a long time to consult with each other and develop a common approach of how to respond to his remarks.¹¹⁰ It may well have been Soviet leader Brezhnev’s visit to the US in the middle of June 1973 that energized the EC to do something about the looming issue. Before then, the

EC had only been able to conclude that the US should certainly be prevented from dividing the EC-Nine. Agreement on more precise procedural steps had not been possible, not least as the French had no desire, as Foreign Minister Michel Jobert expressed it in his memoirs, to be party to “consecrating American hegemony over the western world.”¹¹¹ Jobert was a former aide to Prime Minister Pierre Mendès-France, whom he greatly admired, and an administrator at the Cour des Comptes. He had authored fifteen books, including three novels. Not lacking in Machiavellian skills, he was frequently referred to as “the French Kissinger.” Married to an American wife, he “was usually direct and outspoken, but true none the less.”¹¹²

While denigrating the US in public, the French were at the same time in top secret talks with Washington about the continuation of US support for the further development of French nuclear weapons. The collaboration had started with a meeting between Nixon and Pompidou in February 1970. They agreed that the US would give “negative guidance” to help the French make more rapid progress with developing advanced nuclear weapons, including warheads, missiles, underground test assistance, and penetration aids.¹¹³ The US, as Richard Ullman and William Burr have demonstrated, would tell the French if their research was heading into the right direction, thereby sidelining the US Atomic Energy Act, which forbade the transfer of information about nuclear weapons design to foreign governments.¹¹⁴ Washington appreciated the usefulness of this cooperation in creating closer political ties to the French.¹¹⁵

In top-secret talks with Kissinger and the US secretary of defense, James Schlesinger, and their senior aides between April and September 1973, and thus during the emotional aftermath of Kissinger’s Year of Europe speech, French Defense Minister Robert Galley even proposed a new course of action. Galley asked for more concrete US help with the development of a new French nuclear weapons generation, thus “crossing a line that was observed during previous cooperation,” as William Hyland, one of Kissinger’s assistants, put it. It also could take the US “beyond the level of cooperation with the British, if actually carried out,” Hyland advised Kissinger.¹¹⁶ Yet, as another official pointed out in a memorandum to the secretary of defense, it was probably “true that the move is beyond our current written guidance; it seems doubtful that it is beyond current Presidential intent, however.”¹¹⁷

Jobert was fully in the picture about these activities. He realized that Kissinger would want to use US support for France’s nuclear weapons development to make the French more amenable regarding his scheme for

the future of the transatlantic alliance, as outlined in his Year of Europe speech. He also suspected that the White House was trying to bring France and its nuclear weapons back under the wings of NATO.¹¹⁸ Kissinger was indeed keen on exploiting the nuclear rivalry between the French and the British. At a breakfast meeting in the Pentagon on September 5, 1973, he told Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, "we want to keep Europe from developing their unity as a bloc against us." Mischievously he added, "if we keep the French hoping they can get ahead of the British, this would accomplish our objective."¹¹⁹

In the summer of 1973, Jobert and German Foreign Minister Scheel promised the US that they would submit drafts of a possible EC declaration in response to Kissinger's address.¹²⁰ Eventually the EC-Nine foreign ministers let it be known that they would get together on July 23 in Copenhagen to discuss jointly how to react to Kissinger's speech, which the Danish foreign minister would then present to Washington. Denmark held the six-month rotating EC presidency. The minister, however, would not be entitled to negotiate with the US on behalf of the Nine.¹²¹

Kissinger was distinctly unimpressed by the prospect of having to deal with a mere "messenger" rather than someone who could enter into negotiations with him.¹²² The White House also had expected that bilateral US-EC consultation would take place before the EC formulated a joint position. This would allow Washington to give its input and "be present in the formative period," as Kissinger explained to Jobert.¹²³ The EC-Nine, however, decided "not to communicate with the U.S." until they had formulated their own position. "We were to know nothing about the drafting process," Kissinger still raged in November 1973. This was "extraordinarily worrisome." While the declaration itself was "not so important," the fact that the US had been shut out of the consultation and formulation process Kissinger found highly disconcerting.

The EC's refusal to consult with the US when considering a joint float of the members' currencies, of course, had already been the issue that had antagonized Kissinger the most during the monetary discussions a few months earlier. The situation seemed to be very similar with regard to the envisaged new Atlantic Charter. "The Nine won't discuss with us until they have made their decision," he fumed. This was unacceptable. Seething with anger, he said, "we are forced into a type of consultation which is worse than we have with any other country."¹²⁴ Moreover, throughout the summer of 1973, there was "total silence" from the EC countries.¹²⁵

During the internal EC consultations, Prime Minister Heath proposed that Kissinger's suggested declaration was not the right way forward. Instead, the Europeans agreed that it might be best to propose two separate declarations. It was suggested to draw up an Atlantic Declaration within a NATO context. It would deal with defense cooperation and burden-sharing issues. A second, possibly more complex declaration would deal with economic, EPC, and European unity issues between the EC-Nine and the US. As expected, the latter turned out to be much more difficult than the negotiations within NATO. It was even unclear, for instance, who ought to actually sign the second declaration and whether Nixon should be asked to come to Europe for a ceremonial event that year or next.

Exasperated by what transpired about the complex European consultation process, on July 30, Kissinger told a visiting UK delegation headed by some of London's top officials that the Year of Europe was effectively "over." He explained that the US "will do nothing further until we hear from the Europeans" in response to his speech on April 23.¹²⁶ The British delegation hastened to pacify him. A constructive reply would be forthcoming soon. The complex procedures to discuss and agree on the content of the European declaration among nine governments had slowed down matters.¹²⁷ Kissinger was hardly reassured. "[If I] knew then what I know now, I would certainly never have given the speech," he said.¹²⁸ The "present troubles" were "symptomatic of something deeper," he believed. Were there any achievements during the past three years in Atlantic relations, Kissinger asked rhetorically, to which the allies could "point with pride?" "Nothing," he concluded, "just disputes."¹²⁹ Later, he thought that the Year of Europe plan "was one of the worst mistakes that he had made."¹³⁰ Considering his many other controversial policy decisions throughout his tenure in office, this seemed to be quite an exaggeration. At least the Year of Europe initiative did not result in any casualties.

Despite the alleged "total silence" from the EC, Kissinger was quite up-to-date about the developments in Europe. Italian ambassador Egidio Ortona gave him extraordinarily frank information about the crucial EC foreign ministers' meeting on July 23, 1973. It was based on the detailed information Ortona had received from his own foreign minister, Aldo Moro, and some other high-ranking officials. Having worked on the Italian participation in the Marshall Plan and NATO and then as UN ambassador, Ortona was very well disposed toward the US.¹³¹ The Italian also was a great admirer of Henry Kissinger, describing him in his published diaries as "gifted

with a brilliant intellect, a deep culture, a relentless ambition.”¹³² He wrote that Kissinger was not “oppressed by the burden of loyalty to any ideology” but believed in the balance of power. Kissinger, Ortona thought, was “convinced that only shrewd manipulation of this ‘balance of power’ would provide the United States with the dominant position and the world with a period of peace.”¹³³ Kissinger reassured him that his attitude was “very positive and understanding.”¹³⁴

Ortona told him that the “French were stubborn” and wanted Nixon to hold a summit meeting in Europe the following year, after they had completed “their search for a European identity.” The British and the Germans were “not hot about the idea of a summit this year.” Scheel was “wishy washy,” and Douglas-Home “was orthodox” and “not warm to anything.”¹³⁵ The Nine were thinking of having a number of committee meetings in late August and early September and then another foreign ministers’ meeting on September 10 or 11 to slash out a common position.¹³⁶ Ortona warned Kissinger that he “may have a good, big fight with the French” on his hands and that he might want to visit four or five important European capitals in the near future, an idea Kissinger found intriguing. Kissinger concluded somewhat abruptly, “they are impossible, the Europeans.” The Italian ambassador fully agreed, adding tongue in cheek that he might have to opt for US citizenship.¹³⁷

Eventually, at the Copenhagen foreign ministers’ meeting in late July 1973, the EC-Nine managed to develop a joint position and create a draft for an EC-US declaration. A month later, on September 23, Danish Foreign Minister Knud B. Andersen came to see Kissinger in the White House and presented the joint EC position to him.¹³⁸ Kissinger still disliked the whole approach and expressed his sentiments in a rather frank way. Sarcastically, he welcomed the “new and extraordinary phenomenon . . . that Europe speaks with one voice.” But Kissinger criticized in no uncertain terms that the EC-Nine had not been in touch with him between July 23 and September 19. In the meantime, the document presented to the US had been leaked to the press, and any change in the paper “will be seen as a victory of one side or the other.”¹³⁹

Kissinger continued to complain strongly about the procedure: in the “preparations of its position we were not consulted; then a document is presented to us by a representative that is not empowered to negotiate but only to receive comments and take back to the Nine for comments.” Kissinger got rather excited. “We seem to be talking to those who can’t negoti-

ate and those who can negotiate won't talk to us." This was not something the US could "accept as a permanent arrangement." Even the Soviet Union would talk to Washington "through their Ambassador before formulating their position."¹⁴⁰ While Kissinger went rather over the top in his talk with the Danish foreign minister, who became "very unhappy,"¹⁴¹ he was not altogether wrong. The chosen EC "procedure alone risks an erosion of our relationship," Kissinger had admonished the Dane. And he did not beat about the bush. The development of a European identity, which the US was happy to reaffirm, was "an event of greater significance to Europe" than to the US. For the US, "Atlantic relations are absolutely essential," he explained. But "Europe must decide if it intends to build Europe or also to build Atlantic relations. If the decision is to build Europe when the Atlantic relationship is collapsing then the European achievement will be at the expense of Atlantic relations."¹⁴²

In a subsequent talk over a rather fine lunch with French Foreign Minister Jobert, Kissinger was more respectful. "Many people want me to see you because they feel," Kissinger told Jobert, "you are the only person who can get the better of me." But he found it difficult to restrain his sarcasm. When Jobert said he would speak in English, although this was more difficult for him, Kissinger responded by saying, "you do not need to know much English to say 'no.'"¹⁴³ Once again the national security adviser pointed out that there were procedural and content problems between the US and the EC-Nine. "The EC document," he complained to Jobert, was a mere "collection of phrases" taken from various summit pronouncements, and the Atlantic relationship was hardly mentioned. Moreover, it was "hard to have a dialogue when the Europeans don't produce anything until this week." Kissinger even thought that there should perhaps be a third declaration that could be drawn up focusing on transatlantic relations with Japan. Soon the idea of whether to include Japan led to yet another minicrisis when the Europeans suggested bilateral negotiations with Japan, as such talks would be more "concrete." Any trilateral negotiations that involved the US "would have to be vague and general," they told the Japanese. The EC had not informed the US about their approach to Tokyo, and once again Kissinger was outraged when he found out. Kissinger had a rather delicate ego and felt easily slighted.¹⁴⁴

Earlier Kissinger had already reminded Jobert that the Europeans should bear in mind how the political landscape in the US was developing. "There is no one around who would be as sympathetic on European matters as the present Administration." Thus, the EC countries should agree on a summit

where Nixon could sign both declarations.¹⁴⁵ The “drafting war on the declarations,” as John McCloy called it, was in full swing.¹⁴⁶ Kissinger thought that regarding transatlantic relations, “the party is over.”¹⁴⁷

The issue, however, that was most important to the White House and most unacceptable to the EC remained. In the aftermath of Kissinger’s April speech as well as essentially throughout the Nixon presidency and in subsequent years, the US had made it repeatedly clear that Washington desired to be consulted prior to any economic and common foreign policy decisions by the EC-Nine that had an impact on the US.¹⁴⁸ Considering Washington’s global reach, this effectively came close to a US demand to be consulted on all important matters prior to the EC taking any decisions. This looked suspiciously like a US request for a veto regarding virtually all important EC policy decisions. It explains why Kissinger viewed procedural questions as of great importance. It is no wonder that the EC countries unanimously rejected this.

Kissinger was greatly annoyed by this European attempt, as he saw it, to gang up on the United States. He preferred bilateral dealings in any case. The US felt deserted by its traditional allies. “1973 was a ‘1956 in reserve,’ the British politician David Owen commented. Indeed, as Britain had been isolated during the 1956 Suez crisis, in the early 1970s, it was the US that felt abandoned.¹⁴⁹ Even Kissinger admitted as much during a December 1973 ministerial NATO meeting. “The Europeans really did to us what we did to them in 1956,” he stated.¹⁵⁰ The Year of Europe debacle dragged on during the remainder of 1973, and Kissinger kept reflecting on his predicament of having to deal with allies who were more difficult than Washington’s foes.¹⁵¹

At one stage, Kissinger put not-so-subtle pressure on the West German ambassador, Berndt von Staden, when he told him that he was becoming “bored by this project” and was unsure if “it was worth further consultations.” He explained that “in its present shape,” the transatlantic relationship “could not survive five let alone fifty years.”¹⁵² Von Staden was alarmed by Kissinger’s forceful words and personality. The tall and distinguished-looking diplomat had only recently been appointed ambassador to the US. As director of the Political Department of the German Foreign Ministry, he had been a close confidant of Foreign Minister Scheel and Chancellor Brandt during the *Ostpolitik* negotiations of the previous three years.¹⁵³ The ambassador emphasized emotionally, “the objective to which he continued to be dedicated was the desire to build a united Europe.” Without skipping

a heartbeat, Kissinger immediately replied, "that we too strongly favor this course." Contradicting all his skeptical and hostile internal comments of the past few months, he emphasized, "We wished to help promote European Unity." He had begun to despair, Kissinger claimed, once he had noticed that the Europeans refused to use the word "partnership or see that Unity developing in opposition to the US." European unity should not make "cooperation with us more rather than less difficult," he fumed. This sort of thinking would have "a profound effect on our long-term relationship," he gloomily predicted. With a hint of melancholy and pained sorrow in his voice, he professed that he was often "struck by a profound sadness."¹⁵⁴

In Kissinger's talk with the German ambassador in late October 1973, he insisted that the current US government was "the last administration which has an emotional commitment to Europe. Future administrations," he explained, "may have some intellectual commitment, but this may not be good enough." Things were going from bad to worse. "He was unable to point to anything positive in the alliance relationship in the last few years." Emphatically, Kissinger said, "We do not want a fake partnership and cooperation. We want the real thing."¹⁵⁵

Of course, what Kissinger and Nixon meant by "the real thing" was very different from what the Europeans had in mind. While the latter were thinking in terms of a transatlantic partnership of truly equal nations and ideally represented by a united European Community, Washington wished to continue its long-standing asymmetrical relationship with the various European nation-states and focus on the Atlantic framework of transatlantic relations.

US Troops in Europe

Despite the transatlantic animosities of the preceding eighteen months, the White House was greatly concerned about Democratic Senator Mike Mansfield's renewed attempt in the summer to use a legislative amendment to the 1973 Defense Appropriation Act to reduce the number of US troops in Europe by 40 percent (some 190,000 soldiers). The administration had no illusion about the lack of European ability and willingness to replace these US troops, if they had to be brought home. Clearly Mansfield's amendment threatened to weaken the United States' Cold War posture in Europe. The White House fought Mansfield's endeavors vigorously and asked NATO ambassador Donald Rumsfeld to return from Brussels to testify against the amendment on Capitol Hill.¹⁵⁶ Much to the relief of both

the US and NATO's European members, the Senate narrowly defeated Mansfield's amendment. In late September 1973, however, the Democratic majority leader made yet another attempt and even won a first vote on the matter. A second vote, made possible by technicalities of parliamentary procedures, defeated the new Mansfield amendment only six hours later. Nixon had argued that passing it would undermine Washington in the imminent negotiations with Moscow about mutual troop reductions in Europe (MBFR).¹⁵⁷

But the defeat of the Mansfield amendment on September 26 did not settle the matter. Although the day before, the Jackson-Nunn amendment to the 1973 Defense Appropriation Act had gone successfully through the Senate, this was not enough for many senators. Jackson-Nunn required the European allies to pay those costs of the deployment of US forces in Europe, which contributed to the United States' balance of payments deficit. If the Europeans did not pay up, US troops in Europe would be reduced accordingly.¹⁵⁸

On September 27, Congress sent an even clearer signal to the Europeans and the administration. On this day, the Senate passed the Humphrey-Cranston amendment. While it was more moderate than the Mansfield amendment, it still mandated a 23 percent reduction of US troops worldwide, some 110,000 ground and air troops, by the end of 1975. The first 40,000 troops were meant to be brought back by mid-1974. As the target areas were not specified, Asia and the western Pacific rather than western Europe were "the logical places for us to begin sensible troop cuts which will not endanger our national security," Senator Hubert Humphrey outlined in his Senate speech.¹⁵⁹ Before adopting the Humphrey-Cranston amendment, the Senate had expressed its support for NATO. It referred to the alliance as "vital to the security of the United States."¹⁶⁰ Despite these nice words, the increasing isolationist sentiments of the US Congress were clear for all to see. In November, the eminent Dean Rusk, secretary of state throughout the 1960s, told Kissinger, "our European friends do not adequately recognize the growing mood of withdrawal from world affairs held by many in the U.S." Otherwise, they would make more of an effort to have amicable and cooperative relations with Washington.¹⁶¹

The 1973 debate about US troop reductions might have had the "positive benefit," Rumsfeld later wrote in his memoirs, "of reminding them [the Europeans] that they needed to step up and be more willing to invest in their own defense."¹⁶² This, of course, was a never-ending story. The US

had tried to push Europe to spend more on defense since the days of the Eisenhower administration. Fifty years later, in 2010, Obama's secretary of defense, Robert Gates, complained bitterly about "European demilitarization" and the lack of European spending on defense, just as Nixon and Kissinger and the US Congress had done in the 1970s. Gates predicted "a dim and dismal future" for NATO if nothing was done about it.¹⁶³ Just over seven years later, this was also the mantra that President Trump kept coming back to whenever he met with European leaders. At times, Trump even contemplated seriously withdrawing his country from NATO membership.¹⁶⁴

The 1973 Yom Kippur War / October War and Its Transatlantic Repercussions

Renewed transatlantic friction occurred during the so-called Yom Kippur War of October 1973, when Washington full-heartedly backed Israel while most European countries hesitated to do so. What drove the conflict was the Syrian attempt to recapture the Golan Heights in the north and Egypt's endeavors to gain back the Sinai Peninsula in the south. Both territories had been seized by Israel in its successful Six-Day War of June 1967.¹⁶⁵ For the belligerent parties, at issue were not only the recapture of their lost lands including the West Bank, if possible, but also the reopening of the Suez Canal, which had been closed since June 1967. Perhaps even the continued existence of Israel was in danger. Egypt, in particular, angled for a more lasting overall strategic settlement in the Middle East.¹⁶⁶

The dominant concerns for the two superpowers were maintaining a balance of power among the Middle Eastern countries and upholding their own strategic influence in the region. Once Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat had expelled almost all twenty thousand Soviet military advisers in July 1972 and become friendlier toward Washington, the US was keen on maintaining this situation. Sadat knew that overcoming Egypt's deplorable economic situation required improving relations with the US and obtaining a compromise deal with Israel. More than 20 percent of Egypt's gross national product was supporting the country's military. This was unsustainable.¹⁶⁷ Sadat's realism appealed to Washington.

For the Europeans, the stability of the region and the oil question loomed large and thus, by implication, their own future prosperity and well-being. But also relations with Washington were at issue for the EC countries and whether the US would treat them as serious global players. The EC, how-

ever, turned out to be greatly divided during the October War; in particular, the French continued to pursue their own foreign policy goals in the Middle East.¹⁶⁸ The US viewed the war above all in Cold War terms, fearing that an Arab victory would bring the Soviet Union into the Middle East. In late October, Kissinger told the eminent French ambassador to the US, Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet, the former Resistance fighter who had been a minister in several postwar French cabinets: "The primary issue in the current crisis has been the conduct of the Soviets. The Arab-Israeli problem has been secondary. Throughout the crisis the Europeans failed to see this."¹⁶⁹

The European focus was hardly surprising. Once the war had broken out, the oil-rich Middle Eastern Gulf states, in particular Saudi Arabia, imposed significant increases of the global oil price while cutting production at the same time. This hit governments and consumers badly, as global petroleum consumption had been rising fast for the preceding few years. The Europeans in particular, were unprepared; they had neglected to build up sufficient strategic oil reserves. But not only western Europe and Japan but also the US was using more oil than ever before. Washington thus had no US-produced reserve capacity left to flood the market with cheap oil.¹⁷⁰

Between October 1973 and March 1974, global oil prices quadrupled by more than 400 percent, from \$2.59 per barrel on October 1 to \$11.65 in January 1974.¹⁷¹ OPEC oil ministers imposed a price increase of 70 percent on October 16.¹⁷² The day after, a 5 percent cut in oil production for September was also decreed, and regular 5 percent cuts were envisaged for the following months, until Israel had withdrawn from all occupied Arab territories. Some Arab oil producers even imposed 10 percent cuts. At a meeting of OPEC countries in Kuwait in early November, however, they decided that the total reduction in oil production should be no more than 25 percent from October 1 levels. The US would be hit particularly hard, they decided, though it was clear that the oil wells of Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma made the country much more independent from Middle Eastern oil than the Europeans were.¹⁷³ Of the oil that western Europe used on a daily basis, 45 percent came from the Middle East; by contrast, the US only obtained 6 percent of its oil from the region. Crucially, overall, the US was much more self-sufficient than Europe was. In total, Washington only required to import 17.5 percent of its energy needs from abroad; in 1973, the Europeans needed to import almost 63 percent to satisfy their private and commercial energy requirements.¹⁷⁴ And much of it came from the Middle East.

Many of the European countries, such as the UK, France, and West Ger-

many, had good friendly relations with Israel but also strong economic links with the Arab nations in the region.¹⁷⁵ Thus, the war and the energy question were closely connected with both Middle Eastern stability and Western economic prosperity. Intra-European competition for oil intensified, and the much-hyped solidarity among the EC members was soon exposed as mere talk.¹⁷⁶ In fact, European countries competed viciously with each other when it came to obtaining scarce and increasingly pricey oil resources from the Arab world.¹⁷⁷ Severe competition regarding European monetary affairs also continued and even intensified during the Middle East war. As in the past (and indeed in the future), “strong-currency countries were prepared to extend only limited support to their weak-currency partners,” as the economist Barry Eichengreen notes, “and there was little willingness to subordinate domestic policies to the imperatives of the system.”¹⁷⁸

When OPEC threatened to impose a total oil embargo on Western countries helping Israel, it put the fear of God into European governments. But there was an easy solution to resolve the situation, the Saudis pointed out. Riyadh “urged the EC countries to use their influence to change America’s policy in the Middle East” and stop the US from resupplying Israel.¹⁷⁹ Saudi Arabia clearly overestimated the clout the EC had with the administration in Washington. But the differentiation between “friendly” and “unfriendly” Western countries had the desired effect, in particular regarding Britain and France. Fearing repercussions for their access to oil, London and Paris pursued a fairly pro-Arab policy. They also remained very critical of US support for Israel.¹⁸⁰

Meanwhile, Nixon and Kissinger met with four Arab foreign ministers. Saudi Foreign Minister Omar Saqqaf was the most senior one. Nixon assured him that after the war, the US would embark on a new diplomatic initiative to reach a comprehensive peace settlement for the region. The president told the foreign ministers, “[I] see that you are concerned about the fact that Henry Kissinger is a Jewish-American. A Jewish-American can be a good American, and Kissinger is a good American. He will work with you.”¹⁸¹ On October 19, however, Nixon requested that Congress pass an emergency aid packet of \$2.2 billion for Israel. Almost immediately, this led to a total OPEC oil embargo on the US and the Netherlands. Together with the Portuguese (the embargo was extended to Portugal and also to South Africa and Rhodesia on November 23), the Netherlands was almost the only European country that had readily put its airfields at the disposal of the US. The envisaged OPEC production cut of another 5 percent for

December was canceled in mid-November in view of the EC having supported the Arab position for Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 cease-fire lines. A couple of weeks later, it was announced that “friendly” countries such as Britain, France, and Spain would be exempted from the 5 percent cut envisaged for January 1974. But this was reversed when in early December OPEC explained that the cut would apply to all countries. Clearly, among the Arab countries, “there was no coherent and systematic planning either,” Benjamin Shwadran has concluded.¹⁸²

Throughout the last few months of 1973 and during much of 1974, global markets were in turmoil. There was great uncertainty, fear, and confusion about what to expect and how much oil would actually remain available on the world markets. The foundation of the West’s way of life and the continued existence of many of its most fundamental industries and businesses suddenly seemed highly precarious. The psychological impact of the new “age of shortage” was nothing short of dramatic.¹⁸³ Within weeks, the Western world was faced with a prolonged economic crisis. The first oil crisis caused serious problems and brought the postwar economic boom, already in a feeble state, to a decisive end. It also contributed to a prolonged downturn in stock market prices. Between January 11, 1973, and December 6, 1974, stocks in the G-7 countries, including the US Dow Jones index, lost almost 45 percent of their value. The UK was affected particularly badly; there the decline was some 75 percent.¹⁸⁴

Governments in Europe implemented severe oil-saving programs both to protect the workings of their industrial base and to prevent their budgets from spinning out of control. In West Germany, for instance, even the holy cow of car ownership was affected. The Brandt government imposed a ban on Sunday driving during the four weeks leading up to Christmas (as did Denmark) and also decreed the unheard-of imposition of speed limits on the *Autobahns*. In early December, the CIA reported in a secret briefing book that the German federal authorities “banned the entry of new foreign workers from non-EC countries,” as they were “concerned over the prospects of widespread unemployment.” West Germany was heavily dependent on the embargoed Dutch port of Rotterdam and expected the onset of a recession in the spring of 1974. Consumers were hoarding gas and petrol, and consumption was expected to be down by more than 10 percent. An inflation rate of 10 percent and “sharply increased unemployment” seemed to be just around the corner. An oil-supply shortfall of up to 25 percent was projected.¹⁸⁵

The EC countries were in dire straits, though some more than others. The UK was particularly hard hit. Oil prices and most other prices were soaring, while the government had imposed pay freezes to keep inflation and the economy from spinning out of control. In the fall and winter of 1973, a high number of massive industrial strikes took place. On November 12, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) began an overtime ban. Given that in view of the oil crisis the country's energy situation was already extremely precarious, the Heath government feared that the UK might soon run out of fossil fuel. It foresaw the collapse of Britain's industrial and commercial base. Heath declared a state of emergency and imposed measures to conserve energy, including the early closure of pubs and the scale-down of most nonemergency public services. The BBC and ITV, the country's second main TV channel, were asked to stop broadcasting each night at 10:30 p.m. in order not to keep Britons from going to bed early and thus conserve energy. Domestic electricity for both heating and cooking was curtailed.¹⁸⁶

More importantly, the commercial use of energy also became severely restricted across the UK to prevent the wholesale shutdown of businesses for lack of energy. From January to March 1974, a three-day working week was decreed. As the government refused to meet the pay demands of the coal miners and a compromise deal failed, several hundred thousand miners embarked on widespread strike action on February 9. The strike turned "into a full-scale economic war," and the resulting coal shortage magnified the effects of the oil crisis.¹⁸⁷ The country was close to paralysis, running out of both coal and oil. As the coal miners' union was unwilling to compromise, Prime Minister Heath called a general election for late February 1974. Heath asked the voters, "Who governs Britain?" He received the unexpected answer, "Not you." The election produced a hung Parliament, and Heath was unable to form a coalition government with the Liberal Party or the Ulster Unionists. Instead, in early March 1974, a Labour minority government came to power. It was once again headed by Harold Wilson. Heath had become a victim of the 1973–74 oil crisis.

Throughout the Middle East war and the oil crisis, the EC-Nine firmly believed that the US ought to consult them about its strategy and the moves to obtain a cease-fire and a settlement of the conflict. Instead, Kissinger sidelined them. Britain's foreign secretary, the upright former prime minister Alec Douglas-Home, expressed it well: "Europe is too large and its vital interests too closely involved for it to sit silent while great events take place over their heads."¹⁸⁸

Kissinger's view, however, was quite different. He told his advisers, "The Europeans behaved like jackals. Their behavior was a total disgrace. They did everything to egg on the Arabs. They gave us no support when we needed it." They were not even willing, he claimed, pointing the finger at London, "to have any joint moves in the United Nations." In the staff meeting on October 23, 1973, Kissinger fumed and raged. "And when this is over, as it will be in a few days, it is absolute imperative for us . . . to assess just where we are going in our relationship with the European allies—what exactly it means to talk about the indissolubility of our interests with respect to defense and the total indivisibility of our interests in every other respect that may come up." After a while, Kissinger calmed down a little. He did not "want to prejudge it," he eventually said, "but I think it is an issue that can no longer be evaded."¹⁸⁹ Though he realized that there was a "considerable amount of resentment in Europe" regarding US policy in the Middle East,¹⁹⁰ Kissinger actually meant what he said. Soon afterward, he "ordered a complete reevaluation" of US "relations with Europe," though nothing much came of it.

Among the particularly contentious transatlantic issues surrounding the Yom Kippur War were the US airlift to Israel; the interconnection with NATO, which the Europeans were reluctant to accept; and not least, the nuclear alert that Kissinger triggered on October 24, just before midnight, as a warning to Moscow not to intervene militarily in the Middle East.

The US Airlift

The US airlift (Operation Nickel Grass) was a massive enterprise that brought more military and civilian provisions to Israel than had been delivered during the 1948–49 Berlin blockade. The airlift only started on October 14, 1973, due to delays caused by the Pentagon. This led to a major row between Kissinger and the secretary of defense, James Schlesinger, a Nixon loyalist, who on May 25, 1973, had replaced Elliot Richardson. The latter only stayed for less than four months at the Pentagon until becoming Nixon's attorney general (in October, he dramatically resigned, however, rather than obey Nixon's instruction to fire special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox). The tough-talking Jim Schlesinger was the former chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority, who had also served for just a few months as a rather unpopular CIA director. Over time, Schlesinger came to doubt Nixon's mental stability and put emergency measures in place in case Nixon refused to

resign if he were impeached or tried to remain in power by means of a military coup. He also told the United States' senior military to check with him and Kissinger in case Nixon issued instructions regarding the deployment of the nation's atomic arsenal.¹⁹¹

Trained as an economist at Harvard, Schlesinger tended to be abrasive and overbearingly arrogant. He favored the development of more sophisticated nuclear weapons for retaliatory strikes against Moscow, if need be, and a strengthening of NATO's conventional capabilities. His hardline positions made him highly unpopular with the European allies.¹⁹² The airlift to Israel, which Schlesinger and the Pentagon oversaw, continued well after the end of hostilities into mid-November; a similar sealift continued well into December. Exactly 567 air sorties delivered a total of just over twenty-two thousand tons of food and equipment (nine thousand tons before the end of fighting).¹⁹³

The majority of EC countries, however, tried to maintain their distance from the airlift in order to avoid incurring the wrath of the Arabs and being hit even more severely with the oil weapon.¹⁹⁴ With the exception of the Netherlands and Portugal, most European countries, therefore, did not allow the US to use their air bases for refueling and other tasks in support of Israel. Understandably, this infuriated Washington, though Kissinger greatly exaggerated the situation.¹⁹⁵ The British reluctantly agreed, for instance, to let the US use its Akrotiri base on Cyprus. They insisted, however, that the flights must remain deniable in case information about them was leaked. There also was a good deal of US-UK intelligence cooperation regarding the Yom Kippur War, though Kissinger reduced the amount of US intelligence information that reached the UK, as he was outraged about London's lack of cooperation in the crisis.¹⁹⁶

In view of the special Cold War relationship the West Germans had with both the US and Israel, the Bonn government looked the other way and pretended not to have realized what was going on at its northern port of Bremerhaven. Yet, once the first cease-fire proposal of October 22 had been announced, the Germans requested that the US stop using West German ports. In response, Defense Secretary Schlesinger told the visiting West German Foreign Minister Walter Scheel rather curtly that Washington might reconsider whether to maintain troops in West Germany. Chancellor Brandt believed that the US was treating his country "like a colony."¹⁹⁷

As the situation was getting increasingly out of hand, West German ambassador Berndt von Staden asked to see Kissinger. After some brief pleas-

antries, Kissinger almost immediately went on the offensive. He was “astounded” and took “a dim view of what has happened,” he said. “We have no interest in a pro-Israeli policy per se,” he declared, but “a victory by those aided by the Soviets” would lead to a “radicalization of the entire area and a setback for the West.” He blew his top and said the US had “been deliberately isolated” by its allies, though Washington was working “in defense of western interests generally.”¹⁹⁸

The West German government had not bowed to Arab pressure, Staden protested, but now that a cease-fire had been achieved, Bonn was asking Washington to end the operation.¹⁹⁹ It had been particularly difficult, as not only US ships but even Israeli ships docked in Bremerhaven, which unwittingly made the FRG party to one of the belligerent powers in the conflict. Bonn wanted to show “as much solidarity as it could” with the US, but the country’s “credibility in the Arab world was at stake.”²⁰⁰ It was obvious, however, that it was not so much German credibility but the unhindered flow of oil that Bonn was concerned about. Kissinger could not be appeased. He was genuinely furious and once again turned the conversation into a principled discussion of alliance loyalty. The US greatly disliked “the conspicuous disassociation of our allies,” he fumed. This “general attitude” of the “European allies . . . profoundly concerns us. It has happened with too much consistency, too many times.”²⁰¹

The NATO Link

The United States’ European NATO allies were not happy, to put it mildly, when in view of Moscow’s support for Egypt and Syria, US NATO ambassador Donald Rumsfeld criticized their relations with the Soviet Union. The upstart Rumsfeld, who had recently turned forty-one, admonished the assembled gray-haired European statesmen not to be so close to the Soviets and questioned whether the continuation of détente in Europe made sense. During a meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels on October 16, 1973, Rumsfeld encouraged the Europeans in a “very abrupt” way, as the French ambassador in Washington later put it, to rethink their ties with the Soviet Union.²⁰²

The shrewd, athletic, and rather forceful and blunt Rumsfeld had become close to Nixon when earlier serving as director of the Office of Economic Opportunity and counselor to the president. He became secretary of defense first under Gerald Ford and then again for a second time twenty-five years

later under George W. Bush. In the course of his six-year tenure during the Bush presidency, he contributed to a significant deterioration of transatlantic relations in the wake of the disastrous invasion of Iraq in 2003.²⁰³ Back in 1973, Rumsfeld at first hesitated to accept the position of US ambassador to NATO, but Nixon assured him that “NATO was more interesting and substantive than other ambassadorial posts because it dealt with many countries rather than just one.”²⁰⁴ And Rumsfeld was fortunate. Being in Belgium, he escaped the worst of the Watergate implosion in Washington. Still, he never felt at ease during his time in Brussels; the Europeans viewed Nixon’s forthright representative with suspicion. This was hardly surprising. For instance, during the October 1973 NATO meeting, Rumsfeld suggested, much to the annoyance of those who were present, that the Europeans should not participate in the forthcoming talks of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and perhaps review their economic links with the Soviet Union.²⁰⁵

The EC-Nine found Rumsfeld’s proposal outrageous. For the sake of Washington’s Middle East policy, they had no desire to sacrifice détente in Europe, which had proven so effective in reducing the Soviet threat. The EC was not inclined “of viewing US-USSR détente as separate from Soviet-European détente,” they said.²⁰⁶ Rumsfeld called for “allied unity and support of U.S. actions to prevent the huge Soviet airlift of arms to Arab countries from tipping the military balance.” NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns agreed. NATO’s fifth and longest serving secretary general, who headed the alliance from 1971 to 1984, was a tall, lank man and a politician with immense experience, having served as the Netherlands’ longest serving foreign minister between 1952 and 1971. Luns explained that “alliance solidarity was more important now than ever,” but he added wistfully while rebuking the US ever so slightly that he also “sensed a U.S. preoccupation with the possibility of Alliance disunity.”²⁰⁷ Rumsfeld remained unmoved. He was not easily swayed by diplomatic subtleties. There was no reason why NATO should not have a role in the Middle East, he said; after all, the repercussions of the Middle East crisis affected the entire North Atlantic Treaty area.²⁰⁸

Global Nuclear Alert—DEFCON III

On October 20, at Soviet Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev’s request, Kissinger flew to Moscow to negotiate a cease-fire resolution to be submitted to the UN Security Council.²⁰⁹ In long conversations with Brezhnev and

his colleagues in the Kremlin, they agreed on what became Resolution 338, submitted to the Security Council on October 22. It called on the warring parties to cease hostilities within twelve hours of the adoption of the resolution and start negotiating a peace accord under the “auspices” of the two superpowers. While almost everyone welcomed the resolution, Israel believed it deprived it of ultimate victory over Egypt.²¹⁰

On the same day, October 22, Kissinger flew from Moscow to Tel Aviv to persuade Prime Minister Golda Meir and her cabinet to accept the cease-fire agreement as negotiated in Moscow. Israel refused. Tel Aviv seemed inclined to wait for the imminent destruction of the not yet fully surrounded Egyptian Third Army on the Sinai. What was said or promised during Kissinger’s talks in Israel remains controversial and disputed, however. While the Israelis insisted that Kissinger had told them that he would turn a blind eye if they continued fighting for a few more days, Kissinger himself claimed that he had only a moderate “slippage” of a few hours in mind.²¹¹ In any case, Kissinger believed that he had obtained Israel’s agreement to a cease-fire and that the war was about to come to an end.

When Kissinger arrived back in Washington on October 23 after a long overnight flight, he realized, however, that there was no cease-fire. Instead, the Israeli army had finished encircling the Third Army well after the cease-fire deadline had expired. Moscow was furious. Brezhnev expressed his feeling of betrayal and anger in a stern message to Nixon. The US, it seemed to him, had collaborated with the Israelis, who completed surrounding the Third Army under cover of the cease-fire. Kissinger had double-crossed the Soviets, the Kremlin believed. The crisis was escalating.²¹² On October 24, Kissinger convened the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG)—essentially a significantly reduced NSC meeting—to assess the situation. Despite two UN Security Council resolutions and the cease-fire agreement negotiated during Kissinger’s visit to Moscow, fighting between Egypt and Israel was continuing.²¹³ Kissinger was alarmed; the Soviet Union might well intervene militarily. He told Israeli ambassador Simcha Dinitz firmly that annihilating the Third Army “is an option that doesn’t exist.”²¹⁴

Events proceeded rapidly. On October 24, Egyptian President Sadat asked the Security Council to request the deployment of a joint US-Soviet peace-keeping force to the region to resolve the crisis. Nixon and Kissinger were appalled. They believed such a joint enterprise not only might push the US into getting directly involved in military action but would certainly bring Soviet forces into the Middle East. The whole region was about to become an

area of dangerous and direct superpower involvement. Washington feared a unilateral response by Moscow. The Soviet Union might well accept Sadat's invitation. Kissinger and Nixon shared the view of Saudi Foreign Minister Omar Saqqaf, who told them that once the Soviet Union "gets into the Middle East, it will be impossible to get them out."²¹⁵

And indeed, within hours (at 10:15 p.m.), the seasoned Soviet ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, called and read Kissinger a letter from Brezhnev to Nixon. The text of the letter was then sent over to the White House.²¹⁶ Brezhnev was "demanding," as Kissinger described it, the establishment of a joint US-Soviet force in the region, "indicating that if we did not agree the Soviets would proceed unilaterally to place their forces there" to enforce a cease-fire and prevent the destruction of the Third Army by Israeli forces.²¹⁷ A few hours later, Kissinger read the letter over the phone to Lord Cromer. He told Cromer that Brezhnev's letter had said quite unambiguously, "I will say it straight that if you find it impossible to act jointly with us in this matter, we should be faced with the necessity urgently to consider the question of taking appropriate steps unilaterally. We cannot allow arbitrariness on the part of Israel."²¹⁸ Tension, it seemed, was accelerating by the hour.

This letter "was a totally shocking thing," Kissinger claimed. But going into the Middle East jointly with Moscow "was an absurdity" that "would have had repercussions throughout Europe and even into China."²¹⁹ Kissinger took Brezhnev's letter at face value. He convened his small group within the NSC, and "we then proceeded as we had done in the Cuban Missile Crisis," Kissinger told a number of "wise men" later. "Everyone concluded that there was a real danger of a Soviet movement." He called Dobrynin three times expressing the hope that "they would not take action before they received a response to the Brezhnev letter."²²⁰ When talking to the United States' "wise men" later in the month, Kissinger tried to defend himself by putting the blame on the Soviet ambassador, of all people. Kissinger explained that Dobrynin could have informed him "that things were not so serious and that we were making too much of it. But he did not do so."²²¹ "And the trick is," he had once pointed out to his aides, "to end these things in time, before one of the great powers feels it has to push in another batch of chips."²²² To Kissinger, it appeared that Brezhnev definitely had pushed in a batch of chips too many. Something big and decisive needed to be done.

At the time, it does not seem to have occurred to Kissinger that perhaps

Moscow's talk of "unilateral action" and some movements to this effect were meant to frighten the US and make Washington put pressure on Israel to observe the cease-fire resolutions. It did not necessarily mean that the Soviets were about to put their own forces into the Middle East. Instead, as a result of this "totally shocking thing," Kissinger later explained, "we had to spend most of the night positioning our forces."²²³

After talking to Dobrynin, Kissinger reconvened the WSAG meeting. He took Nixon's seat as chairman of the meeting at the top of the table. The president was indisposed. There was intelligence information that seemed to indicate that Moscow was about to deploy naval and airborne infantry divisions to Egypt. In fact, US intelligence services had concluded "that seven out of the eight Soviet air-borne divisions had been mobilized recently," and no supply transports occurred for two days.²²⁴ But it appeared that a "command post had been established in southern Russia."²²⁵ All this might point to imminent military action. CIA reports, furthermore, had revealed that apparently Moscow had sent a ship to Egypt with radioactive material. The main ship was accompanied by two other vessels with Soviet troops on board. The fleet had come through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean. Three days later, the ships docked at Port Said, at the entrance to the Suez Canal. Washington feared that the radioactive material consisted of nuclear warheads to be put on Scud missiles that the Soviet Union was known to have positioned near Cairo. Later, Kissinger even told the British ambassador that the ship was "carrying nuclear weapons" and "passed through the Bosphorus, and then came back without them."²²⁶

Late on October 24, just before midnight, Kissinger and a few other senior officials decided to do something dramatic "in order to show that [they] were serious." The US "deliberately went on a military alert" before the reply to Brezhnev was sent.²²⁷ It was time for a demonstration of the reality of US power and the will to use it. Kissinger had never believed that Washington "could substitute charm for reality," as he had remarked earlier in the day.²²⁸ The WSAG meeting with Kissinger in the lead decided to raise the alert of US forces from Defense Condition Four to Defense Condition Three (DEFCON III), the highest military alert in peacetime. It was the same level of alertness that US conventional and nuclear forces had been raised to during the Cuban Missile Crisis. DEFCON I meant war. Nuclear-armed B-52s in their secret silos were put in a state of readiness, as were their highly trained pilots and launch commanders. Nuclear-armed submarines moved to their launch positions near the Soviet Union. The elite

Eighty-Second Airborne Infantry Division, based at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, one of the world's largest military bases, was instructed to get ready. All leave was canceled. The US also ordered massive naval movements. Two aircraft carriers and a significant number of amphibious ships were given orders to move closer to the theater of war in the Middle East.²²⁹

The global alert of the United States' nuclear forces was triggered by Kissinger and a small number of officials without the knowledge and permission of the president. Nixon was asleep. He had had a bad day. He was agitated and depressed and had drunk too much, slurring his words in the process. Nixon did not participate in a single crisis meeting during that night. Chief of Staff Alexander Haig had talked to him at round about 9:30 p.m., when he was barely awake, after which the chief of staff left the president alone in the living quarters of the White House.²³⁰ All the while, the various emergency meetings continued downstairs. Kissinger wondered whether they should wake Nixon when the decision about triggering DEFCON III needed to be taken, but Haig thought this was inadvisable. Kissinger fully understood. The president was too distraught and mentally incoherent to participate in the meeting. Nixon approved the action the next day.²³¹

Once the alert had been put in place, the White House replied to Brezhnev's earlier letter.²³² An hour before the letter was delivered, the US also informed the North Atlantic Council.²³³ In the letter to Brezhnev, the allies were informed, the Kremlin was told that if Moscow "put in forces unilaterally into the Middle East they would be in violation of Article II of the agreement on prevention of nuclear war."²³⁴ In view of the global nuclear alert of US forces that had just gone into effect, this was a rather ominous threat. Moscow could hardly misunderstand the seriousness of the situation.

The nuclear alert stayed in place until the evening of October 25 and thus for just one day. But it included Strategic Air Command, Continental Defense Command, the Sixth Fleet, and also the European Command. The US nuclear forces in the UK, therefore, were also placed at DEFCON III level. Most of the European governments, however, including France, a nuclear power itself, had not been informed about the alert in advance. Paris complained about the "lack of consultation." The French ambassador had received no background information about the alert and did not know anything about the resolution the US wished to introduce in the UN Security Council. In reply, Kissinger noted, "in all candor, perhaps we should have told you," but he said, "Our experience in this crisis with the Europeans is

they have behaved not as friends but as hostile powers. Not once did we get their support.”²³⁵ A few days before, he had already told the French ambassador, “our credibility has been weakened more by the European reaction to our alert than by anything else.”²³⁶ Kissinger also indicated to Ambassador Kosciuszko-Morizet that the Europeans should be pleased by his policy. “The intervention of the Soviets in the Middle East would not be in the interests of Europe,” he explained. “If the Soviets were there it would have consequences for the moderate forces in the Middle East. This now stopped. Now we must all bring about a settlement so that we can remove this danger.”²³⁷

The Europeans, however, could not be appeased that easily. During a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels on October 27, 1973, criticism about the policy of nonconsultation continued. Prior information would have been expected, it was pointed out to US ambassador Rumsfeld. The European governments were “being caught by surprise,” they muttered, while at the same time, Washington asked them to “demonstrate alliance solidarity.”²³⁸ Rumsfeld, however, remained adamant. “He would make no apologies for U.S. actions throughout this period.” He merely agreed that in view of all the activity, which occurred within a matter of hours in the middle of the night, it was perhaps not surprising that “the consultation process might be a few hours behind events.” The US had not “overreacted,” he emphasized.²³⁹ Above all, “the alert had apparently worked so far and perhaps this should be the test.” No Soviet forces had entered the Middle East. Cockily, Rumsfeld went on the offensive. “He had been a little surprised,” he explained, “that members of the alliance had not expressed satisfaction that tensions had apparently been somewhat reduced, that the possibility of the Soviets injecting troops into the Middle East seemed to have been reduced, and that the détente policy of the alliance was, at least for the moment, not ruptured.”²⁴⁰

As later transpired, the White House “wanted NATO to say the President did the right thing.” After all, the North Atlantic Council did not know that it was not Nixon who had taken the decision to trigger the alert. “I don’t care what Belgium thinks,” Kissinger said cynically. “But if one or two of our major allies had supported it,” this would have been appreciated. “The behavior of our European allies puts our alliance in jeopardy.”²⁴¹

Rumsfeld’s presentation to the North Atlantic Council on October 27 had a similar drift. The various NATO ambassadors were taken aback. They reassured Rumsfeld that they were “aware of the lonely responsibility of a power such as the United States,” but transatlantic consultations needed to

be improved as a matter of urgency. The Turkish NATO representative hit the nail on the head when he said that he “felt that the United States should help its friends to be its friends.” It was obvious, he insisted, that the North Atlantic Council “should have been notified prior to the alert since it involved U.S. forces throughout the alliance countries. It was wrong that the allies all received that information first from the press.”²⁴²

While there was little the NATO countries could do once the alert had been triggered, transatlantic relations had suffered a further crisis and this time regarding a rather dangerous situation. With the partial exception of the UK, the US had certainly not bothered to consult or even inform its European allies. They were treated more like underlings than serious partners. The downward spiral was continuing.

On October 26, 1973, the UN Security Council on the basis of Resolution 339 of October 24 imposed a second cease-fire. It did the trick. The fighting in the Middle East stopped, although some subsequent cease-fire violations took place. The war was over. Within a few days, the nearly impossible was happening. Israeli-Egyptian talks for a lasting settlement began, which eventually led to the Sinai I disengagement agreement of January 1974. It was followed by the Sinai II agreement of September 1975. In May 1974, Kissinger helped to bring about an Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement, and a peace process began. Nixon visited Israel, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia in June. Already on March 18, 1974, after intense diplomatic efforts, the Arab states had lifted the oil embargo on the US and most other countries.²⁴³ A year later, the Suez Canal was opened again. A more lasting Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement was reached at Camp David in September 1978 under the Carter administration. The Sinai I and II interim agreements and Kissinger’s shrewd endeavors to bring them about had clearly helped to lay the ground for the Camp David accord.²⁴⁴

Dealing with the Legacy of the October War and the Washington Energy Conference

By means of Kissinger’s well-publicized “shuttle diplomacy” in 1973–75 and his attempts to mediate the disengagement process in the Middle East, he had quickly become the world’s dominant political player. Transatlantic relations, however, continued to be fraught with tension. The Europeans, in particular the French, deeply resented being excluded from the cease-fire negotiations and the subsequent peace process. Kissinger was unrepentant.

He believed that the Europeans only had to blame themselves for their exclusion. They “are too one-sided to serve as mediator and they are too separated from us to have any real influence on us.”²⁴⁵

Much to Kissinger’s displeasure and without advance warning, the Nine issued a Declaration on the Middle East (the Brussels Declaration) on November 6, 1974, some two weeks after the end of the war. Kissinger believed it undermined his own policy of finding a lasting settlement. It might well encourage radical Arab states to turn against moderate ones, such as Sadat’s Egypt.²⁴⁶ It was of “obvious interest” to the US that the EC-Nine should have consulted Washington on their Declaration on the Middle East.²⁴⁷ Instead, Kissinger fumed once again, “under French leadership and with acquiescence of the British, the Europeans are seeking their identity in opposition to the U.S.”²⁴⁸

Yet the Brussels Declaration, according to the Swiss historian Daniel Möckli, was a “remarkable document.” It was the first declaration of substance that European Political Cooperation (EPC) had ever produced. The EC-Nine had managed to arrive at a unified position. The EC document asked Israel to terminate its “territorial occupation,” and for the first time, the “legitimate rights” of the Palestinians were mentioned in an official paper. The pro-Arab position of the document was influenced by both French foreign policy objectives and the desire to placate the Arabs in the oil question. The paper, nevertheless, was based on the insight that the EC had to become more proactive to achieve its goals in the region.²⁴⁹

Just over a month later, in mid-December 1973, the EC Copenhagen summit was held. The EC issued its Declaration on European Identity. The declaration encouraged EC members to make a serious attempt to use the 1970 EPC instrument to ensure that foreign policy positions would be coordinated among all EC countries.²⁵⁰ The EC-Nine, the document spelled out, “have the political will to succeed in the construction of a United Europe.” The Europeans “have overcome their past enmities and have decided that unity is a basic European necessity to ensure the survival of the civilization which they have in common.” That way, they will “strengthen their own cohesion and contribute to the framing of a genuinely European foreign policy.”²⁵¹ Kissinger remained distinctly cool. He noted that the identity paper treated the US “like any other external power.”²⁵²

In the aftermath of the Middle East war and Kissinger’s successful crisis diplomacy, he was on a roll. He certainly did not wish to see the initiative taken away from the US. The White House was concerned about the at-

tempts of the European allies to cut bilateral energy deals with the oil-producing countries. Kissinger feared that it was undermining his own diplomacy. In a well-received speech at the Pilgrim's Society in London on December 12, 1973, he proposed establishing a joint Western consumer front, the Energy Action Group (EAG), to contain and curtail the influence of OPEC. That way, he hoped to develop a common Western energy policy and obtain Western access to oil at reasonable prices.²⁵³ Kissinger lobbied for an international energy conference that eventually took place at the State Department in Washington, DC, February 11–13, 1974.²⁵⁴

In Kissinger's opening address to the energy conference, he said that the US "recognized its responsibility" to help bring about a "collective solution" of the energy crisis and the "restoration of the world economic system." This, he stated, Washington considered to be "a matter of enlightened self-interest—and moral responsibility."²⁵⁵ The French, however, saw no US altruism at play. Instead, Paris thought that Washington was attempting to use the energy conference to "either dominate Europe or break up the Community." This conviction, according to an official of the French Foreign Ministry, was at "the heart of the current French analysis of U.S./European relations."²⁵⁶ When Kissinger asked Foreign Minister Jobert in the course of the energy conference, "What do you object to?" the Frenchman's answer was unambiguous: "American leadership."²⁵⁷

Although the energy conference was a qualified success, it was not an altogether happy meeting. In particular, Jobert and Kissinger clashed several times, though Kissinger professed, "I genuinely like him."²⁵⁸ Kissinger felt it was all a storm in a teacup. After "the orgasm of our press for three days about that Titanic confrontation with Jobert," nothing much had happened.²⁵⁹ It was rumored, however, that Kissinger had threatened Jobert: "we will attack you in the monetary field." In a later conversation with Willy Brandt and Walter Scheel, Kissinger laughed, saying this was "impossible": "I do not know enough about the monetary to use it for an attack."²⁶⁰ The French foreign minister certainly felt on the defensive. He refused to sign the crucial part of the final conference communiqué by "abstaining from three paragraphs—the most operational paragraphs"—which dealt with consumer cooperation.²⁶¹ The conference decided to ignore French protestations. "At the end of the day," as Henning Türk has argued, "cooperation with the United States in these areas was so important that most of the EC countries were prepared to accept a deterioration of their common work in the EC, caused by the controversy with France."²⁶² At the Washington

Energy Conference, the US once again managed to put down its foot and reminded the allies who was running the Western alliance.

In fact, Nixon and Kissinger were jubilant and viewed the energy conference as a huge success. Kissinger told the president, "The communiqué is essentially the one we drafted. We got about, I would say, 90 per cent of what we wanted." Nixon agreed and declared that the best way "to handle the French" was to "isolate them. They don't want to be isolated." The president found it most interesting that the Europeans abandoned the French and were "willing, you know, to go along" with what the US had in mind.²⁶³ Kissinger was indeed elated. A day later, he told Alexander Haig, "It will teach a good lesson to the Europeans about who's got muscle." Excited, he claimed, "we got 99% of what we asked for." Knowing that Kissinger would never be offended by too much flattery, Haig reassured him, "you performed a miracle."²⁶⁴

In the aftermath of the conference, during the subsequent discussions in the Energy Action Group (EAG), it became apparent that Washington wanted to develop a strong EAG standpoint to impress the OPEC countries with a united position of the US, the Europeans, Canada, and Japan.²⁶⁵ This, of course, was quite a confrontational approach toward the Arab world. The EC lacked the courage and stamina for such a course and did not go along with it. It would give too much influence to the US and also distract the Europeans from developing their own joint energy policy, the EC countries reasoned. It might also once again antagonize the oil-producing Arab countries. Yet, in the end, they caved in. When the US agreed to include the United States' own formidable oil production into the sharing system of a joint consumer-cooperation scheme, the Europeans were won over, except France. The discussants agreed on setting up an International Energy Agreement (IEA) as an autonomous organization within the OECD. IEA was a preemptive instrument. It was meant to prevent the Arabs from using oil as a diplomatic weapon in the future and, if possible, decrease the Western world's dependence on Middle Eastern oil. The US had made sure that unlike in the OECD, voting in the IEA was weighted according to oil consumption. Washington thus had by far the largest influence within the new organization.²⁶⁶

Once again, the US had won the day. All EC countries, with the partial exception of France, had reluctantly accepted the continuation of US predominance. The negotiations that led to the creation of the IEA should per-

haps "be seen as a struggle of the United States to maintain its hegemonic role."²⁶⁷ French Foreign Minister Jobert certainly had no doubts about this. For him, the IEA was a "machine de guerre."²⁶⁸ It might well inflame Western relations with the Arab countries and make even more difficult the EC's fraught relations with the United States.

Yet the EC's desire for independence from overbearing US influence in the Middle East and elsewhere had not been entirely extinguished. In March 1974, only a month after the Washington Energy Conference, the EC agreed to establish an instrument called Euro-Arab dialogue (EAD). Not surprisingly, it was a French initiative and was formally instituted in Paris in July 1974. EAD was meant to facilitate the EC's relations with the twenty Arab states of the region. Although crucial US interests in the Middle East were affected, hardly any consultation with Washington had taken place. With a fine eye for perfect planning, the EC even announced the EAD initiative in Brussels at exactly the same time when the indefatigable Kissinger arrived in the city to brief the North Atlantic Council on the results of his latest shuttle diplomacy in the region. The secretary of state was not amused, and George Vest, the State Department's spokesperson, complained that the US had only been "informed about it [EAD] after it became public."²⁶⁹

Vest had a point. The Europeans had in mind to convene a joint EC-Arab summit conference, possibly at the level of foreign ministers. As it excluded the US, unsurprisingly Kissinger noted that the meeting would be "a mistake."²⁷⁰ The Middle East was "the one area" in global politics where there was "scope for a political initiative by the EEC," a German politician believed. The Arab states, he optimistically proclaimed, were waiting for the European Community to "play a more active role" in the region.²⁷¹

The US but also the Arab states themselves saw the situation rather differently. Kissinger and Nixon were furious about EAD. In a question-and-answer session at the Executives' Club of Chicago on March 15, 1974, the president explained that it was unacceptable that "the nine countries of Europe gang up against the United States." He threatened the Europeans with the withdrawal of US troops.²⁷² The Europeans, Kissinger soon told visiting German Foreign Minister Scheel, were busy undermining US policy. It was entirely intolerable, he continued, that the European countries did their best to become engaged in an area that was of vital interest to the United States but were not bothering to consult Washington. This also applied to France with its long-standing politico-economic interests in Syria

and Libya.²⁷³ Jobert had always been convinced that Kissinger viewed a separate European Middle East policy as “a sort of declaration of independence from the United States.”²⁷⁴

And perhaps it was. US opposition certainly contributed to fatally undermining the effectiveness of EAD as a non-politicized organ. In 1979, this “unique experiment in international relations,” as a European official put it benignly,²⁷⁵ was suspended by the Arab countries in the aftermath of Egypt’s expulsion from the Arab League when Cairo concluded a separate peace treaty with Israel. The Nine, however, did not give up hope about a European role in the Middle East and attempted to relaunch EAD, most notably by means of the Venice Declaration of June 1980. The Carter administration proved to be more tolerant of the ultimately mostly unsuccessful European initiative than Nixon and Kissinger had been.²⁷⁶

The Gymnich Compromise and the Atlantic Declaration

Regarding Europe, Kissinger proceeded to ignore his own insight that “the essence of a good settlement is that everybody can feel he has gained something.” He had also once wisely proclaimed that “you cannot conduct a permanent relationship on the basis of unconditional surrender” but then he quickly forgot about it.²⁷⁷ The Nixon White House clearly continued to expect European loyalty, if not subservience. The signing of the Atlantic Declaration by the Western heads of state in Brussels during NATO’s twenty-fifth-anniversary meeting on June 26, 1974, therefore, was not a particularly uplifting event. It also turned out to be Nixon’s final trip abroad as president. Everyone among the other fourteen heads of state and government present seemed to realize that Nixon would not be able to hold on much longer; this added to the funereal atmosphere at the summit. In public, Nixon was in a “pleasant mood” while coming across as snappy and irritated in private.²⁷⁸

In fact, the two meetings that preceded the Brussels NATO summit turned out to be much more important. On June 10, 1974, the foreign ministers of the EC-Nine had met at Schloss Gymnich in West Germany. This picturesque castle in the small Eifel town of Erftstadt near Cologne was chosen as the perfect location for a quiet brainstorming session. Transatlantic relations topped the agenda. After prolonged discussions, a compromise solution was reached of how to normalize relations with the US. The EC foreign ministers made sure that Washington’s desire was met for a

much smoother consultation mechanism among the transatlantic allies. The host of the meeting, West German Foreign Minister Scheel, played a crucial mediator role.²⁷⁹

The “Gymnich Compromise” consisted of the agreement that an issue that concerned relations with the US could only remain on the EPC agenda if all nine EC countries agreed. In practice, this meant that any country that objected in principle—or perhaps wanted to please the US—had the right to have an issue removed from the agenda. Washington, however, would not be consulted automatically, it was decided, but only on a case-by-case basis. Still, all EC member states could propose that the EPC forum should consult with the US, if they felt this was necessary or desirable. Each country also had the right to enter into bilateral consultations with Washington.²⁸⁰ This indeed was a strenuous effort by the EC-Nine to meet Kissinger’s conception of the nature of transatlantic consultations. Washington would only need to persuade one EC country to do its bidding.

Not surprisingly, the White House, on the whole, was pleased with the outcome of the EC foreign ministers’ meeting. The necessity of a separate US-EC declaration had gone; the focus shifted to drawing up a transatlantic declaration within the NATO context.²⁸¹ A European draft for a grand new Atlantic Declaration was abandoned, therefore. The attempt to rejuvenate transatlantic relations by establishing a formal EC-US pillar had been given up for the sake of strengthening consultation procedures within NATO, as the US had requested for many months.²⁸²

Just a week after the Gymnich meeting, the transatlantic declaration envisaged at Gymnich was adopted at the NATO foreign ministers’ meeting in Ottawa on June 19, 1974. The new Atlantic Charter that would be signed by Nixon and his European counterparts at the NATO summit in Brussels yet another week later (on June 26) was based on the Ottawa statement. Still, the declarations signed in the Canadian and Belgian capitals were something like an anticlimax. The Ottawa Declaration spoke of the “maintenance of close consultation, cooperation and mutual trust” among the transatlantic partners. The allies, the statement spelled out, “are firmly resolved to keep each other fully informed and to strengthen the practice of frank and timely consultations by all means which may be appropriate on matters relating to their common interests as members of the Alliance.”²⁸³ This was general enough to enable the EC to save face, and it was sufficiently specific to reassure Washington that in fact the US position had been adopted to a significant extent.

The US had clearly won the day. US ideas of the nature of the transatlantic relationship prevailed.²⁸⁴ Yet it had taken a prolonged period of time to arrive at the declaration. It could be argued that only the unexpected interference of a major crisis such as the Yom Kippur War and the oil crisis brought the Europeans to heel and hastened the conclusion of the document in a way that clearly favored the United States. In the aftermath of the adoption of the Atlantic Declaration in Ottawa, the *New York Times* commented adroitly that in return for the continuation of the US security umbrella, the Nixon administration managed to obtain “more economic cooperation from the European Community, better political consultation, greater sharing of mutual defense costs and improved machinery for joint management of common problems, plus a lofty inspirational reaffirmation [of] common goals.”²⁸⁵

At the NATO anniversary summit in Brussels on June 26, 1974, the European heads of state had no option but to put their signature to Nixon and Kissinger’s new Atlantic Charter as finalized at Ottawa. It was more or less the kind of transatlantic declaration that Kissinger had envisaged in his Year of Europe speech the year before. The transatlantic relationship was still a highly asymmetrical enterprise and not an alliance of equal partners. Certainly, this procedure was far removed from what the EC-Nine had in mind when at the Paris EC summit conference in October 1972 they had envisaged the creation of a united Europe with an independent foreign policy that would come into being by the end of the decade. Instead, already by 1974, it seemed, European eagerness to take on the US and push for a united Europe and a common European foreign policy had withered away. “U.S. hegemony reasserted” would have been an appropriate conclusion. Moreover, as Edward Heath put it in his memoirs, “after the oil crisis of 1973–74 the [European] Community lost its momentum and, worse, lost sight of the philosophy of Jean Monnet: that the Community exists to find common solutions to common problems.”²⁸⁶

In an action memorandum submitted by Assistant Secretary for European and Canadian Affairs Arthur A. Hartman on April 22, 1974, the diplomat recommended, and Kissinger concurred, that the US should take the “high road” and tell the Europeans that Washington was still supporting European unity but that “implicit in this support” was the obvious “assumption, that a unified Europe will work confidently and cooperatively with the United States directly and within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance.”²⁸⁷ There it was again: if the Europeans decided not to be amena-

ble to US wishes, Washington would not continue supporting European unity, though the US would not necessarily work against it. Hartman, who later became US ambassador to France and the Soviet Union and was regarded “as one of the brainiest and most professional members of the Foreign Service,” also made another point in his draft memorandum: “We continue to support European unity. We do not want a weak Europe that we can dominate but rather a strong partner with whom we can work cooperatively on common problems.” Kissinger, however, told him to delete this section. “I don’t want us to push unity but we should not oppose it either.”²⁸⁸

In the last resort, it had been the economic and monetary crises and the resulting tension with the European allies in the early 1970s that, combined with Nixon’s reelection fears, had led to the “Nixon shocks” of the 1971 Camp David meeting and inaugurated a highly euroskeptical policy in the US. Even Henry Kissinger refers in his memoirs to “the brutal unilateralism” of August 15, 1971, that had “mortgaged relations” with the European allies “for many years to come.” While Kissinger’s conclusion was that “allied cohesion had been strained but not broken,”²⁸⁹ by 1973–74, the Europeans saw this differently. The transatlantic allies had indeed begun to drift apart to an extent nobody would have deemed possible only a few years before. The US, it was slowly recognized, had almost turned into just another ordinary Great Power without any particularly strongly developed sense of altruism, unless it was to its advantage. Washington seemed to have terminated the policy of “enlightened self-interest” and had become a rather uncertain ally.

By the mid-1970s, a new element of hardly suppressed mistrust, suspicion, and rivalry among competing powers had come to the forefront in transatlantic relations. Admittedly, since the creation of the EEC in 1957–58, these factors had always been there, but they had been largely dormant. Now they had come to the surface and threatened to dominate transatlantic relations with a vengeance. What was obvious, however, was that US interest in and support for the European integration process and the creation of the unity of Europe had become a clear victim of this increasing estrangement in US-European relations. Helmut Sonnenfeldt had it right when he remarked in April 1974 that he felt that there had been “a basic change in our policy in the sense that we used to support European unity as an end in itself.”²⁹⁰

Certainly, during the remaining Cold War years and the post-Cold War

era, US interest in European integration and the creation of a united Europe would not return. In fact, at the time of this writing in late 2020, almost half a century later, not much seems to be left of the United States' "benign," "supportive," and "enlightened" role in the European integration process. Relations during the Trump years deteriorated to such an extent that they can only improve during the Joe Biden administration, which took office in January 2021. In the 1970s, while Richard Nixon remained in the White House, the lukewarm attitude of his administration toward European integration did not change. Although after the vitriolic tension of the summer and fall of 1973, tempers cooled again quickly, the administration never reconciled itself to accepting the strivings for greater independence of its European allies. Paradoxically, and despite the man's protestations to the contrary, the administration's greatest skeptic regarding the unity of Europe remained the German-born Henry Kissinger.

Kissinger continued to be convinced that the Europeans were attempting to organize Europe against the US. He also tended to dismiss western Europe's occasional forays into international politics, such as in the Middle East, as irresponsible and largely free of common sense. Many, though not all, of his advisers agreed with him. The president himself, greatly distracted by fighting the attempts of Congress to impeach him, did not interfere much with Kissinger's European policy. In any case, in early August 1974, Nixon became the first US president to resign his office. Within minutes of his departure on August 9, Vice President Gerald Ford was sworn in as the thirty-eighth president of the United States. He asked Henry Kissinger to remain as both national security adviser and secretary of state.

It can be claimed with a good deal of justification that there was something very unique about the US "empire by invitation" and Washington's "benign hegemony" that emerged in the first few years after the end of the Second World War.²⁹¹ The Truman and Eisenhower administrations' genuine interest in helping to create a united Europe must be seen in this context. By the time of Richard Nixon's resignation, however, Washington's policy of "enlightened self-interest" and strong support for a unified western Europe had been abandoned. While the US had been behind the European integration process in its infancy, the Nixon/Kissinger years saw a decisive weakening of US interest in and support for creating a united Europe. This development, as it turned out in the following years, was unlikely to be reversed again. "If the purpose of European unity is to resist the U.S.," Henry Kissinger kept saying, "we do have a problem." The EC was, he believed,

“developing in a way where they seem to be looking for issues on which to pick fights; they are not organized in a way to prompt a cooperative attitude.”²⁹²

While Kissinger remained adamant and insisted on the undiluted maintenance of US hegemony within the Western alliance, the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff began to recognize the United States’ dilemma much more clearly. In a conceptual internal paper, the authors wrote, “we have been so closely committed to Western Europe for so long that any serious diminution of our standing and influence there would have a negative impact on our diplomatic as well as our strategic position in the global balance.”²⁹³

In late October 1979, a CIA analysis outlined that it was “difficult to gauge how far the erosion of American leadership has progressed. . . . American influence is declining, albeit to different degrees and at different rates, in all phases of the allied relationship.”²⁹⁴ Not only the continental Europeans but even the British could no longer be relied on to support and go along with most of Washington’s policies. The US-UK “special relationship,” it seemed, had “lost much of its meaning.” According to the CIA analysis, the US was “no longer significantly closer to Britain than to its other major allies.” And even if it still existed, “it would not mean a great deal given the United Kingdom’s now largely secondary political, economic, and military role in the EEC, in NATO, and in the third world.”²⁹⁵ From the United States’ point of view, the French proved to be as mistrustful and obnoxious as ever, and other European countries, such as Italy, had also become increasingly self-confident. But the change in the behavior of the West Germans was particularly telling. The “previous docility” of the German government was a thing of the past, the CIA paper of the late 1970s concluded. “The economic giant is no longer the political dwarf . . . who was usually ready to do the bidding of the United States.”²⁹⁶

With rare exceptions, the following decades showed at best lukewarm US support for the realization of the European dream of “ever closer union.” Instead, in particular during the Carter and Reagan presidencies and the George W. Bush and Donald Trump years, Washington became greatly focused on reimposing its supremacy on the European allies and remaining the undisputed leader of the Atlantic system. At the same time, the Europeans were becoming increasingly self-confident, resented many of the United States’ foreign and indeed economic policy decisions, and were itching to break out of Washington’s tight embrace. Punctuated by only very few

years of transatlantic calm and stability during the Ford and George H. W. Bush administrations, the result was an almost uninterrupted crisis atmosphere in transatlantic relations from the 1970s to the end of the Cold War in 1989–90 and throughout much of the post–Cold War years in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.²⁹⁷

Conclusion

THE EARLY 1970S WERE DECISIVE watershed years—a clear turning point—in the United States' policy toward the European unity process. In March 1973, President Nixon concluded in a memorandum to Henry Kissinger that the EC constituted a wicked “Frankenstein monster” that had turned remorselessly against its US creator and supporter. Nixon explained, “the way the Europeans are talking today, European unity will not be in our interest, certainly not from a political viewpoint or from an economic viewpoint.” The president predicted, “Europe will be in increasing confrontation with the United States rather than joining with us to present a united front” against worldwide communism. “What matters now is what we do and we must act effectively and soon or we will create in Europe a Frankenstein monster, which could prove to be highly detrimental to our interests in the years ahead.”¹

A similar episode a year later, in April 1974, confirmed that this kind of thinking was quickly becoming the established policy line in Washington. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, during an angry outburst in his office, wondered why the US should support the European integration process, if the Europeans were always opposing US policies. “Why should European unity be built by the United States? For what American purpose,” he asked his advisers in the course of a long internal discussion about the purpose of the European integration process.² Kissinger believed that it was “senseless to speak of a unified Europe not being a third force to some extent, because the reason it is being unified is to make it a third force. The question is whether it is going to be a third force that will cooperate with the United States or not.” Kissinger concluded that “the axiom of the early sixties, that

the stronger Europe was, the more cooperative it would automatically be,” had been a “simple-minded notion.”³

The longer he thought about it, the more annoyed he became during the lengthy meeting. “The major weakness in Europe is total irresponsibility and the constant attempt to get something for nothing.” Of course, “a united Europe that works cooperatively with us will have our support. But we have to see evidence of that,” he shouted. His trusted lieutenant Helmut Sonnenfeldt had already chimed in, saying that what was needed was “the right kind of unity.” Kissinger stated that “on the available choices,” his “first preference would be a unified Europe cooperating with the United States,” but his clear “second choice would be a divided Europe.”⁴ Clearly, by this stage, the notion that the US ought to pursue a policy of “enlightened self-interest” and continue its unequivocal support of the European unity process had long since been discarded. Instead, the US had become a rather uncertain ally.

US policy toward the unity of Europe during the first few decades after the end of World War II consisted of three major stages: First, there was a golden age of relative transatlantic harmony from the Marshall Plan to the early 1960s. This was followed by a second transitional phase during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, when the US was increasingly distracted and losing interest in the European integration process. Third, and most important, there was a “turning point” phase (or perhaps “tipping point” in modern parlance) at the time when Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger ruled the White House. During these years, from 1969 to 1974, US interest in and support of the European unity process ceased, initially for mostly economic and financial/monetary reasons. At times, this disinterest turned into outright hostility. And on a few occasions, the Nixon White House even considered actively intervening in order to derail and prevent the further integration of the European continent. In early April 1973, for instance, President Nixon expressed his “opposition to any solution that brought the Common Market countries closer together.” Kissinger agreed. “What we had to do,” he advised Nixon, was “to throw a monkey wrench into the Common Market machinery, for European unity in the economic area would definitely work against U.S. interests.”⁵

Phase I. Golden Age: The 1950s

During the “golden age” of transatlantic relations from the late 1940s through to the late 1950s and early 1960s, most policy makers in the United

States were convinced that it was their country's responsibility to create a peaceful and prosperous postwar world. This included the necessity to maintain a well-functioning transatlantic alliance and bring about the unity of the European continent under firm but benign US leadership. In fact, a united European continent was seen as the *deus ex machina* with which Washington could overcome the daunting political, economic, and military problems of the postwar world. At the same time, it was always taken as a given that US support for uniting the European continent meant that the Europeans would not develop independent "third force" ambitions but would always "be standing rather close to the United States" and continue to accept Washington's well-meaning "empire by invitation."⁶

Partially based on the thinking of Jean Monnet, US politicians believed that only a united western Europe would ensure the lasting reconciliation between Germany (in its new West German incarnation) and France. This would solve the long-standing German Question and thus preserve peace on the European continent. The US thought that the reconstruction of the continent was only possible on the basis of a closely integrated Europe. Such an economically healthy Europe would then be able to build up strong military forces to keep the Soviet Union at bay and allow the US to reduce the large number of US troops that were based in Europe. In due course, the US foresaw that the closely integrated, flourishing European nations would also provide a huge new market for US exports. Bringing about the unity of Europe would benefit both Europe and the US. It was a win-win situation, to use a current term.

The US had done its best to nudge both Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer toward proposing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the first stage on the long road toward a more integrated and united European continent. The ECSC (or Schuman Plan) proved to be an overwhelming success in both political and economic terms; it became the forerunner of the European Economic Community (EEC) created on January 1, 1958. A similar supranational institution, the European Defense Community (EDC) dismally failed in August 1954, however. Because of the Red Army's huge conventional superiority on the other side of the Iron Curtain, the EDC was established to facilitate the rearmament of the new West German state and the European continent's military integration. Instead, it was NATO, a traditional intergovernmental alliance of friendly countries, which was put in charge of the transatlantic partners' strategic and military cooperation. Despite the drawing down of US troops in Europe, once West Germany had

been admitted in 1955, NATO would still be able to pursue a policy of strength toward the Soviet Union. Throughout the postwar years, it turned out, this security-driven Atlantic framework and Cold War considerations were almost always more important for US policy makers than were the complex details of how to bring about the unity of the European continent.

Nevertheless, embarking on the realization of the United States' creative postwar vision for the peaceful, stable, and prosperous future of a united (western) European continent, which promised to also greatly benefit the US, proved irresistible to the vast majority of US policy makers. But already in the 1950s, a growing number of critical voices could be heard in the corridors of power in Washington. Fewer and fewer people in DC were convinced that the US ought to make short-term sacrifices and accept economic disadvantages when supporting the European Coal and Steel Community and thus the early stages of the European integration process in order to obtain long-term benefits, such as the reconstruction and stabilization of the European continent. The Schuman Plan of 1950 only focused on the coal and steel industries and eventually only included six continental European countries within its ambit. Nevertheless, the Treasury Department and the Trade and Commerce Departments as well as a number of business organizations expressed concern about the closed European coal and steel markets that clearly discriminated against US exporters and were far removed from the ideal of a free-market-driven economy. A few years later, the creation of the EEC in 1958 caused additional worries among officials in Washington who feared the growing economic competition from Europe.

And indeed, it did not take long before economic and financial realities began to encroach ever more urgently on US foreign policy. The notion that lofty Cold War geopolitics was more important than the nitty-gritty of economic and trade matters was increasingly challenged within the US government. To many people in Washington, it appeared that economically the US and its transatlantic allies were facing each other as competitors. The speedy recovery of the European economies, including West Germany's "economic miracle" that gradually began in the mid-1950s, and the discovery of structural deficiencies in the United States' economic performance made many US policy makers resentful. The US, after all, began suffering from rising unemployment and inflation. The late 1950s saw a serious recession in the United States, and the country's trade balance with the outside world slowly deteriorated. Washington began to view not only the

Soviets, who in 1957 sent the first ever satellite into space, but also increasingly the Europeans (and also the Japanese) as significant technological and, above all, economic competitors.

The Eisenhower White House and the State Department, however, remained unconcerned. These were, after all, only temporary phenomena that would not be able to prevent the gradual development of full economic multilateralism in transatlantic relations in the long run. Despite the in-built discriminatory trade restrictions, for the time being, it was necessary for the US to support the European integration process for the sake of stabilizing Franco-German friendship, aiding the economic recovery of the continent, and not least maintaining a united Western front toward Moscow.

Phase 2. Transition: The 1960s

By the early 1960s, the economic aspects of transatlantic relations had become crucially important. Washington began to insist on the termination of all protective European tariffs and trade discriminations as well as the full convertibility of the major European currencies. European economic competition, the United States' growing payments deficit and within a few years the attempt to set up something approximating a social welfare system, and, above all, the accumulating costs of the Vietnam War were undermining the country's relative economic performance.

John F. Kennedy's "Grand Design," as expressed in the president's speech in Philadelphia on July 4, 1962, contained the expectation that a more united and independent Europe would have a strong and lasting US connection. Contradicting what many people in his administration believed behind closed doors, Kennedy insisted that the US did not view "a strong and united Europe as a rival but as a partner." A Europe, he outlined, that played a greater defense role and worked toward the lowering of trade barriers and resolving other global economic issues would be a partner the US would be able to deal with on "the basis of full equality."⁷ This certainly sounded good to European ears. It quickly became clear, however, that Kennedy and most of his advisers remained opposed to a Europe that "struck off on its own" in order to play an independent role in world affairs. Kennedy strongly believed that Europe's international activities ought to take place within the Atlantic framework and thus be subject to US guidance.

Still, Washington became somewhat more attentive to accommodating European criticism about the United States' onerous hegemony and unilat-

eral behavior in the Atlantic alliance. The Kennedy administration and subsequently, to some extent, also the Johnson government showed more understanding of European ambitions to achieve a degree of greater independence in the economic as well as in the political and security spheres. This strategy included efforts to give the Europeans a greater say in NATO's nuclear decision-making by means of the ill-fated Multilateral Force (MLF). The creation of NATO's top-secret Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) in December 1966 was meant to convince also NATO's nonnuclear members that they were participating in nuclear decision-making. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations also convened two lengthy multilateral rounds of trade negotiations to smooth economic relations and make the Europeans reduce their tariffs on US goods.

In the 1960s, Washington's political, military, and economic predominance within the transatlantic alliance inspired more criticism than before, but these challenges were not substantial enough to endanger US hegemony. Since the disastrous 1956 Suez crisis, Britain was keen on demonstrating its loyalty to the US (without, however, being prepared to get involved in the Vietnam War), and the West Germans were much too dependent on US goodwill in view of their precarious front-line status in the Cold War to openly challenge US predominance in the alliance. The constant squabbling over burden-sharing issues was merely an unpleasant sideshow, though it did contribute to the fall from power of Chancellor Ludwig Erhard. These disputes did not seriously undermine the further development of US Cold War strategy, however. Italy and other European countries were much too weak to pose a major challenge either. It was only French President Charles De Gaulle who openly disputed US leadership in the alliance. This culminated in the French withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command in 1966. The general's deep-seated anti-US attitude angered and perturbed the US, but Washington was fully aware that it was West Germany and not so much France that was the key to the United States' role in Europe.

During the Kennedy era and also in the course of the Johnson years, the US ostensibly seemed more prepared than before to grant the Europeans greater input on transatlantic relations and view them as more independent actors on the world stage. Yet it was obvious that Washington always considered European integration and unity as subordinate in importance to upholding the Atlantic superstructure framework. Washington had no desire to accept the Europeans as genuinely independent players on the global stage. Despite the gradual transformation of the Cold War with the

development of East-West détente in the aftermath of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and De Gaulle's challenge to Washington's European policy, the United States' dominance in the Western alliance remained unimpaired. In the 1960s, Washington continued to believe that despite all difficulties, in the last resort, European integration and the gradual emergence of a united Europe was constructive and mutually beneficial for both Europe and the US.

By the end of the decade, however, a growing number of policy makers feared that the "ever closer union" of Europe—the phrase embedded in the 1957 Rome Treaties to describe the ultimate objective of the EEC—would turn the Europeans into forceful economic and possibly geopolitical competitors and rivals. It could be assumed that some time soon, a united Europe might well attempt to become a truly independent "third force" in international affairs and, in a worst-case scenario, even cut its connection with the US altogether.

Phase 3. Turning Point: The Nixon/Kissinger Years

With the advent of the Nixon administration in early 1969, it was this apprehension that had a major impact on the belief system of most senior politicians in Washington, including the president himself and Henry Kissinger, his national security adviser, who within a few months managed to become Nixon's closest foreign policy confidant. The long-foreshadowed open clash between the US and Europe was just around the corner.

Initially, however, President Nixon was quite well disposed toward the Europeans. He believed that the Johnson administration had neglected the continent, and Nixon wished to stabilize and renew the transatlantic relationship rather than launch any dramatic changes in the United States' European policy. Just over four weeks after his inauguration, Nixon embarked on an eight-day grand presidential tour of many important European countries, which included visits to Britain, Italy, West Germany, and France, as well as NATO headquarters and briefly the European Commission in Belgium. Nixon made a good impression, and though he had listened attentively to the pro-European sentiments he heard in Bonn and Rome, he was not displeased to hear remarks about the continuing importance of the nation-state in London and above all in Paris from De Gaulle, whom he held in high esteem. Nixon decided that he wanted to focus on the improvement of relations within the Atlantic alliance, including Washington's bilateral

relations with the various European countries, and leave “doctrinal disputes” and “the elaboration of Europe’s internal arrangements to the Europeans.”⁸ The president never really believed that the Europeans would be able to construct something like a united Europe if they had to achieve it by themselves and without US help. He thought that the Europeans “had one hell of a time acting as a bloc,” as they simply could “not get along with each other.”⁹

Henry Kissinger, however, was not quite so sure about this. He had a much darker outlook on US-European relations, perhaps influenced by his own German Jewish heritage. Certainly he always thought that Germany was “the last country that should be encouraged to ‘go it alone’” regarding any independent foreign policy ventures, such as for instance Chancellor Willy Brandt’s controversial *Ostpolitik*, which he strongly opposed.¹⁰

In Kissinger’s many writings before joining the Nixon White House, in particular in his popular 1965 book *The Troubled Partnership*, he did not hesitate to criticize US policy, arguing that transatlantic relations were a “dialogue among the deaf,” not least as the US had come to deal with Europe by means of a “certain self-righteousness and impatience.”¹¹ In the mid-1960s, Kissinger, however, still believed that European unity was in the interest of the US. He merely wondered whether this unity really ought to be created by way of a supranational Europe. Along with many of his contemporaries, he thought that a confederate structure within an overarching and strong Atlantic framework would be much better. Full of foreboding, Kissinger argued that the rapprochement with the Soviet Union in the years since the Cuban Missile Crisis and Europe’s rapid economic recovery as well as a certain provincial outlook on international affairs on the continent had led to European “Third Force tendencies” and “reduced “Europe’s receptivity to America’s political maxims.”¹²

Kissinger was all doom and gloom regarding the prospects for transatlantic relations. The emergence of “a specifically European view of the world,” Kissinger pontificated, would lead the Europeans to “challenge American hegemony in Atlantic policy.”¹³ He dismissed entirely the widespread US perception that European unity would lead to “parallel policies” and “similar views about appropriate tactics” in international affairs. Instead, Kissinger thought “a united Europe is likely to insist on a specifically European view of world affairs—which is another way of saying that it will challenge American hegemony in Atlantic policy.”¹⁴ To him, it was obvious that a united Europe would not lead to a solution of all Atlantic disagreements; in fact, he thought, “in many respects it may magnify rather than reduce differences.”¹⁵

While Nixon would eventually arrive at very similar convictions, it was Kissinger who held deeply euroskeptical beliefs even before his time in office. Subsequently, it was he who largely designed the Nixon administration's increasingly suspicious, if not hostile, policy toward European unity. And the more Nixon became distracted by his détente policy toward the Soviet Union and China, the escalation of the Vietnam War and its heated domestic repercussions, and, above all, the Watergate crisis, the more Kissinger was in charge of Washington's European policy. And of course, in Nixon's view, Kissinger's background gave him particular expertise on all things European. Already right at the beginning of Nixon's presidency, Kissinger had advised him that the US should perhaps best keep out of European affairs, pursue a policy of noninterference, and leave it entirely up to the Europeans to find out whether they were capable of making any progress toward creating a united Europe.

Despite Nixon's successful visit to Europe in February–March 1969, European frustration and anger over the erosion of Washington's support of and commitment to a united Europe soon came back to the forefront. Within the EC, shortly to be enlarged to nine members, there was the widespread belief that the US was still not taking seriously European attempts to create a united continent and stand on their own feet in international affairs. As the 1960s had demonstrated, US hegemony in NATO and transatlantic security affairs could hardly be successfully challenged; in economic and monetary affairs, however, the circumstances were very different.

Here Washington's policy seemed to display a surprisingly high degree of irresponsibility—at least this was the perception of most European countries. In particular, France and West Germany, the economic powerhouses and main drivers of the European integration process, saw it that way. Italy viewed things similarly, as did Britain under both Prime Ministers Harold Wilson and Edward Heath. London was waiting impatiently in the wings to be accepted as a full EC member and was careful not to come across as too pro-US. Despite much mutual suspicion on both sides of the Atlantic regarding relations with the Soviet Union in the age of détente and *Ostpolitik*, it was the economic and monetary areas that became the main, rather vicious battlegrounds in transatlantic relations during the next few years. This resulted in a decisive, long-lasting turning point in US policy toward a united Europe.

It was unfortunate for Nixon that his presidency commenced when the country's economic and financial position had begun to deteriorate. The

US was also much less secure socially and regarding its national identity than it had been during the previous postwar decades. From 1971 onward, the US accumulated an ever-larger balance of payments deficit. Nixon was particularly concerned that in the same year, and for the first time in almost one hundred years, this situation had resulted in the US having developed also a significant trade deficit with the outside world. On top of this came a steep rate of inflation and rising unemployment numbers. Compared with earlier years, US manufacturing industries in many areas had become much less productive and also less good in terms of product quality. Japanese and European goods were capturing many important sectors of the US market.

The administration, however, put the blame for the United States' economic woes on the country's foreign competitors. Washington accused them of employing unfair trade practices such as the imposition of high tariffs on US goods and subsidizing their own products to make them cheaper on the US market. Not without justification, the EC's heavily subsidized Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was viewed particularly suspiciously in Washington as it prevented the United States' large agricultural industry from penetrating the EC market.

Above all, the White House blamed the strength of the dollar for the country's economic predicament. Nixon considered that the hugely overvalued dollar made US goods unnecessarily expensive and uncompetitive on the world markets. While there was some truth in this claim, it also was an exaggeration. The United States' economic problems went much deeper; the country had not just a monetary problem. Nixon, however, was hopeful that bringing about a much weaker dollar would not only help the country's export industry but also stabilize its balance of payments and perhaps enable Washington to once again achieve a trade surplus. His administration tried to weaken the dollar, but the depreciation of the US currency led to further inflationary pressure on prices, which endangered the savings and retirement accounts of millions of Americans. It also made foreign investments in the country much less appealing for international industrial and business investors. At the same time, the strength of many European currencies, in particular that of the West German Deutschmark, had made them solid "safe havens" for global investors. Currency speculators moved much of their portfolios to Europe, in particular to West Germany but also to France, thus swamping the old continent with dollars.

Already since the mid-1960s, the transatlantic world had been shaken by repeated monetary crises and the necessity to revalue its currencies, which

were all pegged to the US dollar. The latter in turn was pegged to gold at \$35 per ounce. The Bretton Woods monetary system, established in 1944, had provided much postwar monetary stability and prosperity for the Western world but was now straining on its leash and becoming seriously unbalanced. The German and French governments in particular put pressure on Washington to do something about the dire situation. The rise of European prosperity and self-confidence, if not arrogance at times, had convinced Bonn and Paris that their economic wisdom was turning out to be superior to that of the US. Yet European criticism met with a "policy of benign neglect" on the part of the Nixon administration. Treasury Secretary John Connally, who at times rivaled, if not surpassed, Kissinger in influence with the president, proved to be rather unhelpful. He had little empathy for the monetary difficulties of the allies. "The dollar is our currency," he once told visiting European dignitaries, "but it's your problem."¹⁶

In the course of the early 1970s, disputes about monetary and economic issues assumed an exceptional viciousness and were conducted in highly nationalistic terms hitherto unheard of among the transatlantic partners. In this hostile environment, US support for the further political integration and economic unity of Europe became all but extinct. At times, in particular in the spring and summer of 1973, Kissinger did not shrink from trying to persuade Nixon to actively oppose and undermine the European unity process and divide the Europeans among themselves. He believed that the best chance to sow disunity among the EC members was by encouraging the West Germans to be less enthusiastic about the European integration process. Their precarious and divided Cold War position, with West Berlin being situated in the middle of communist East Germany, made them particularly vulnerable and dependent on the US after all.

During Nixon's first term in office, there was one overriding factor that was hugely important for the way the president interpreted the worsening situation. It underpinned much of the president's economic concerns and greatly undermined his trust in the European allies. This factor was Nixon's reelection prospects, which were severely affected by the monetary upheavals and Europe's economic and financial competition. As early as 1970, Nixon had become deeply worried about the country's deteriorating economic situation. With an eye to the forthcoming congressional election of November 1970 and in particular the presidential election of 1972, Nixon felt he urgently had to do something about this. And as the Watergate crisis demonstrated, Nixon was paranoid about losing the election and prepared

to do anything in his power (including resorting to illegal means) to obtain a second term in office. "The President's preoccupation with the election frightens me," Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns wrote in his diary in early November 1971, almost exactly a year after the 1970 midterm election, which the Republicans lost. "Is there anything that he would not do to further his reelection? I am losing faith in him, and my heart is sick and sad."¹⁷

Perhaps Nixon's concern was understandable. After all, he had also lost the 1962 California gubernatorial election and only narrowly defeated Hubert Humphrey in the presidential election of 1968. In view of his experience of being narrowly defeated by Kennedy in the 1960 election in the middle of a recession, which President Eisenhower had done very little to overcome in Nixon's view, he was strongly convinced that only a flourishing economy with low unemployment rates would help him win a second term in 1972. Nixon repeatedly told his advisers, "our concern must not be inflation but recession." He had "never heard of losing an election because of inflation, but lots were lost because of unemployment or recession."¹⁸

Nixon's electoral concerns influenced his entire approach to dealing with the growing instability of the Bretton Woods system and the economic competition and monetary criticism of the European allies throughout his first term. Regarding these crucial issues the main influence on him was not so much Kissinger, whose economic knowledge was limited, but Treasury Secretary Connally, whom Nixon greatly admired, as well as the latter's successor, George Shultz. Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns, Under Secretary Paul Volcker, and the writings of the Chicago monetarist Milton Friedman, as well as more surprisingly the thoughts of the liberal economist John Maynard Keynes, also significantly influenced Nixon's thinking on how to boost the country's economic fortunes and fight off foreign competitors. The advice he received and his electoral anxieties resulted in the August 1971 Camp David meeting, the "Nixon shocks," and the ending of the Bretton Woods system. Nixon's concerns also contributed to the subsequent collapse of the transatlantic monetary compromise deal, the Smithsonian Agreement of December 1971, and eventually led to the free floating of international exchange rates (and the beginning of the dominance of neoliberal economic thinking in much of the Western world). These long months of monetary and political turmoil and uncertainty were accompanied by intense transatlantic acrimony.

At the end of this process, transatlantic relations and the Europeans' con-

fidence that they would develop into global players were a shadow of their former selves. The US terminated supporting the European unity process (though in the end the White House stopped short of actually attempting to actively subvert it), and in August 1974, the Watergate crisis forced Nixon to resign in disgrace. Prior to this, the results not only of the Washington Energy Conference of February 1974 but also of both the June 10, 1974, Gymnich Compromise and the signing of a new Atlantic Declaration on June 26, 1974, largely confirmed the status quo: Europe's reluctant acceptance of the United States' continued predominance in the Atlantic alliance in economic, political, and of course security affairs. These developments also demonstrated that Europe was much less united than the EC aspired to be, and when push came to shove, it turned out that the EC was still quite incapable of standing on its own feet in global affairs.

During the Nixon administration, the deterioration of transatlantic relations and the cessation of US support for the European unity project proceeded in four major chronological stages (though stages 3 and 4 overlapped to some extent).

Stage 1. The Camp David Meeting on August 15, 1971, and the End of Bretton Woods

On August 15, 1971, in close collaboration with Treasury Secretary John Connally, Nixon called a meeting with his most trusted economic advisers at Camp David to discuss a drastic change of approach to the country's economic policy. Without a greatly improved economic situation, Nixon feared losing his 1972 presidential reelection bid. Immediately after the Camp David meeting, the president announced the "Nixon shocks" in a major TV address to the nation. Nixon informed the astounded public of a new US monetary policy and thus the effective abandonment of the Bretton Woods monetary system of fixed exchange rates. He announced a comprehensive package of temporary wage and price controls, which proved to be highly popular, the severance of the link between gold and the dollar, and a 10 percent temporary tariff on foreign goods entering the country, which he hoped would lead Americans to buy more domestic goods.

European and other allied governments had not been forewarned. They were utterly surprised by Nixon's "bombshell" and deeply annoyed. They quickly realized that it was not so much Nixon's caring about the well-being

of the US and the transatlantic alliance but his electoral concerns that had led to his new nationalist economic policy and the abrupt termination of the long-standing Bretton Woods system. The Europeans considered forceful counteraction, such as trade sanctions on US exports but in the end refrained from starting a trade war when they managed to persuade the US to embark on monetary discussions. The whole unilateral episode motivated the Europeans to make much more strenuous efforts than hitherto to develop their own common monetary policy. For Europe, after all, Bretton Woods represented stability and prosperity, while for the Nixon administration, it stood for shackling the US economy to an outmoded system that constrained rather than helped create an economic boom, which Nixon believed he so desperately needed to win another term in office.

The prolonged animosity in transatlantic relations in the aftermath of the Camp David meeting and the “Nixon shocks” was aggravated by Connally’s stubborn behavior. He clearly believed that he could obtain better terms for a new transatlantic monetary deal by maintaining an unrelenting and obstinate position for more than three months. It was Connally’s rival, National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, who had not been invited to Camp David, who realized the political dangers in this course of action. Beginning in late September and throughout October 1971, Kissinger became increasingly concerned about the international fallout from the monetary crisis and believed that something needed to be done about the deteriorating situation as a matter of urgency. By late November, he had convinced Nixon that it was high time to deal with the worsening relations with the allies. Prior to the president’s forthcoming crucial détente summits in Peking and Moscow (in, respectively, February and May 1972), alliance relations ought to be good and united rather than seriously strained. Nixon and Kissinger agreed that a compromise should be found by means of a number of high-level bilateral monetary talks with European leaders, which the president much preferred to holding a grand new monetary summit similar to the 1944 Bretton Woods conference.

Stage 2. The Smithsonian Agreement and Its Collapse

Bilateral French-US talks between President Georges Pompidou and Nixon and Kissinger in the Azores in December 1971 led to a new tentative currency settlement. The other European countries reluctantly accepted the Franco-American deal in further negotiations a few days later at the Smith-

sonian Castle in Washington, DC. The Smithsonian Agreement of December 17, 1971, spelled out a new realignment of Western currencies with somewhat more generous fluctuation margins than had been the case under the Bretton Woods system and with the weakened dollar still being at the center of the system. Moreover, the dollar would still be linked to gold but at \$38 an ounce (rather than the previous \$35), which devalued the US currency by something like 7 percent. The European allies, in fact, had succeeded in saving the old Bretton Woods system by repairing it and making it more flexible.

The Smithsonian Agreement, it turned out, did not prevent further monetary crises and dollar depreciations in the course of 1972. Also, the US balance of payments did not improve as much as Nixon had expected. The rates of inflation and unemployment fell but were still too high for Nixon's taste. President Pompidou and the other European leaders became deeply annoyed, moreover, when they realized that Nixon was not sticking to the rules of the Smithsonian Agreement and was not defending the new, somewhat looser but still fixed currency exchange rates as agreed. It did not help that Treasury Secretary Connally's successor, George Shultz, a Friedman monetarist, did not believe in a fixed exchange-rate system. Exasperated with Washington's monetary policy, the Europeans considered setting up the so-called Snake—a kind of regional European monetary system that largely adhered to the Bretton Woods rules—to maintain fixed exchange rates and price stability and hopefully low stable rates of inflation for the EC countries.

The European Snake, with its fixed currency-exchange rates among the European countries, existed within a moderately floating and thus inherently unstable Smithsonian Tunnel that was dominated by the US (the Snake in the Tunnel). The Snake clearly demonstrated the EC's desire to become independent from the turmoil of the US-dominated Western monetary system. This was a clear "move toward monetary union in the EEC," the economist Robert Solomon has argued.¹⁹ In November 1972, Nixon won an overwhelming electoral victory and a second term in office. It proved to him that his drastic economic course correction at Camp David in August 1971 had been correct, never mind the constant criticism and complaints of the United States' European allies.

Still, the transatlantic monetary crises continued into 1973, and several further dollar devaluations took place. On January 1, 1973, the first enlargement of the EC occurred when the UK, Ireland, and Denmark were admitted. EC member states soon began considering a joint European currency

float that did not include the US dollar (the Snake without the Tunnel). It was this envisaged demonstration of European independence and lack of consultation with Washington that was entirely unacceptable to Kissinger and made him burst out with anti-European diatribes. Although Treasury Secretary Shultz, a trained economist, was much less worried about a joint European float, Kissinger was incapable of not viewing everything the Europeans did or said from a power-political and Cold War point of view. It was during these weeks and months that the Nixon administration became decidedly disillusioned with the Europeans. It was the heated monetary disputes and the display of much greater European strivings for monetary independence than hitherto that was the straw that broke the camel's back. This led to a decisive turning point in US policy toward the European unity process.

In the spring of 1973, Kissinger advised Nixon, "the time has come where we must make clear to the Europeans that they cannot take a common position without consultation with us on a matter that vitally affects our interest and buy us off in currency of abstract European integration, and that sort of thing."²⁰ He kept saying that the Europeans "ought to have consulted" the US. After all, "European integration was never seen as a substitute for Atlantic or world cooperation," and therefore a decision like a joint float "should be taken in full consultation with the United States."²¹ Gloomily, he told Nixon that he was "no longer so sure that European integration is all that much in our interest." And the president agreed. "Oh, I am not so sure of it at all," he replied. Kissinger pointed out, "We've always seen it [European unity] as a step towards Atlantic cooperation. And in this case, moreover, it's world cooperation. And we've never interpreted European integration to mean that Europe takes unilateral decisions . . . that affect us and, in this case, affect even the Japanese . . . without prior consultation."²²

A united European monetary system, Kissinger thought, was not in the United States' interest. It needed to be scuppered. "I basically have only one view right now," he told Deputy Treasury Secretary William Simon, "which is to do as much as we can to prevent a united European position without showing our hand," as he would "rather play with them individually" than as a coherent bloc.²³ Kissinger remained convinced that "a common float if it works, is going to lead to a common monetary system."²⁴ And such a development greatly alarmed him.

Yet, on March 11, 1973 (with effect from March 16), the EC-Nine agreed to let their currencies float jointly against the dollar and all other global cur-

rencies. With this, the Smithsonian Agreement had collapsed, and the remnants of the old Bretton Woods system vanished. The G-10 soon approved of the end of the Bretton Woods system of fixed currency rates in favor of a system of unpredictable floating exchange rates, which effectively also led to yet another devaluation of the dollar. The Europeans felt that they had no choice but to cave in to US pressure and accept the economic and monetary market realities and give up on the Bretton Woods system of fixed rates. While the nine EC countries reluctantly adopted a freely floating currency-exchange-rate system, it was still a system, which joined the European currencies together as one monetary bloc within the Snake (but without the dollar-dominated Tunnel). It was the forerunner of a tentative European currency bloc.

Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns tried to explain the circumstances to Nixon. Underlying the whole uncertain situation, he outlined, was the fact that the Europeans “have come to view the U.S. as a locus of unsettling forces in the monetary world for years.” They believed “you can’t rely on the U.S.” and may well have concluded that they needed to build a new monetary system run by the Europeans themselves.²⁵ In the view of the Europeans, the US had become a rather unreliable and uncertain ally.

Stage 3. The 1973 “Year of Europe” and a New Atlantic Declaration

Kissinger’s anxieties about Europe becoming too independent in the monetary realm were further increased by European Political Cooperation (EPC), a consultative forum created in 1970, with which the EC countries intended to coordinate their foreign policies. To the US, it looked suspiciously like an attempt to form a common European foreign policy. It also proved to be more dynamic than expected. At the Paris summit in October 1972, the members of the soon-to-be-enlarged EC even talked about their intention to achieve “economic and monetary union” within less than ten years. The White House was not pleased. Soon, the terrible Christmas bombings in Vietnam at the end of 1972 led to a furious reaction in Europe and estranged the transatlantic partners even further.

On April 23, 1973, Kissinger gave his so-called Year of Europe speech to attempt to put transatlantic relations back on a new, constructive footing. On the model of Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill’s original Atlantic Charter in 1941, Kissinger proposed a new charter to design the future

course of US-European relations and reinvigorate “shared ideals and common purposes.”²⁶ The reaction in Europe was not complimentary. European leaders felt slighted, as they had hardly been consulted about Kissinger’s intention. They also viewed Kissinger’s remarks about the Europeans only having regional responsibilities while the US had global concerns as condescending. They were not impressed either when Kissinger seemed to link greater European burden-sharing efforts in the security realm with Washington’s willingness to keep US troops on the continent. Above all, the EC countries interpreted his speech as a not-too-subtle attempt to undermine and prevent the further integration of the European continent. It was in particular this issue that led to such a negative reaction to Kissinger’s speech in Europe. He seemed to make every effort, the Europeans thought, to reimpose a firm Atlantic framework on US-EC relations and undermine their envisaged separate transatlantic pillar of a united European community.

In the aftermath of Kissinger’s speech, he became highly critical of the long period of time the Europeans took to submit their response to his Atlantic Charter proposal. But in particular, just like Kissinger’s reaction to European efforts to design a joint float in the monetary realm, it was the European decision to consult each other and formulate a joint position without talking to the US beforehand that he regarded as outrageous. Kissinger exploded, “The Nine won’t discuss with us until they have made their decision. . . . We are forced into a type of consultation which is worse than we have with any other country.”²⁷ Subsequently, relations among the allies were further strained by the transatlantic talks about the content of the envisaged Atlantic Declaration, to be signed by all NATO members, and whether perhaps also a separate EC-US declaration should be drafted.

But what continued to irk Kissinger the most was the fact that the EC was effectively ignoring Washington’s insistence on being consulted before the EC-Nine would make any concrete economic and foreign policy decisions. The White House clearly wished to stay in charge of the Atlantic alliance and its European member states and thoroughly disliked the Europeans “ganging up” on the US, as Nixon and Kissinger saw it. European unity, Kissinger declared, should not make “cooperation with us more rather than less difficult.”²⁸

Furthermore, as if transatlantic relations were not complicated enough, in mid-December 1973, the EC issued a Declaration on European Identity at its summit in Copenhagen. The declaration encouraged EC members to

make better use of the EPC consultation mechanism to ensure that foreign policy positions would be much better coordinated among all EC countries than hitherto. The EC-Nine, the document spelled out, “have the political will to succeed in the construction of a United Europe.” That way, they will “strengthen their own cohesion and contribute to the framing of a genuinely European foreign policy.”²⁹ Kissinger remained distinctly unimpressed and thought that the identity paper treated the US “like any other external power.”³⁰

Still, despite all of these ambitions and good intentions, eventually the Europeans agreed to sign a new Atlantic Declaration at NATO’s twenty-fifth-anniversary summit in Brussels in late June 1974, and it became quite clear that the US had won the day. In the Gymnich agreement just over two weeks earlier, the Europeans had found a face-saving compromise about how to handle the transatlantic consultation process. They essentially gave in to almost all of Kissinger’s demands while pretending to have worked out smooth and satisfactory procedures on how to deal with Washington. The Gymnich Compromise spelled out that an issue that concerned relations with the US could only remain on the agenda of an EPC meeting and be discussed jointly by the EC-Nine if all EC members agreed. Thus, any one of the nine EC countries could veto such a discussion and have the topic removed from the agenda. The US could also be consulted on a case-by-case basis, if an EC country proposed to include the US. And each EC country also retained the right to consult with the US on a purely bilateral basis.

Altogether, this was a great effort by the EC countries to satisfy Kissinger’s idea of how the transatlantic consultation process should work. And Washington was pleased by the result. After all, the US could get its way quite easily. Washington only needed to persuade just one EC country to do its bidding and either veto a topic that the US did not want to see discussed by the EC or propose that the US should be consulted to become part of the internal EC discussion.

Stage 4. The Yom Kippur War, DEFCON III, and the Washington Energy Conference

In October 1973, in the middle of the difficult and acrimonious talks that eventually led to the signing of the Atlantic Charter in mid-1974, yet another major crisis erupted. The Nixon administration, and once again in particular Henry Kissinger, became greatly upset when most European countries

only reluctantly supported the US position in the October 1973 Yom Kippur War between Israel and a formidable coalition of Arab states, led by Egypt and Syria. The oil boycott by OPEC, which included oil-rich Saudi Arabia, greatly distressed the Europeans. The boycott had been imposed on almost all Western countries that supported Israel in the war. The crisis led to major economic turbulence in most EC countries; one victim was Britain's distinctly pro-European prime minister Edward Heath, who lost the general election in late February 1974 that he had unwisely called in the middle of a coal miners' strike and a shutdown of much of British industry due to a scarcity of coal and oil.

In view of the OPEC oil boycott, the Europeans were more concerned about staying on the right side of the Arabs for the sake of maintaining their access to precious oil resources than showing solidarity with the US or Israel (or indeed with each other). The airlift introduced by the US in the middle of October 1973 to provide urgently needed defense and other resources to Israel caused major friction among the allies. While the West German government, for instance, closed both eyes and allowed the US to use its port of Bremerhaven to provide Tel Aviv with badly needed material, as soon as a cease-fire had been arranged, Bonn immediately asked the US to stop using the port for this purpose. Kissinger was not impressed.

The most dangerous and dramatic European-US crisis occurred shortly before an armistice was reached. When in the course of the war the US feared that the Soviet Union might become directly involved and send Soviet troops to the Middle East to aid Egypt and Syria, which were losing the war, Kissinger convened a small committee of the National Security Council. Shortly before midnight on October 24, 1973, Kissinger's committee put all of the United States' nuclear forces on a global nuclear alert—DEFCON III. This was the same level of alert that had occurred during the Cuban Missile Crisis; it included all of the United States' nuclear-armed forces in Europe. NATO's other nuclear powers, France and the UK, were not consulted prior to this decision, and the whole of NATO was kept in the dark until European leaders found out about the nuclear alert when they heard about it the next day. They protested vigorously, but the US was unapologetic. US NATO ambassador Donald Rumsfeld made clear that there simply had been no time for consultation, as everything had happened within a few hours in the middle of the night. The allies should be grateful instead, he pointed out, that the alert had stopped the Soviets from introducing their forces into

the Middle East. Whether Moscow had actually had this intention in the first place was more than doubtful, however.

Employing the extraordinary and dangerous measure of raising the nuclear threshold in a global crisis shocked the Europeans. US irresponsibility no longer seemed focused on economic and monetary issues alone. Although the nuclear alert only lasted for one day, the episode further undermined European trust and confidence in US leadership. Incidentally, Nixon had not been able to participate in the decision. While Kissinger was presiding over his small committee in the West Wing and put the country and much of the globe on a nuclear alert, the president was indisposed. Due to the stress of the Watergate crisis, he had consumed way too much alcohol and fallen asleep in his private quarters upstairs in the White House (he gave his approval the next day).

The Yom Kippur War ended on the same day that the nuclear alert had been triggered. Afterward, during both Kissinger's successful shuttle diplomacy to aid the Israeli-Arab peace negotiations and the subsequent Washington Energy Conference in February 1974 to resolve the oil question, the US largely sidelined the Europeans. In particular, French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert was most upset about this, but in the end, there was little he could do, not least as European solidarity on the oil question was still severely lacking. With the signing of a new Atlantic Charter a few months later, as noted earlier, the US managed to formally reassert its authority on the Atlantic alliance and its wayward European allies.

Toward the end of the Nixon administration, European-US relations were in bad shape. Nixon's assessment of the solid foundation of the transatlantic relationship when he returned from his European journey in early March 1969 had proven highly optimistic. Kissinger had realized the need to rejuvenate transatlantic relations when he gave his Year of Europe speech just over four years later, but his attempt had badly backfired. The Nixon administration had not taken terribly seriously the developments within Europe in the preceding years. The president and Henry Kissinger greatly underestimated the European unity process, which had infused into the transatlantic alliance an entirely new dynamic that required new constructive responses.

Although it had been Nixon and Kissinger who had contributed much to transforming constructively the Cold War world with their successful détente policies, paradoxically they seemed to believe they had no choice but

to continue maneuvering in a traditional Cold War environment regarding the internal dynamic of the Western alliance. The US thus attempted to reassert its dominance of the Atlantic alliance as it had been established in the 1950s, in entirely different circumstances. Instead of adapting to a rapidly changing world, Kissinger insisted on the US guiding the allies and being respectfully consulted at every turn. In view of the economic and monetary and also political/military irresponsibility that the US had displayed over the preceding years and the increasing confidence and growing unity among the EC-Nine, this situation was unacceptable to the Europeans. The result was the epic transatlantic battle that played out during the Nixon era. The Europeans, however, could not win this battle at this stage. They were still much too weak, particularly in the security-policy realm but in other respects too, and were not sufficiently united either.

The effective termination of the US support for the development of a united Europe during the Nixon administration left lasting damage. Much mutual goodwill had been lost by August 9, 1974, when Nixon made his farewell remarks to his closest associates and slowly strode to the presidential helicopter that would take him out of the White House for good. It was left to the short-lived Ford administration to smooth the ruffled transatlantic feathers, but the damage had been done.

Despite a distinct improvement in the personal relations among the main transatlantic players during the Ford years (with Kissinger remaining in charge of US foreign policy), the mutual trust and closeness that had once been taken for granted in transatlantic relations would never come back. Relations during the Carter and Reagan years and in particular during George W. Bush's first term in office, due to the invasion of Iraq, were tense. Washington continued to insist on a pliant and domesticated Europe that paid its dues and followed US policies and its guidance and advice without asking too many, if any, critical questions. Despite all nice rhetoric to the contrary, the US had a transatlantic alliance in mind that worked on a basis of subservience rather than equality and mutual respect. There certainly was nothing left of Washington's policy of "enlightened self-interest" and strong support for a united Europe that had characterized transatlantic relations prior to Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger moving to the White House. The development in the US of an eventually outright hostile policy toward the European Union and the major European states such as France and Germany during Donald Trump's one-term presidency went back to

the watershed years of the Nixon era. It was in the early 1970s that the foundation was laid for the ever-widening rift in transatlantic relations that characterized the subsequent decades and culminated in the twenty-first century.

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NOTES

Preface and Acknowledgments

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Introduction

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Chapter 1. Golden Age

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151. Memorandum of conversation between Johnson and Erhard, September 26, 1966, in FRUS, 1964–68, Vol. VIII, pp. 471–77; also memorandum of conversation, Erhard, Schröder, von Hassel, Johnson, Rusk, McNamara, and others, September 26, 1966, in FRUS, 1964–68, Vol. XV, pp. 429–30.
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Chapter 2. Thinking of Europe and Beyond

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2. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA): Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Box 341, Subject Files, HAK/President Memos 1969–

- 1970: memorandum, Nixon to Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and Kissinger, March 2, 1970 (also at Office of the Historian Foreign Service Institute, US Department of State: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76vol1/d61>).
3. Ibid.
 4. Allen J. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy: Booms, Busts, Dollars, and Votes* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), p. 126; memorandum, Nixon to Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and Kissinger, March 2, 1970.
 5. In the literature, the abbreviations EEC, EC, and Common Market are often used interchangeably. This is not correct. The European Economic Community (EEC)—also frequently referred to as “Common Market”—came into being on January 1, 1958, after the ratifications of the 1957 Rome Treaties. In 1967, the EEC and the two other communities—EURATOM and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)—were merged and referred to as the European Community (EC). The EC became the main pillar of the European Union (EU), which came into existence as a result of the 1990–91 Maastricht Treaty. The EC ceased to exist as a separate entity and was fully subsumed into the EU following implementation of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009.
 6. Henry A. Kissinger, *The Troubled Partnership: A Re-appraisal of the Atlantic Alliance* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1965), p. 49; Gregory D. Cleva, *Henry Kissinger and the American Approach to Foreign Policy* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1989), p. 172.
 7. See Bill Clinton’s remarks to a man who heckled him during a speech on October 26, 2007, in Minneapolis (CNN video): <https://www.facebook.com/OYMUSA/videos/640473356090789/?v=640473356090789>. Clinton said to the heckler, “The Bohemian club! Did you say Bohemian club? That’s where all those rich Republicans go up and stand naked against redwood trees right? I’ve never been to the Bohemian club but you oughta go. It’d be good for you. You’d get some fresh air.” Quoted in Tea Krulos, *American Madness: The Story of the Phantom Patriot and How Conspiracy Theories Hijacked American Consciousness* (New York: Feral House, 2020).
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14. For the full text of the Truman Doctrine, see Harry Truman, “Address before a Joint Session of Congress, March 12, 1947”: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp.
15. I. Gellman, *Richard Nixon*, p. 139.
16. James Worthen, *The Young Nixon and His Rivals: Four California Republicans Eye the White House, 1946–1958* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), pp. 60–61.
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Chapter 3. Special Relationships

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 14. See, for example, Geir Lundestad, “*Empire*” by Integration: *The United States and European Integration, 1945–1997* (Oxford: University Press, 1998), pp. 99ff.
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34. Mark Attwood Lawrence, *Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); on Wilson: Sir Michael Palliser, conversation with the author, London, May 10, 2010. See Nixon's conversation with the Italian Prime Minister: NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President's Trip Files, Box 447, Folder "Memcoms—Europe (Feb. 23,'69–Mar. 2,'69)": memorandum of conversation, Nixon—Prime Minister Rumor, February 28, 1969.
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51. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President's Trip Files, Box 442, Folder "President Nixon's Trip to Europe, February–March 1969, Belgium. Secret": "Talking Paper for European Trip. Subject: NATO—General Talking Points," TP-12, undated.
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53. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Name Files: Rumsfeld, Donald to Scowcroft, Brent Col., Box 833, Folder "Sonnenfeldt, Helmut [Jan 69–Dec 73]": "Draft Record of 4.15 pm Session, Chancellor's Office" (present were Nixon, Kissinger and Kiesinger, Brandt, and both countries' respective advisers), Secret, February 26, 1969.
54. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 939.
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 62. “Call on Pompidou: international economic and monetary situation,” Shriver, US ambassador in Paris, to State Department, July 24, 1969, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 361. The phrase was used by the new French president Pompidou.
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 65. See in particular NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President’s Trip Files, Boxes 442 and 443.
 66. *Ibid.*
 67. *Ibid.*, Box 442. For Wilson’s foreign policy, including his attitude toward Vietnam and détente, see Geraint Hughes, *Harold Wilson’s Cold War: The Labour Government and East-West Relations, 1964–1970* (Woodbridge, UK: Royal Historical Society / Boydell, 2009); and Harold Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964–1970: A Personal Record* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971). Willy Brandt writes in his own memoirs regarding Wilson’s book, “What surprised me was that, Commonwealth ties apart, he deals with international affairs as if Britain were still a world power.” Brandt, *People and Politics*, p. 248.
 68. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 763, Folder “1969–1974—United Kingdom. Prime Minister Wilson Corres., Nov. 68–June 70”: memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, “Back-Channel Messages to P.M. Wilson and Chancellor Kiesinger,” dated February 3, 1969, Secret.
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72. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President's Trip Files, Box 442, Folder "Belgium—The President": Paper on "EEC," NE/BEL-13, February 13, 1969, Confidential.
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 78. Ibid., part 2.
 79. "Memorandum for the President. Subject: Your Trip to Europe—Scope Paper."
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 81. See Hillenbrand, *Fragments of Our Time*, p. 272.
 82. Nixon, RN, p. 375.
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 84. Livingstone conversation, July 28, 2010.
 85. See Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 124.
 86. See Bernhard Gwertzman, "Lawrence Eagleburger, a Top Diplomat, Dies at 80," *New York Times* (June 4, 2011): <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/05/us/politics/05eagleburger.html?pagewanted=all>. Lawrence Eagleburger, interview with the author, Washington, DC, April 4, 2003.
 87. On Sonnenfeldt, see Kenneth Weisbrode, *The Atlantic Century: Four Generations of Extraordinary Diplomats Who Forged America's Vital Alliance with Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2009), pp. 203ff. The author conducted a great number of interviews and conversations with Sonnenfeldt, at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC, in the course of 2002 and 2003.
 88. For this story, see, in detail, Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 170; see also Safire, *Before the Storm*, p. 165.
 89. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 592.

90. See Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 134. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, interview with the author, Washington, DC, March 18, 2003.
91. This becomes clear when reading the various memoranda Sonnenfeldt wrote to Kissinger; also Sonnenfeldt interview, March 18, 2003.
92. See Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 131.
93. Henry Kissinger, conversation with the author, Washington, DC, June 13, 2003.
94. Weisbrode, *Atlantic Century*, p. 244.
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96. For the “Sonnenfeldt Doctrine,” Helmut Sonnenfeldt, interview with the author, Washington, DC, March 21, 2003; also Piotr Dlugolecki, “The Sonnenfeldt Doctrine: A Plan to Finlandize Eastern Europe,” *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, No. 3 (2017), pp. 115–29.
97. See Sonnenfeldt’s letter of resignation: NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Name Files: Rumsfeld, Donald to Scowcroft, Brent Col., Box 833: letter, Sonnenfeldt, “Dear Henry,” dated April 13, 1970.
98. See for example the episodes narrated in Isaacson, *Kissinger*, pp. 604–5 (quotes: p. 604).
99. For Nixon’s remarks to the North Atlantic Council on February 24, 1969, see NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials, RG 59, Conference Files, Box 489: President Nixon’s Trip to Europe, 2-23–3-2-69, Chronology, Memcoms Vol. I of VIII.
100. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President’s Trip Files, Box 442, Folder “President Nixon’s Trip to Europe, February–March 1969,” part 2: memorandum, “Talking Paper for European Trip. Subject: East-West Relations,” TP-3, undated (ca. mid-February 1969), Secret.
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102. Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle: The Ruler, 1945–1970* (New York: Norton, 1991), p. 367; also Jonathan Fenby, *The General: Charles De Gaulle and the France He Saved* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010).
103. Armin Fuhrer, *Eine Freundschaft für Europa: Der lange Weg zum Élysée-Vertrag* (Munich: Olzog Verlag, 2013).
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- Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001); Christian Nuenlist, Anna Locher, and Garret Martin (eds.), *Globalizing De Gaulle: International Perspectives on French Foreign Policies, 1958–1969* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).
105. Quoted in Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe*, p. 235.
 106. See Richard M. Nixon, *Leaders* (New York: Warner Books, 1982). The very first chapter deals with Churchill.
 107. Rodman, *Presidential Command*, p. 69.
 108. See Morris, “Nixon Goes to Europe,” part 2.
 109. Hillenbrand, *Fragments of Our Time*, p. 271.
 110. Nixon, *RN*, p. 370.
 111. In a conversation with the author on April 8, 2010, in New York, Kissinger rejected the idea that Nixon and he were “overawed” by De Gaulle.
 112. Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 128.
 113. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 35 (diary entry for February 28, 1969).
 114. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President’s Trip Files, Box 447, Folder “Memcoms-Europe (Feb. 23, ’69–Mar. 2, ’69)”: memorandum of conversation, Nixon–De Gaulle, Élysée Palace, Paris, February 28, 1969. See also Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 104–10.
 115. Isaacson, *Kissinger*, p. 169.
 116. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Country Files—Europe, Box 674, folder “Country Files, France, Vol. 1 (20 Jan.–11 Apr. 1969)”: telegram 3939, US embassy Paris to State Department, March 10, 1969. Shriver was married to JFK’s sister Eunice. In 1972, he became Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern’s (second) vice presidential running mate.
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 118. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Country Files—Europe, Box 674, Folder “Country Files, France, Vol. 1, 20 Jan.–1 Apr 1969”: telegram 006, Secret, US ambassador in Paris, Shriver, to State Department, February 1969.
 119. Memorandum of conversation, Nixon–De Gaulle, March 1, 1969.
 120. *Ibid.*
 121. *Ibid.*
 122. *Ibid.* See David P. Calleo, “De Gaulle’s Visions for Europe,” in Benjamin M. Rowland (ed.), *Charles De Gaulle’s Legacy of Ideas* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), pp. 1–10.
 123. See Marc Trachtenberg, “The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy during the Nixon-Pompidou Period, 1969–1974,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 13/1 (winter 2011), p. 4.
 124. Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 130.
 125. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 34 (diary entry for February 28, 1969).

126. Hillenbrand, *Fragments of Our Time*, p. 271.
127. For Nixon's note to De Gaulle regretting his resignation, see NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence, 1969–1974, Box 751, Folder "France. President De Gaulle. Corres.": dated April 27, 1969. For ambassador Shriver's assessment on April 26, 1969, that De Gaulle was likely to lose and subsequently would "resign for good," see NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Country Files—Europe, Box 674, Folder "Country Files, France, Vol. 1, 20 Jan–1 Apr 1969": telegram 6056, US ambassador in Paris, Shriver, to State Department, April 26, 2010, Secret.
128. Hillenbrand, *Fragments of Our Time*, p. 271.
129. For copious details on Eisenhower's funeral, see B. C. Mossman and M. W. Stark, *The Last Salute: Civil and Military Funerals, 1921–1969* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1971), chap. 29 (pp. 338–84): http://www.history.army.mil/books/last_salute/ch29.htm. See David Eisenhower, *Going Home to Glory: A Memoir of Life with Dwight D. Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010).
130. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 105–6.
131. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
132. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President's Trip Files, Box 447, Folder "Memcoms-Europe (Feb. 23, '69–Mar. 2, '69): memorandum of conversation, Nixon/Rogers/Kissinger with Eyskens/Harmel/Viscount Davignon, Royal Palace of Brussels, February 23, 1969, Confidential.
133. See Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 131.
134. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Name Files: Rumsfeld, Donald to Scowcroft, Brent Col., Box 833, Folder "Sonnenfeldt, Helmut [Jan. 69–Dec. 73]": "Draft Memo of Private Conversation between Chancellor Kiesinger and President Nixon," Secret, undated (ca. February 26, 1969).
135. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Country Files—Europe, Box 674, Folder "Country Files, France, Vol. 1, 20 Jan–1 Apr 1969": US ambassador in Paris, Shriver, to State Department, Secret, Section two of three, Paris 30003, dated February 28, 1969.
136. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Name Files: Rumsfeld, Donald to Scowcroft, Brent Col., Box 833, Folder "Sonnenfeldt, Helmut [Jan. 69–Dec. 73]": "Draft Record of 4.15 pm Session, Chancellor's Office" (present were Nixon and Kissinger, and Kiesinger and Brandt, and both countries' respective foreign policy advisers), Secret, February 26, 1969.
137. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President's Trip Files, Box 447, Folder "Memcoms Europe (Feb. 23, '69–Mar. 2, '69)": memorandum of conversation, Palazzo Chigi, Rome, February 28, 1969 (conversation between Nixon and Prime Minister Mariano Rumor, with only two interpreters present).
138. Memorandum of conversation, Chequers, February 24, 1969. Present were Nixon, Rogers, Ambassador Bruce, Kissinger, and, on the British side, Prime Minister Wilson, Foreign Secretary Stewart, and a number of other ministers and officials. See NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials, RG 59, Conference Files,

- Box 489: President Nixon's Trip to Europe, 2-23-3-2-69, Chronology, Memcoms Vol. I of VIII. Nixon's "blue chip" remark is also quoted in Wilson's memoirs: *The Labour Government, 1964–1970*, p. 620; also Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 126.
139. Roy Jenkins, *A Life at the Center* (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 169.
140. Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964–1970*, p. 619. For the establishment of the back channel with the British, see NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 763, Folder "1969–1974—United Kingdom. Prime Minister Wilson Corres., Nov. 68–June 70": memorandum, Al Haig to Hal Sonnenfeldt, "The Wilson Back Channel," dated March 11, 1969; also memorandum, Haig to Kissinger, dated January 24, 1969.
141. Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 133.
142. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 90.
143. Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964–1970*, p. 619; also Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 126.
144. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 90.
145. *Ibid.*, pp. 932–35.
146. See Niklas H. Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969–1974* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Andrew Scott, *Allies Apart: Heath, Nixon and the Anglo-American Relationship* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
147. For a good analysis, see Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945*, pp. 177, 181. See also Marie-Pierre Rey, "Chancellor Brandt's Ostpolitik, France, and the Soviet Union," in Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer (eds.), *Ostpolitik, 1969–1974: European and Global Responses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 111–28. See also Claudia Hiepel, *Willy Brandt and Georges Pompidou. Deutsch-französische Europapolitik zwischen Aufbruch und Krise* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2012).
148. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 763, Folder 1, "1969–1974—United Kingdom. Prime Minister Wilson Corres., Nov. 68–June 70": memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, "Letter from Prime Minister Wilson on His Just Completed Meetings with Chancellor Brandt," March 7, 1970, Confidential.
149. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President's Trip Files, Box 442, Folder "President Nixon's Trip to Europe, Feb–Mar. 69, Belgium, Secret": "Talking Paper for European Trip. Subject: NATO—General Talking Points," TP-12, undated, Secret, p. 2.
150. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Country Files—Europe, Box 674, folder "Country Files, France, Vol. 1 (20 Jan–11 Apr 1969)": "Memorandum for the Record," by Hal Sonnenfeldt, dated March 29, 1969, Secret; also memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, "Response to De Gaulle's Message to You Regarding the Dutch-UK-German Gas Centrifuge Project," March 29, 1969, Secret, and March 21, 1969.
151. Once in power, Pompidou even embarked on top-secret nuclear cooperation with

- the United States to obtain US nuclear and missile technology, a fact that was only revealed in 1989. For details, see chapter 6 of this book.
152. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Country Files—Europe, Box 674, folder “Country Files, France, Vol. 1 (20 Jan–11 Apr 1969)”: memorandum of conversation between Nixon and Jacques Chaban-Delmas, President of the French National Assembly, and some of their advisers (which, on the US side, included Sonnenfeldt; Kissinger was absent).
 153. Quoted from the Nixon tapes in Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe*, p. 55 (the conversation took place in the Oval Office on September 24, 1971).
 154. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 763, Folder “1969–1974—United Kingdom. Prime Minister Wilson Corres., Nov. 68–June 70”: letter, Nixon to Wilson, dated March 11, 1970, Confidential.
 155. Ibid.
 156. Quoted in Morris, “Nixon Goes to Europe,” part 2.
 157. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, President’s Trip Files, Box 446, Folder “Mem for the President. Reaction to your European Trip [Feb.–Mar. 69]”: memorandum, Rogers to Nixon, “Subject: Summing-Up of the European Trip,” S/S 2795, March 4, 1969.
 158. Ibid., memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, “Subject: Reaction to your European Trip,” Secret, March 5, 1969.
 159. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 88–89.
 160. “That jackass” presumably referred to EC Commission President Sicco Mansholt. “CIEP Executive Committee Meeting,” memorandum of conversation, September 11, 1972, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 265.
 161. See Morris, “Nixon Goes to Europe,” part 2.
 162. See “Doctrines—the Nixon Doctrine,” American Foreign Relations (no date): <http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/A-D/Doctrines-The-nixon-doctrine.html>.
 163. See Jeffrey Kimball, “The Nixon Doctrine: A Saga of Misunderstanding,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 36/1 (March 2006), pp. 59–60; Robert Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969–1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For an upbeat interpretation of Nixon’s “grand design,” see Franz Schurmann, *The Foreign Policy of Richard Nixon: The Grand Design* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1987), pp. 47ff. See also the contributions in Frederik Logevall and Andrew Preston (eds.), *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969–1977* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Jussi M. Hanhimäki, “Foreign Policy Overview,” in Melvin Small (ed.), *A Companion to Richard M. Nixon* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2011), pp. 355–58.
 164. See Kimball, “The Nixon Doctrine”; Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine*; Hanhimäki, “Foreign Policy Overview”; John F. Kennedy, “Inaugural Address” (January 20, 1961): <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres56.html>.
 165. See Kimball, “The Nixon Doctrine,” p. 72.

166. For interesting details and impressive pictures, see Bob Fish, *Hornet Plus Three: The Story of the Apollo 11 Recovery* (Reno, NV: Creative Minds, 2009), pp. 90ff., 108ff.
167. Richard M. Nixon, “Informal Remarks in Guam with Newsmen” (July 25, 1969), in *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1969* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 553; also “Doctrines—the Nixon Doctrine.”
168. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 222–24.
169. See Kimball, “Richard M. Nixon and the Vietnam War,” pp. 222–23.
170. Nixon, “Informal Remarks in Guam with Newsmen,” p. 553.
171. *Ibid.*
172. Background briefing to journalists at San Clemente, California, June 26, 1970, quoted in David Landau, *Kissinger: The Uses of Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), p. 112.
173. Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine*, pp. 117ff. (quote: p. 123).
174. Letter, George Ball to Dean Acheson, dated March 3, 1970, quoted in Weisbrode, *Atlantic Century*, pp. 253, 254.
175. Richard M. Nixon, “Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam” (November 3, 1969), in *The American Presidency Project: Richard M. Nixon* (Santa Barbara: University of California, Santa Barbara): <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=2303>. See also *Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 901–9.
176. *Ibid.*, pp. 905–6.
177. Richard M. Nixon, “Message to the Congress Transmitting the First Annual Report on United States Foreign Policy” (February 18, 1970), in *The American Presidency Project*: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=2824>.
178. For an extensive list and the texts of Nixon’s speeches, reports, and other statements from 1952 to 1974, see *The American Presidency Project*: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/people/president/richard-nixon>.
179. Richard M. Nixon, “First Annual Report to the Congress: United States Foreign Policy for the 1970’s” (February 18, 1970), in *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1970* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 116–90. Quote: p. 116.
180. *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 119.
181. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
182. *Ibid.*, pp. 128–29.
183. *Ibid.* (my emphasis)
184. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
185. *Ibid.*
186. *Ibid.*
187. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Subject Files, CIA Intelligence Memorandum, Box 4, Folder “Ex IT6 European Communities [1969–70]”: memorandum, Kissinger to President, “Proposal that you receive Jean Rey,” May 1, 1969; *ibid.*, letter, Nixon to Rey, dated June 18, 1969.

188. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Subject Files, CIA Intelligence Memorandum, Box 4, Folder “Ex IT6 European Communities [1/1/71–12/31/72] [1 of 2]”: memorandum for Kissinger from Dwight L. Chapin, “Proposed Visit of Raymond Malfatti,” dated November 23, 1970.
189. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Subject Files, CIA Intelligence Memorandum, Box 4, Folder “Ex IT6 European Communities [1969–70]”: memorandum, Kissinger for Dwight Chapin, “Proposed Visit of Raymond Malfatti,” dated November 21, 1970.
190. *Ibid.*: memorandum, Bergsten for Kissinger, “Malfatti visit,” dated November 17, 1970.
191. On Malfatti, see Antonio Varsori, “Franco Maria Malfatti (1970–1972): An Uncompleted Presidency,” in van der Harst and Voerman, *An Impossible Job*, chap. 3.
192. Hillenbrand, *Fragments of Our Time*, p. 272.
193. The classic account is Peter Bender, *Die “Neue Ostpolitik” und ihre Folgen. Vom Mauerbau bis zum Moskauer Vertrag*, 3rd rev. ed. (Munich: dtv, 1995); also Holger Klitzing, “To Grin and to Bear It: The Nixon Administration and Ostpolitik,” in Fink and Schaefer, *Ostpolitik, 1969–1974*, pp. 80–110; also Arne Hofmann, *The Emergence of Détente in Europe: Brandt, Kennedy and the Formation of Ostpolitik* (London: Routledge, 2007).
194. For a good overview, see W. R. Smyser, *From Yalta to Berlin: The Cold War Struggle over Germany* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1999), chaps. 13 and 14. See also Stephan Fuchs, “Dreiecksverhältnisse sind immer kompliziert.” Kissinger, Bahr und die Ostpolitik (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1999), especially pp. 48ff.
195. Henry Kissinger, conversation with the author, New York, April 8, 2010.
196. For an overview, see Klaus Larres, “Germany and the West: The ‘Rapallo Factor’ in German Foreign Policy from the 1950s to the 1990s,” in Klaus Larres and Panikos Panayi (eds.), *The Federal Republic of Germany since 1949: Politics, Society and Economy before and after Unification* (London: Longman, 1996), pp. 278–326. See also Brandt, *People and Politics*, chaps. 5 and 8; Luca Ratti, “Britain, the German Question and the Transformation of Europe: From Ostpolitik to the Helsinki Conference, 1963–1975,” in Oliver Bange and Gottfried Niedhart (eds.), *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe* (Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 83–97; and Marie-Pierre Rey, “France and the German Question in the Context of Ostpolitik and the CSCE, 1969–1974,” in Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, pp. 53–66.
197. Kissinger conversation, April 8, 2010.
198. Paul Frank, *Enschlüsselte Botschaft. Ein Diplomat macht Inventur* (Munich: dtv, 1985), p. 287.
199. Hersh, *The Price of Power*, p. 416; also quoted in William Bundy, *A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), p. 116. See also Gottfried Niedhart, *Durch den Eisernen Vorhang. Die Ära*

- Brandt und das Ende des Kalten Krieges* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2019).
200. Niedhart, "The Federal Republic's Ostpolitik and the United States," p. 300.
 201. See Ronald J. Granieri, "Odd Man Out? The CDU-CSU, Ostpolitik, and the Atlantic Alliance," in Matthias Schulz and Thomas A. Schwartz (eds.), *The Strained Alliance: U.S.-European Relations from Nixon to Carter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 83–101.
 202. See Gottfried Niedhart, "Peaceful Change of Frontiers as a Crucial Element in the West German Strategy of Transformation," in Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, pp. 39–52.
 203. Quoted for instance in "Person of the Year, 1970: Willy Brandt," *Time* (January 4, 1971).
 204. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 753, Folder "Germany. Chancellor Willy Brandt, May–December 1970": letter, Brandt to Nixon, dated August 8, 1970 (informal translation), Confidential. See also Larres, "Germany and the West," pp. 278–326.
 205. See William Glenn Gray, "Abstinence and Ostpolitik: Brandt's Government and the Nuclear Question," in Fink and Schaefer, *Ostpolitik, 1969–1974*, pp. 244–68; David Tal, "The Burden of Alliance: The NPT Negotiations and the NATO Factor, 1960–1968," in Christian Nuenlist and Anna Locher (eds.), *Transatlantic Relations at Stake: Aspects of NATO, 1956–1972* (Zurich: ETH Center for Security Studies, 2006), pp. 97–124.
 206. For manifold examples of this, see for instance NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 753. See also Bernd Schaefer, "The Nixon Administration and West German Ostpolitik, 1969–1973," in Schulz and Schwartz, *The Strained Alliance*, pp. 47–50.
 207. Kissinger conversation, April 8, 2010.
 208. This characterization occurred in a conversation between Wilson and Nixon in Washington in late January 1970, quoted in Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe*, p. 33.
 209. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 763, Folder 1, "1969–1974—United Kingdom. Prime Minister Wilson Corres., Nov. 68–June 70": memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, "Letter from Prime Minister Wilson on His Just Completed Meetings with Chancellor Brandt," March 7, 1970, Confidential.
 210. For the discussion in the literature about whether Kissinger liked Brandt, as Kissinger claims in his memoirs, and whether Nixon disliked Brandt as much as Kissinger says in his memoirs, see Larres, "Germany and the West," pp. 315–16.
 211. See Arthur Frank Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration: The Secret Diary of Arthur Burns, 1969–1974*, ed. Robert F. Ferrell (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), p. 94 (diary entry for April 3, 1973).
 212. Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, Washington, February 3, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. E-15, Part 2, *Documents on Western Europe, 1973–1976* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2014), pp. 25–26. I am grate-

ful to Bernd Rother of the Willy-Brandt-Foundation in Berlin for having drawn my attention to this conversation.

213. See Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, pp. 170–71; also Martin Rupps, *Troika wider Willen. Wie Brandt, Wehner und Schmidt die Republik regierten* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2004), p. 161; Hillenbrand, *Fragments of Our Time*, p. 279.
214. The Brandt/Scheel government had a majority of twelve seats. The classic account is Arnulf Baring, *Machtwechsel: Die Ära Brandt-Scheel* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1982).
215. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 411.
216. *Ibid.*, p. 409; also pp. 529–30.
217. *Ibid.*, p. 409.
218. *Ibid.*, p. 412, also p. 530.
219. Henry A. Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 735; Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 408–10; Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), pp. 144–46.
220. Livingstone conversation, July 28, 2010. See also Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 411.
221. For instance, the author was present at an event honoring the late Willy Brandt at the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC, on March 18, 2003, when both Bahr and Kissinger gave laudatory speeches complimenting Brandt but above all each other and were having a rather good time together. See also Stephan Fuchs, “Dreiecksverhältnisse sind immer kompliziert.” Kissinger, Bahr und die Ostpolitik (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1999); also Egon Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit* (Munich: Blessing, 1996).
222. The classic account is still Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1994); also Takeshi Yamamoto, “Confidence Building Measures: A Transatlantic Convergence of Arms Control and Disarmament Détente during the 1960s and 1970s,” in Catherine Hynes and Sandra Scanlon (eds.), *Reform and Renewal: Transatlantic Relations during the 1960s and 1970s* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), pp. 85–103. See also Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow’s Ambassador to America’s Six Cold War Presidents (1962–1986)* (New York: Times Books / Random House, 1995), pp. 191ff., 201ff.; also James K. Sebenius, *Kissinger, the Negotiator: Lessons from Dealmaking at the Highest Level* (New York: Harper, 2018).
223. See Larres, “Germany and the West,” pp. 315–16.
224. Quoted in Niedhart, “The Federal Republic’s Ostpolitik and the United States,” p. 292.
225. Larres, “Germany and the West,” p. 315.
226. Quotes: Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, pp. 735–36. See Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon*, Vol. 2: *The Triumph of a Politician, 1962–1972* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), pp. 386–87; also Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 410–11; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 146.
227. See for instance NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presiden-

- tial Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 753, Folder “Germany. Chancellor Brandt, 1969–April 1970”: letter, Brandt to Nixon, dated February 25, 1970, Secret. See also Nixon’s reply, *ibid.*, dated March 12, 1970.
228. Quote: Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 736; also Ambrose, *Nixon*, Vol. 2, pp. 464–65; Hersh, *The Price of Power*, pp. 415–22.
229. See Brandt, *People and Politics*, p. 291; also p. 292. See Dennis L. Bark, *Agreement on Berlin: A Study of the 1970–72 Quadripartite Negotiations* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1974); Honore M. Catudal, *The Diplomacy of the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin: A New Era in East-West Politics* (Berlin: Berlin-Verlag, 1978); David M. Keithly, *Breakthrough in the Ostpolitik: The 1971 Quadripartite Agreement* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1986).
230. See James E. Goodby, “Challenging the Bipolar Order: The American Origins of the West’s Campaign for Human Rights,” in Goodby, *Europe Undivided: The New Logic of Peace in U.S.-Russian Relations* (Washington, DC: US Institute for Peace, 1998), pp. 37–64; Csaba Bekes, “The Warsaw Pact, the German Questions and the Birth of the CSCE Process, 1961–1970,” in Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, pp. 113–28.
231. See Michael C. Morgan, *The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).
232. Nixon in a taped conversation with some of his advisers, September 11, 1971, quoted in Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe*, p. 58.

Chapter 4. Living with Deficits

1. Quoted in John S. Odell, *U.S. International Monetary Policy: Markets, Power, and Ideas as Sources of Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 263; also in John Peterson, *Europe and America in the 1990s: The Prospects for Partnership* (London: Edward Elgar, 1993), p. 41; also Harold James and Hermann Graml, *Rambouillet, 15 November 1975: Die Globalisierung der Wirtschaft* (Munich: dtv, 1997), pp. 131ff. Economic aide C. Fred Bergsten was among the consultants Connally addressed. Bergsten, interview with the author, Washington, DC, July 29, 2011.
2. For Connally as secretary of the Navy, see James Reston Jr., *The Lone Star: The Life of John Connally* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), pp. 200–9.
3. Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (1978; repr., New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), p. 674. See Arthur Frank Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration: The Secret Diary of Arthur Burns, 1969–1974*, ed. Robert F. Ferrell (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), p. 41 (diary entry for May 4, 1971).
4. Peter Peterson, interview with the author, Washington, DC, May 19, 2011; William Safire, *Before the Fall: An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 497ff. Safire writes that Nixon had previous “affairs of the head” with John Mitchell, Henry Kissinger, and Peter Peterson. See also Charles Ashman, *Connally: The Adventures of Big Bad John* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), p. 196.

5. Ashman, *Connally*, pp. 201–2.
6. Reston, *The Lone Star*, pp. 349, 351ff.
7. Ashman, *Connally*, p. 180; Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), pp. 502–4.
8. John Connally with Mickey Herskowitz, *In History's Shadow: An American Odyssey* (New York: Hyperion, 1993), pp. 175–92; also Reston, *The Lone Star*, pp. 261–87.
9. Richard Severo, “John Connally of Texas, a Power in 2 Political Parties, Dies at 76,” *New York Times* (June 16, 1993): <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/16/us/john-connally-of-texas-a-power-in-2-political-parties-dies-at-76.html?pagewanted=print&src=pm>.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Ashman, *Connally*, p. 191.
13. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 37 (diary entry for March 8, 1971).
14. Reston, *The Lone Star*, p. 326.
15. Severo, “John Connally of Texas, a Power in 2 Political Parties, Dies at 76.”
16. Ashman, *Connally*, pp. 179, 183.
17. Harold James, *International Monetary Relations since Bretton Woods* (Washington, DC/Oxford: International Monetary Fund/Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 210.
18. Robert Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy: The Decline and Fall of Bretton Woods* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 41.
19. For a good State Department assessment, see the paper “International Economic Strategy for the 1970’s,” March 16, 1971, in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1969–76, Vol. III: *Foreign Economic Policy; International Monetary Policy, 1969–1972* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2001), pp. 133–40.
20. Brandt’s letter to Nixon was dated May 12, 1971. See “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 433.
21. Quotes: “Summary of the Report of the Task Force on U.S. Balance of Payments Position,” undated (ca. January 1969), in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 1; “Talking Paper on revised balance of payments program,” prepared in the Department of the Treasury, March 17, 1969, *ibid.*, p. 25.
22. For the many papers written, see FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 1ff., 29off.
23. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 26 (diary entry for November 7, 1970).
24. Connally with Herskowitz, *In History's Shadow*, pp. 233, 235.
25. Ashman, *Connally*, p. 183; Connally, *In History's Shadow*, p. 234.
26. Richard M. Nixon, “First Inaugural Address of Richard Milhous Nixon” (January 20, 1969), in *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1969* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 909.
27. Ashman, *Connally*, p. 217.
28. Quoted in Severo, “John Connally of Texas, a Power in 2 Political Parties, Dies at 76.”
29. For the differing plans, see in brief Robert C. Angel, *Explaining Policy Failure: Japan in the 1969–1971 International Monetary Crisis* (New York: Columbia Uni-

- versity Press, 1991), pp. 4–8. For the Bretton Woods system, see Joanne Gowa, *Closing the Gold Window: Domestic Politics and the End of Bretton Woods* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 33ff.; Barry Eichengreen, *Globalizing Capital: A History of the International Monetary System* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 9ff.; Robert Solomon, *The International Monetary System, 1945–1981*, updated and exp. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), pp. 9ff.; Fred L. Block, *The Origins of the International Economic Disorder: A Study of U.S. International Monetary Policy from World War II to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).
30. Michael Moffit, *The World's Money: International Banking from Bretton Woods to the Brink of Insolvency* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 19.
 31. William Glenn Gray, "Floating the System: Germany, the United States, and the Breakdown of Bretton Woods, 1969–1973," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 31/2 (April 2007), p. 298.
 32. Murray N. Rothbard, "Monetary Planners as the Masters of Denial," review of books by Robert Solomon and Fred Block, *LewRockwell.com* (appeared originally in *Inquiry* [January 1978], pp. 26–27): <http://www.lewrockwell.com/rothbard/rothbard253.html>.
 33. Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 30.
 34. In the twenty-first century, this came to be known euphemistically as a policy of "quantitative easing." For the gold standard and the instability of the interwar world, see Eichengreen, *Globalizing Capital*, chaps. 1–2. See also paper, Robert Osgood, "VIII. Foreign Economic Trends," undated (ca. summer 1969), in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 70.
 35. Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 73; "Editorial Note," in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 389.
 36. These were the words of Charles Coombs, a former senior official at the New York Federal Reserve Bank. Quoted in Moffit, *The World's Money*, p. 16.
 37. Keynes's suggestion, however, to establish a \$20 billion overdraft facility was reduced to just over \$8 billion; US negotiators feared a lack of monetary discipline by individual countries if such a large overdraft facility were made available.
 38. See Dianne Pauls, "U.S. Exchange Rate Policy: Bretton Woods to the Present," *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, Vol. 76/11 (November 1990), p. 892.
 39. See Barry J. Eichengreen, *The European Economy since 1945: Coordinated Capitalism and Beyond* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 246; Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, pp. 31–32; Robert Solomon, interview with the author, Washington, DC, November 11, 2010.
 40. See Robert Triffin, *Gold and the Dollar Crisis: The Future of Convertibility* (1960; repr., New York: Garland, 1983).
 41. See Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, pp. 39ff.; Moffit, *The World's Money*, pp. 29–30; Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, pp. 59, 69.
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- Charles P. Kindleberger, and Lewis E. Lehrman (eds.), *Money and the Coming World Order* (New York: NYU Press, 1976), p. 42.
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 45. See National Archives and Records Administration (NARA): Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Name Files, Box 818: memorandum from Kissinger to the President, undated (ca. late September 1971), “U.S. Follow-through on August 15 International Package.”
 46. Quoted in Paul Volcker with Christine Harper, *Keeping at It: The Quest for Sound Money and Good Government* (New York: Public Affairs, 2018), pp. 51–52.
 47. “German Offset Problem,” memorandum, Bergsten to Kissinger, March 24, 1969, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 31–35 (quote: p. 32). See also action memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, June 25, 1969, *ibid.*, p. 346.
 48. See “Editorial Note,” *ibid.*, pp. 63–64; “Editorial Note,” *ibid.*, pp. 121–22; “US-FRG Offset Negotiations—Current Status,” July 28, 1971, *ibid.*, pp. 163–65; telegram, Rogers from Brussels to Department of State, December 10, 1971, *ibid.*, pp. 213–14. For the complex context, see memorandum, Bergsten to Kissinger, March 24, 1969.
 49. Moffit, *The World’s Money*, p. 31. See also Rowland Evans Jr. and Robert D. Novak, *Nixon in the White House: The Frustration of Power* (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 185.
 50. Eichengreen, *European Economy since 1945*, pp. 225, 229.
 51. Jeffrey Pickering, *Britain’s Withdrawal from East of Suez* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1989); Saki Dockrill, *Britain’s Retreat from East of Suez: The Choice between Europe and the World?* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2002); P. L. Pham, *Ending “East of Suez”: The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore, 1964–1968* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
 52. Eichengreen, *European Economy since 1945*, p. 225.
 53. For speculation about a revaluation of the German mark in 1969, see FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 319ff.; also “Editorial Note,” *ibid.*, pp. 366, 372ff.
 54. Eichengreen, *European Economy since 1945*, p. 243.
 55. Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 131.
 56. Calleo, “The Decline and Rebuilding of an International Economic System,” p. 44; C. Fred Bergsten, *Reforming the Dollar: An International Monetary Policy for the United States* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1972), pp. 22–23.
 57. Helmut Schmidt, *Men and Powers: A Political Retrospective* (New York: Random House, 1989), pp. 155–56.
 58. See also Milton Friedman and Robert V. Roosa, *The Balance of Payments: Free versus Fixed Exchange Rates* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1967), pp. 177ff.
 59. For a good summary, see the IMF fact sheet on SDR (March 31, 2011): <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/sdr.htm>.

60. Eichengreen, *European Economy since 1945*, p. 246; James, *International Monetary Relations since Bretton Woods*, p. 207.
61. Wolfram Hanrieder, “The German-American Connection in the 1970s and 1980s: The Maturing of a Relationship,” in Carl C. Hodge and Cathal J. Nolan (eds.), *Shepherd of Democracy: America and Germany in the Twentieth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1992), p. 116. See also Heribert Dittgen, “Die Ära der Ost-West-Verhandlungen und der Wirtschafts- und Währungskrisen (1969–1981),” in Klaus Larres and Torsten Oppeland (eds.), *Deutschland und die USA im 20. Jahrhundert: Geschichte der politischen Beziehungen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), pp. 188–90.
62. Connally with Herskowitz, *In History's Shadow*, p. 237.
63. On the 1970s, see Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel J. Sargent (eds.), *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Edward D. Berkowitz, *Something Happened: A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Francis Wheen, *Strange Days Indeed: The 1970s; the Golden Age of Paranoia* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010).
64. The quoted figures follow the statistics in US Census Bureau, *The Statistical Abstracts of the United States* (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2011): https://www.census.gov/library/publications/time-series/statistical_abstracts.html; and in the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the US Department of Commerce (<http://www.bea.gov/>).
65. The 1971 trade deficit was \$1.302 million; it rose to \$6.082 million in 1976, but already in 1977, the first year of the Carter administration, it shot to \$27.246 million. In 2006, the trade deficit stood at an unprecedented \$760 billion. For precise figures, see United States Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, “U.S. Trade in Goods and Services—Balance of Payments (BOP) Basis” (June 3, 2015): <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/historical/gands.txt>.
66. Harriet Torry, “U.S. Trade Deficit Narrows for First Time in Six Years,” *Wall Street Journal* (updated February 20, 2020): <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-trade-deficit-narrowed-in-2019-for-first-time-in-six-years-11580909498>.
67. For the figures, see for example the inflation calculator published online by CoinNews.net: <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/historical-inflation-rates/>.
68. Ibid.
69. Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011. See also Volcker's memoirs: Volcker with Harper, *Keeping at It*, pp. 95ff.
70. See US Census Bureau, *The Statistical Abstracts of the United States*.
71. See Robert Z. Lawrence, “An Analysis of the 1977 U.S. Trade Deficit” (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1978): http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/Programs/ES/BPEA/1978_1_bpea_papers/1978a_bpea_lawrence_smeal_von_furstenberg_gordon_houthakker_krause_cline_kareken_maclaury.pdf.
72. Osgood, “VIII. Foreign Economic Trends,” pp. 70, 66–72; also Volcker with Harper, *Keeping at It*, pp. 46ff.

73. Robert Schatzel, *The Unhinged Alliance: America and the European Community* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 45.
74. See Youri Devuyt, "American Attitudes on European Political Integration—The Nixon-Kissinger Legacy," IES Working Paper 2/2007 (Brussels: Institute for European Studies / Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2007).
75. For the EC summit in The Hague, see also chapter 2 of this book.
76. See Jean De Ruyt, *European Political Cooperation: Toward a Unified European Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council of the United States, Occasional Paper, October 1989); David Allen, Reinhardt Rummel, and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), *European Political Cooperation* (London: Butterworth Scientific, 1982); Christopher Hill (ed.), *National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation* (London: George Allen / Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1983); Elfriede Regelsberger, Philippe de Schoutheete, and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), *Foreign Policy of the European Union: From EPC to CFSP and Beyond* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997); Christopher Piening, *Global Europe: The European Union in World Affairs* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997); Karen E. Smith, *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008); Simon J. Nuttal, *European Political Cooperation* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1992); Roy H. Ginsberg, *Foreign Policy Actions of the European Community: The Politics of Scale* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1989).
77. For further details, see chapter 6 of this book.
78. EPC has begun to be viewed more positively in the literature as a constructive and not entirely unsuccessful first step on the road to a common foreign and security policy. See above all Aurélie Élisa Gfeller, *Building a European Identity: France, the United States, and the Oil Shock, 1973–1974* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Daniel Möckli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War. Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009); also Angela Romano, *From Détente in Europe to European Détente: How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2009); Claudia Hiepel, *Willy Brandt and Georges Pompidou. Deutsch-französische Europapolitik zwischen Aufbruch und Krise* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2012).
79. Nixon used these words in his address on March 15, 1974. See Schatzel, *The Unhinged Alliance*, p. 46; William C. Cromwell, *The United States and the European Pillar: The Strained Alliance* (New York: St Martin's, 1992), p. 42; and Devuyt, "American Attitudes on European Political Integration," p. 25. See also the editorial "Nixon's Warning," in the German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (March 18, 1974).
80. See Schatzel, *The Unhinged Alliance*; Cromwell, *The United States and the European Pillar*; and Devuyt, "American Attitudes on European Political Integration."
81. "The President's Expression of Foreign Policy Views at Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy," memorandum, Bergsten to Kissinger, April 14, 1969, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 49–50 (quotes: p. 49).
82. Devuyt, "American Attitudes on European Political Integration," p. 11.
83. For European monetary cooperation in the 1970s, see Matthias Kaelberer, *Money*

- and *Power in Europe: The Political Economy of European Monetary Cooperation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 97ff.; Arthur I. Bloomfield, “The Historical Setting,” in Lawrence B. Krause and Walter S. Salant (eds.), *European Monetary Unification and Its Meaning for the United States* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1973), pp. 11ff., 21ff.
84. Osgood, “VIII. Foreign Economic Trends,” p. 70.
 85. “Conversation with European officials,” memorandum, Treasury Secretary Kennedy to Nixon, December 15, 1969, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 85.
 86. Action memoranda from Kissinger to Nixon, June 25, 1969, *ibid.*, p. 345. See also Marc Trachtenberg, “The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy during the Nixon-Pompidou Period, 1969–1974,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 13/1 (winter 2011), p. 11.
 87. Quotes: James, *International Monetary Relations since Bretton Woods*, p. 210. For the workings of the Bretton Woods system, see also Schmidt, *Men and Powers*, pp. 154ff.
 88. Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 191.
 89. “Relaxation of Balance of Payments Controls,” action memorandum from Bergsten to Kissinger, April 1, 1969, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 42.
 90. “Reduction of Controls on U.S. Capital Outflows: Foreign Implications and a Note of Caution,” memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, March 17, 1969, *ibid.*, p. 30. The memorandum was written by Bergsten but sent to Nixon under Kissinger’s name.
 91. Quoted in Charles E. Coombs, *The Arena of International Finance* (London: Wiley, 1976), p. 219. See also Jennifer Sterling-Folker, *Theories of International Cooperation and the Primacy of Anarchy: Explaining U.S. International Policy-Making after Bretton Woods* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 258.
 92. Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, pp. 29–37.
 93. Schmidt, *Men and Powers*, p. 153.
 94. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, pp. 28–29 (diary entry for November 23, 1970) (quotes: p. 28).
 95. Herbert Stein, *On the Other Hand: Essays in Economics, Economists and Politics* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1995), p. 101; see also Nicholas Wapshott, *Keynes Hayek: The Clash that Defined Modern Economics* (New York: Norton, 2011), pp. 242–43.
 96. Wyatt C. Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World: Arthur F. Burns and the Federal Reserve, 1970–1978* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 35–36.
 97. H. R. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1994), pp. 308, 309–10 (diary entries for June 28 and 29, 1971); also Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 86.
 98. Safire, *Before the Fall*, pp. 101, 587. This was later reiterated by Connally. See memorandum of conversation, Treasury Secretary Connally and French finance minister Giscard, Washington, May 20, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 436.
 99. Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, pp. 84–85.

100. Information memorandum for the record, conversation, Kissinger with Helmut Schmidt, July 31, 1971, dated August 1, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 635.
101. Memorandum, Kissinger to Richardson, Under Secretary of State, July 21, 1969, *ibid.*, p. 65.
102. Gowa, *Closing the Gold Window*; Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011.
103. “CIEP Executive Committee Meeting,” memorandum of conversation, September 11, 1972, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 261–64.
104. Allen J. Matusow, “Feature Review: Richard Nixon and the Failed War against the Trading World,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 27/5 (November 2003), p. 768.
105. James, *International Monetary Relations since Bretton Woods*, p. 209; Francis J. Gavin observes that there was a harsher, more unilateral rhetoric and a “change in tone” right from the beginning of the administration. See Gavin, *Gold, Dollars, and Power*, pp. 187–96 (quote: p. 188).
106. See Matusow, “Feature Review,” p. 767.
107. Letter, Agriculture Secretary Hardin to Secretary of State Rogers, July 18, 1970, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 107.
108. For a good account of the history of CAP, see Rosemary Fennell, *The Common Agricultural Policy: Continuity and Change* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1997); also Carine Germond, “The Agricultural Bone of Contention: The Franco-German Tandem and the Making of the Cap,” *Journal of European Integration History*, Vol. 16/2 (2010), pp. 25–44; Byron L. Berntson, O. Halbert Goolsby, and C. O. Nohre, *The European Community’s Common Agricultural Policy: Implications for U.S. Trade* (Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture / US Government Printing Office, 1969).
109. See John Killick, *The United States and European Reconstruction, 1945–1960* (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997), p. 173; also Orin Kirshner (ed.), *The Bretton Woods–GATT System* (London: Routledge, 2015). The British left EFTA when they joined the EEC in 1973. For EFTA, see the EFTA website: <http://www.efta.int/>.
110. Memorandum, Springsteen, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs to Samuels, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, May 7, 1970, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 98.
111. *Ibid.*
112. Memorandum of conversation, Camp David, May 3–5, 1970, *ibid.*, p. 396.
113. Memorandum, John Holdrige and Robert Hormats to General Haig, Deputy National Security Adviser, August 10, 1971, *ibid.*, p. 168.
114. Jack L. Hervey, “Changing U.S. Trade Patterns,” in Harold G. Vatter and John F. Walker (eds.), *History of the U.S. Economy since World War II* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 447.
115. “The Absurdity of Possible Reductions in U.S. Forces Overseas for Balance of Payments Reasons,” memorandum, Bergsten to Kissinger, December 3, 1970, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 119.

116. Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 106. See also Trachtenberg, “The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy,” pp. 4–6.
117. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 111.
118. Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011.
119. Klaus Larres, “Angela Merkel and Donald Trump: Values, Interests, and the Future of the West,” *German Politics*, Vol. 27/2 (June 2018), pp. 193–213; Robert M. Gates, “The Security and Defense Agenda (Future of NATO),” Brussels, Belgium (June 10, 2011): <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1581>; Gates, “NATO Strategic Concept Seminar (Future of NATO),” Washington, DC (February 23, 2010): <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1423>. See also James J. Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? The Transformation of Modern Europe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008); also Larres, “Une Europe démilitarisée? Un regard américain,” *Politique Étrangère*, Vol. 79/1 (2014), pp. 39–52. See also Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York: Knopf, 2014), pp. 387ff.
120. Springsteen to Samuels, May 7, 1970, pp. 98–101.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
122. For the fast rise of the influence of Milton Friedman and monetarism on US economic policy, see Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, pp. 25ff., 41ff.
123. Schmidt, *Men and Powers*, p. 156; on Giscard, see Eric Roussel, *Valéry Giscard d’Estaing* (Paris: Editions de L’O, 2018).
124. Evans and Novak, *Nixon in the White House*, pp. 181–82; Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, pp. 78–79; Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, pp. 26ff.
125. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 14 (diary entry for February 25, 1969).
126. For McCracken’s “game plan,” see Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, pp. 34–35; and the convincing analysis in Collins, *More*, pp. 98ff., esp. 112ff.; see also Allan H. Meltzer, *A History of the Federal Reserve*, Vol. II: *Book Two, 1970–1986* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 731ff.
127. By May 1971, Bergsten had become unhappy with his lack of influence and eventually resigned, to be succeeded by Robert Hormats. Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011. On Bergsten, see Gowa, *Closing the Gold Window*, pp. 122–25.
128. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 37 (diary entry for March 8, 1971).
129. Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, pp. 141–45.
130. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 33 (diary entry for December 29, 1970).
131. Schmidt, *Men and Powers*, p. 160.
132. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 66 (diary entry for November 26, 1971).
133. See for Shultz’s fluctuating influence with Nixon, *ibid.*, pp. 65–66 (diary entry for November 26, 1971), pp. 69–72 (diary entry for January 19, 1972), pp. 77–79 (diary entry for September 16, 1972). “Forcefully articulate” quote from Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 220. George Shultz, interview with the author, Washington, DC, February 11, 2003.

134. Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 220.
135. Sarah Katherine Mergel, *Conservative Intellectuals and Richard Nixon: Rethinking the Rise of the Right* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 83ff., esp. 86–91; also Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, pp. 35ff.
136. Daniel P. Moynihan Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Box 249, White House, Staff: Moynihan to Nixon, January 3, 1969. Also quoted in Nigel Bowles, *Nixon's Business: Authority and Power in Presidential Politics* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), p. 39.
137. Quoted in Evans and Novak, *Nixon in the White House*, p. 179; Solomon interview, November 11, 2010. From 1947 to 1976, Solomon worked at the Federal Reserve Board, eventually rising to chief international economist. He embarked on an equally successful scholarly career at Brookings after his retirement from the Fed. See Adam Bernstein, "Robert Solomon, Chief International Economist for the Fed, Dies at 91," *Washington Post* (September 17, 2013): https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/robert-solomon-chief-international-economist-for-the-fed-dies-at-92/2013/09/17/0bda193e-1f14-11e3-b7d1-7153ad47b549_story.html.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 178; also p. 180.
139. See Wapshott, *Keynes Hayek*, pp. 233–34; also William I. Hitchcock, *The Age of Eisenhower: America and the World in the 1950s* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018).
140. Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, pp. 25ff.; Allen J. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy: Booms, Busts, Dollars, and Votes* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), pp. 24–25, 61.
141. Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 59. For the classic book that launched both Friedman's career and the popularity of monetarism, see Milton Friedman and Anna Jacobson Schwartz, *A Monetary History of the United States, 1867–1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963); also Edward Nelson, "Milton Friedman and U.S. Monetary History, 1961–2006," working paper (St. Louis, MO: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2007): <http://research.stlouisfed.org/wp/more/2007-002/>.
142. Quoted in Paul A. Samuelson, "Second Lecture," in Arthur F. Burns and Paul A. Samuelson, *Full Employment, Guideposts and Economic Stability* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1967), pp. 47–48. See also Peter A. Johnson, *The Government of Money: Monetarism in Germany and the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), esp. pp. 145ff. (for the US case).
143. Milton Friedman, "Money and Inflation," *Newsweek* (May 26, 1969), p. 105.
144. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, pp. 13–21.
145. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4. In detail, see Daniel J. Galvin, "Building the New Majority: Richard Nixon," in Galvin, *Presidential Party Building: Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 70–98.
146. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 326 (diary entry for July 21, 1971); see also *ibid.*, p. 338 (diary entry for August 10, 1971).
147. Quoted in Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, p. 22. See also Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, p. 34.

148. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, p. 31.
149. Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011.
150. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, pp. 32–33.
151. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 55.
152. John Ehrlichman, *Witness to Power: The Nixon Years* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 254; Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 79; Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, p. 34.
153. Nigel Bowles, "Economic Policy," in Melvin Small (ed.), *A Companion to Richard M. Nixon* (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 241; also Wapshott, *Keynes Hayek*, p. 235.
154. Quotes: Richard Nixon, "Remarks at the Swearing in of Dr. Arthur F. Burns as Chairman of the Board of the Governors of the Federal Reserve System" (January 31, 1970), in *The American Presidency Project: Richard M. Nixon* (Santa Barbara: University of California, Santa Barbara): <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-swearing-dr-arthur-f-burns-chairman-the-board-governors-the-federal-reserve>.
155. Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, p. 42.
156. Memorandum of conversation between Nixon and French President Georges Pompidou, February 26, 1970, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 91.
157. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 27 (diary entry for November 23, 1970).
158. Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, p. 29.
159. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 30.
160. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 127 (diary entry for May 2, 1974).
161. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–48 (diary entry for July 8, 1971).
162. Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011. For a more optimistic view, see Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, pp. 43ff.
163. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, pp. 99–104.
164. Both the auto workers and the aluminum industry received wage increases of up to 31 percent. See "Steel Settlement: Confrontation over Prices and Profits," *CQ Researcher* (July 7, 1971): <http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrr1971070700>.
165. Nixon, *RN*, pp. 494–95.
166. Memorandum of conversation, Nixon and Pompidou, November 12, 1970, Élysée Palace, Paris, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XLI: *Western Europe; NATO, 1969–1972* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2012), pp. 523–24.
167. Quoted in Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, p. 83.
168. See Kenton Clymer, "Cambodia and Laos in the Vietnam War," in David L. Anderson (ed.), *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 367–73; William Burr and Jeffrey P. Kimball, *Nixon's Nuclear Specter: The Secret Alert of 1969, Madman Diplomacy, and the Vietnam War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015), pp. 66–105.
169. Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, pp. 59–60; Bowles, *Nixon's Business*, p. 84.

170. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, pp. 68–72.
171. Not least, he wished to replace the ineffectual Treasury Secretary David Kennedy. See Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 31 (diary entry for December 20, 1970).
172. Haldeman, *Haldeman Diaries*, p. 211 (diary entry for November 18, 1970).
173. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 38 (diary entry for March 8, 1971).
174. Alex R. Larzelere, *Witness to History: White House Diary of a Military Aide to President Richard Nixon* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2009), p. 237.
175. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 38 (diary entry for March 8, 1971). See also Elizabeth Drew, *Richard M. Nixon* (New York: Times Books, 2007), pp. 149–51.
176. Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 35; also “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 407.
177. “Foreign Attitudes toward U.S. Economic Policies,” memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, February 9, 1971, marginal note by Nixon, *ibid.*, p. 124, n. 3.
178. Springsteen to Samuels, May 7, 1970, p. 101.
179. *Ibid.*; also Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011. See also John H. Jackson, Jean-Victor Louis, and Mitsuo Matsushita, *The Tokyo Round: National Constitutions and International Economic Rules* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984); Leslie Alan Glick, *Multilateral Trade Negotiations. World Trade after the Tokyo Round* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld, 1984). See also chapter 1 of this book.
180. For a biographical overview, see Rush’s obituary, David Binder, “Kenneth Rush, U.S. Diplomat, Is Dead at 84,” *New York Times* (December 13, 1994): <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/12/13/obituaries/kenneth-rush-us-diplomat-is-dead-at-84.html?pagewanted=print&src=pm>.
181. Kenneth Weisbrode, *The Atlantic Century: Four Generations of Extraordinary Diplomats who Forged America’s Vital Alliance with Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2009), pp. 221ff.; Isaacson, *Kissinger*, pp. 474–75, 502.
182. Telegram, Rush, Bonn, to State Department, “US Trade Policy,” August 3, 1970, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. IV: *Foreign Assistance, International Development, Trade Policies, 1969–1972* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2001), pp. 616–17.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 617.
184. On the US opposition to this EC strategy, see “European Community Trade Agreements with Spain and Israel,” memorandum, Irwin to Nixon, October 20, 1972, *ibid.*, pp. 275–79.
185. Rush to State Department, “US Trade Policy,” pp. 616–17.
186. Richard Reeves, *President Nixon: Alone in the White House* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), pp. 264, 287.
187. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, White House Central Files (WHCF), Staff Member and Office Files, Subject Files, CIA Intelligence Memorandum, Box 4, Folder “Ex IT6 European Communities [1969–70]”: McCracken memorandum for the President, “The Crisis in Trade Policy,” dated July 2, 1970.

188. "Editorial Note," in FRUS, 1969–79, Vol. III, p. III.
189. "USC meeting on EC enlargement," memorandum, Samuels, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, to Kissinger, August 20, 1970, *ibid.*, p. 110.
190. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, WHCF, Staff Member and Office Files, Subject Files, CIA Intelligence Memorandum, Box 4, Folder "Ex IT6 European Communities [1/171–12/31/72] (2 of 2)": letters, Acting Secretary to Peter Flanigan and Henry Kissinger, dated September 29, 1972. Also see "USC meeting on EC enlargement," memorandum, Samuels, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Affairs to Kissinger, August 20, 1970, in FRUS 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 108–10; also "US-EC Consultation October 15–16," memorandum, Acting Secretary of State John Irwin to Nixon, October 29, 1970, in FRUS 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 117–18; Ralf Lord Dahrendorf, interview with the author, London, April 3, 2006.
191. Moffit, *The World's Money*, p. 35.
192. Memorandum of conversation, Treasury Secretary Connally and French finance minister Giscard, Washington, May 20, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 434.
193. Moffit, *The World's Money*, p. 38.
194. "U.S. Balance of Payments," paper, Treasury Secretary Connally to certain US ambassadorial posts abroad, April 21, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 152, 151; also the information memorandum from Robert Hormats to Kissinger, dated August 13, 1971, *ibid.*, pp. 464–66.
195. "Editorial note," *ibid.*, pp. 421–22. Coombs's paper, "The Outlook for the Dollar," was dated March 22, 1971.
196. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 41–42 (diary entry for May 4, 1971).
197. See Alexander Nützenadel, *Stunde der Ökonomen. Wissenschaft, Politik und Expertenkultur in der Bundesrepublik 1949–1974* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2005), esp. pp. 346ff.
198. Meltzer, *A History of the Federal Reserve*, p. 750.
199. See already Volcker's early thoughts on the United States' unilateral "action to remove the privilege of gold convertibility at the initiative of foreign monetary authorities." Volcker Group Paper, "Summary of Possible U.S. Approach to Improving International Monetary Arrangements," March 17, 1969, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 312.
200. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 42 (diary entry for May 4, 1971).
201. State Department paper, "International Economic Strategy for the 1970's," March 16, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 139; also Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, p. 144.
202. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, pp. 42–43 (diary entry for May 22, 1971).
203. "U.S. Negotiating Position on Gold," paper prepared in the Department of the Treasury, May 9, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 429.
204. Treasury memorandum, May 8, 1971, *ibid.*, pp. 423–27.
205. *Department of State Bulletin* (July 12, 1971). p. 46; "Editorial Note," in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 433.
206. *Department of State Bulletin*, pp. 46, 45.

207. Ibid., pp. 46, 44.
208. Ibid., p. 43.
209. Volcker with Harper, *Keeping at It*, p. 69.
210. *Department of State Bulletin*, p. 46.
211. Meltzer, *A History of the Federal Reserve*, pp. 750–51.
212. Reston, *The Lone Star*, p. 406.
213. Ibid.
214. Memorandum of conversation, Connally and Giscard, May 20, 1971, p. 434.
215. “International Monetary Reform,” memorandum, McCracken to Nixon, June 2, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 438. Connally, however, took “vigorous personal exception” to the paper’s “premises and conclusions,” not least to the assumption that the US was “muddling through.” See *ibid.*, p. 440.
216. Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and US Department of Defense (eds.), *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam* (Boston: Beacon, 1971–72), 5 vols.; George C. Herring (ed.), *The Pentagon Papers: Abridged Edition* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993). See also David Rudenstine, *The Day the Presses Stopped: A History of the Pentagon Papers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
217. Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* (New York: Viking, 2002), pp. 227ff., 343–55.
218. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 730.
219. Ellsberg, *Secrets*, pp. 444ff.
220. Volcker with Harper, *Keeping at It*, pp. 61, 48.
221. See Wapshott, *Keynes Hayek*, p. 243.
222. Meltzer, *A History of the Federal Reserve*, p. 751.
223. For this memorandum, dated January 21, 1969, see FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 290–91; and for one of the first papers produced by the Volcker Group, “Long-Term Aspects of U.S. International Monetary and Exchange Policies,” undated (ca. January 1969), *ibid.*, pp. 292–98. See also “Editorial Note,” *ibid.*, pp. 309ff. On the Volcker Group, see Gowa, *Closing the Gold Window*, pp. 127–30.
224. Memorandum, Huntsman, White House staff, to Connally, June 8, 1971, in FRUS 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 443.
225. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 314 (diary entry for July 2, 1971); Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 85.
226. Matusow, *Nixon’s Economy*, p. 145. In fact it was 1896.
227. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 62 (diary entry for November 3, 1971).
228. Matusow, *Nixon’s Economy*, pp. 146–47.
229. The ambassadorial Chinese-US talks that took place first in Geneva and then Warsaw dealt with the Far East and the Taiwan question. By the early 1970s, 136 meetings had taken place, though only experts were aware of them. See Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin, 2011), pp. 202ff.; Evelyn Groh, “The China Card,” in Small (ed.), *A Companion to Richard M. Nixon*, pp. 425–43; on the Warsaw talks, which the Chinese terminated when the US invaded Cambodia on April 30, 1970, see Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation:*

- American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1994), pp. 249–53. See also John Pomfret, *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom: America and China, 1776 to the Present* (New York: Henry Holt, 2016).
230. Nixon, *RN*, p. 518.
231. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, pp. 335–36 (diary entry for August 2, 1971); see also “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 453–54.
232. Nixon, *RN*, p. 518. For the internal White House developments between August 2 and 15, see the insightful two “Editorial Notes,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 453–60.
233. See Wapshott, *Keynes Hayek*, pp. 239–40.
234. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, pp. 335–36, quote: p. 336 (diary entry for August 2, 1971); also Bowles, *Nixon’s Business*, pp. 88ff.
235. Quoted in “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 459–60.
236. Nixon, *RN*, p. 518.
237. Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011.
238. For the situation in the summer of 1971, see “Requirements for a Secure U.S. Balance-of-Payments Position,” paper prepared in the Department of the Treasury, September 10, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 179–88.
239. Memorandum, John Holdrige and Robert Hormats to General Haig, Deputy National Security Adviser, August 10, 1971, *ibid.*, p. 168.
240. “Editorial Note,” *ibid.*, p. 457.
241. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 340 (diary entry for August 12, 1971).
242. Matusow, *Nixon’s Economy*, p. 148.

Chapter 5. Downward Spiral

1. Safire also became a rather popular author about the intricacies of the English language. See Robert D. McFadden, “William Safire, Political Columnist and Oracle of Language, Dies at 79” (obituary), *New York Times* (September 27, 2009): <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/28/us/28safire.html?ref=williamsafire>.
2. *Ibid.*; also William Safire, “It Was My Kitchen,” TV interview, August 10, 2009: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2DDI-ZpdI>. See also Claartjevandijk, “William Safire and the Kitchen Debate” (September 28, 2009): <http://fansinaflashbulb.wordpress.com/2009/09/28/william-safire-and-the-kitchen-debate/>.
3. He remained convinced, however, of the rightness of invading Iraq and toppling Saddam Hussein, writing twenty-seven editorials in favor of an invasion of the country.
4. Jessica Gresko, “William Safire’s FBI File Unlocked,” *Huffington Post* (April 13, 2010); for Safire’s FBI files, see Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), “FBI Records: The Vault—William Safire”: <https://vault.fbi.gov/William%20Safire>.
5. Quoted in Gresko, “William Safire’s FBI File Unlocked.”
6. William Safire, *Before the Fall: An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975).

7. Already on August 12, 1971, Haldeman was told that the whole new economic package would be announced on Monday, August 16, 1971, as he had originally planned. H. R. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994), p. 340 (diary entry for August 12, 1971).
8. Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 525.
9. John Connally with Mickey Herskowitz, *In History's Shadow: An American Odyssey* (New York: Hyperion, 1993), p. 238. See also Joanne Gowa, *Closing the Gold Window: Domestic Politics and the End of Bretton Woods* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 150–70; Allan H. Meltzer, *A History of the Federal Reserve*, Vol. II: *Book Two: 1970–1986* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 759ff.
10. Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 512.
11. For the best accounts, see *ibid.*; Rowland Evans Jr. and Robert D. Novak, *Nixon in the White House: The Frustration of Power* (New York: Random House, 1971); Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, pp. 340–46 (diary entry for August 12–15, 1971); Arthur Frank Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration: The Secret Diary of Arthur Burns, 1969–1974*, ed. Robert F. Ferrell (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), pp. 50–54 (diary entry for August 22, 1971).
12. Peter Peterson, interview with the author, Washington, DC, May 19, 2011. According to *Fortune* magazine, by 2010, Peterson was the 149th-richest man in the US, with a personal net worth of \$2.8 billion. Peterson was CEO of Bell & Howell (1963–71) and Lehman Brothers (1973–84), and he cofounded the private equity firm the Blackstone Group in 1985. He was chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations until 2007 and of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2000–2004. In 2008, he established the Peterson Foundation with an endowment of \$1 billion. In 1992, he was one of the cofounders of the Concord Coalition, an advocacy group working for a reduction of the federal deficit. In 2010, he signed the “Giving Pledge,” a promise by forty US billionaires to give half their wealth to charity. He passed away in March 2018. See Robert D. Hershey Jr., “Peter G. Peterson, a Power from Wall Street to Washington, Dies at 91,” *New York Times* (March 10, 2018): <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/20/obituaries/peter-g-peterson-dies-power-from-wall-st-to-washington.html>.
13. Connally with Herskowitz, *In History's Shadow*, p. 240.
14. Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (1978; repr., New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), pp. 518–19. See Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, pp. 342–44 (diary entry for August 13, 1971); also Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, pp. 52–53 (diary entry for August 22, 1971).
15. Paul A. Volcker with Christine Harper, *Keeping at It: The Quest for Sound Money and Good Governance* (New York: Public Affairs, 2018), p. 73.
16. See memorandum, Acting Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, Julius Katz, to Rogers, dated August 13, 1971, in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1969–76, Vol. III: *Foreign Economic Policy; International Monetary Policy, 1969–1972* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2001), pp. 460–64; also “Editorial Note,” *ibid.*, p. 467; Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 954.

17. Helmut Schmidt, *Men and Powers: A Political Retrospective* (New York: Random House, 1989), pp. 158, 161.
18. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 343 (diary entry for August 13, 1971).
19. For “The Defeat of Burns” (a subheading in Gowa’s book), see Gowa, *Closing the Gold Window*, pp. 155–63.
20. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 53 (diary entry for August 22, 1971). For Nixon’s need to be seen as an “activist president,” also Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 330–31 (diary entry for July 26, 1971).
21. Richard M. Nixon, “Address to the Nation Outlining a New Economic Policy ‘The Challenge of Peace’” (August 15, 1971), in *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard M. Nixon, 1971* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 886–91.
22. Robert Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy: The Decline and Fall of Bretton Woods* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 49.
23. Schmidt, *Men and Powers*, p. 160; also George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Scribner’s, 1992), pp. 819–20; Shultz interview, February 11, 2003.
24. Volcker with Harper, *Keeping at It*, pp. 73–74.
25. Connally with Herskowitz, *In History’s Shadow*, p. 239.
26. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 342 (diary entry for August 13, 1971).
27. Nixon, “Address to the Nation Outlining a New Economic Policy,” pp. 886–91.
28. James Reston Jr., *The Lone Star: The Life of John Connally* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), p. 396; Wyatt C. Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World: Arthur F. Burns and the Federal Reserve, 1970–1978* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 60.
29. “Nixon Takes US Dollar off Gold Standard,” *New York Times* (August 6, 1971), p. 1.
30. Reston, *The Lone Star*, p. 410.
31. Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Penguin, 2011), pp. 136, 139.
32. Telegram, Rogers to Willy Brandt (and other European heads of government), August 16, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 468–69.
33. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 342 (diary entry for August 13, 1971). Fred Bergsten confirmed that Nixon’s monetary policy was entirely dominated by domestic and electoral concerns. C. Fred Bergsten, interview with the author, Washington, DC, July 29, 2011.
34. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 54 (diary entry for September 10, 1971).
35. C. Fred Bergsten, “The New Economics and U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 50/2 (January 1972), p. 204.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 203–5. In a July 2011 interview, Bergsten showed somewhat greater understanding for Nixon’s policy and said that his judgment in the early 1970s had perhaps been a little harsh. For his thinking in the 1970s, see C. Fred Bergsten, *Toward a New International Economic Order: Selected Papers, 1972–74* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1974).

37. See Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 515.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 514–15; also Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 342 (diary entry for August 13, 1971).
39. Connally with Herskowitz, *In History's Shadow*, p. 240.
40. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 346 (diary entry for August 14, 1971); also *ibid.*, p. 344 (diary entry for August 13, 1971); also Allen J. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy: Booms, Busts, Dollars, and Votes* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), p. 59; John Ehrlichman, *Witness to Power: The Nixon Years* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 244.
41. Quoted in Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 58.
42. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 68.
43. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 69.
44. Allen J. Matusow, "Feature Review: Richard Nixon and the Failed War against the Trading World," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 27/5 (November 2003), p. 770.
45. Michael Moffit, *The World's Money: International Banking from Bretton Woods to the Brink of Insolvency* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 40.
46. Memorandum, Theodore Eliot, Executive Secretary of the Department of State, to Kissinger, September 24, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 500.
47. Letter, Burns to Nixon reporting on a recent IMF meetings which he attended, October 14, 1971, *ibid.*, p. 516.
48. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, p. 169. See also Marc Trachtenberg, "The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy during the Nixon-Pompidou Period, 1969–9174," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 13/1 (winter 2011), pp. 4–59.
49. Memorandum, Theodore Eliot, Executive Secretary of the Department of State, to Kissinger, September 24, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 499.
50. "Under Secretary of Treasury Volcker Received in Paris as Special Envoy of President Nixon," *New York Times* (August 18, 1971); Reston, *The Lone Star*, p. 410. For Volcker's conversations and discussions with European leaders in London and Paris on August 16 and 17, 1971, see FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 469–84. See also Volcker's memoirs, Volcker with Harper, *Keeping at It*, pp. 75ff., which, however, reveal little.
51. Safire, *Before the Fall*, p. 518; also Leeson, *Ideology and the International Economy*, p. 12.
52. Memorandum of conversation, Volcker and economic experts from France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the UK, London, August 16, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 469–78 (quote: p. 473).
53. *Ibid.* (quotes: pp. 475, 476).
54. Memorandum of conversation between Volcker and Giscard, Paris, August 17, 1971, *ibid.*, p. 481.
55. See for example the memorandum from Hormats to Kissinger, September 6, 1971, *ibid.*, pp. 488–91.
56. During an interview on July 29, 2011, in Washington, DC, Fred Bergsten agreed with this conclusion.
57. Memorandum of conversation, Karl Schiller, German Finance Minister, and his

- team and Connally, Volcker, and US experts, Washington, September 25, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 506–11.
58. Ibid. (quotes: pp. 509–10).
59. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 80 (diary entry for October 14, 1972).
60. George P. Shultz and Kenneth W. Dam, *Economic Policy beyond the Headlines*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 115.
61. Memorandum, Lawrence Berlin, Agency for International Development, to Stern, Assistant Administrator for Program and Policy Coordination, September 24, 1971, in FRUS 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 505. Connally gave a similar outline to a visiting German delegation; see the following note.
62. Memorandum of conversation, Karl Schiller et al., September 25, 1971, *ibid.*, pp. 506–11.
63. Reston, *The Lone Star*, p. 414.
64. Barry J. Eichengreen, *The European Economy since 1945: Coordinated Capitalism and Beyond* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 246–47. For US considerations and attempts at negotiations with the Europeans, see the detailed accounts in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 501ff.
65. See remarks by Secretary Connally to the G-10 Ministers meeting in London, September 15–16, 1971 (as quoted in the editorial note), in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 193. See also telegram, Volcker, London, to Department of State, September 17, 1971, *ibid.*, pp. 492–93.
66. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA): Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Name Files, Box 818, memorandum from Hormats to Kissinger, dated September 21, 1971, “U.S. Follow-through on August 15 International Package.” See Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 55 (diary entry for September 10, 1971).
67. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 57 (diary entry for September 20, 1971).
68. Action memorandum from Kissinger to Peterson, September 20, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 494.
69. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 58 (diary entry for October 7, 1971).
70. See Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, pp. 87–88.
71. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 57 (diary entry for October 7, 1971).
72. For Connally’s Asian trip, see FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 538ff.
73. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 957.
74. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Name Files, Box 818, memorandum from Kissinger to the President, undated (ca. late September 1971), “U.S. Follow-through on August 15 International Package,” p. 1; also Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011.
75. Connally with Herskowitz, *In History’s Shadow*, p. 248.
76. Quoted in “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 169.
77. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 957.
78. Ibid., pp. 958, 957 (quotes: p. 957); also Reston, *The Lone Star*, p. 421.
79. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 55 (diary entry for September 10, 1971), also p. 85 (diary entry for October 7, 1971).

80. Arthur Burns referred to the Moscow summit during the Camp David meeting on August 13, 1971. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 342 (diary entry for August 13, 1971).
81. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Name Files, Box 820, memorandum, Kissinger to President, "Ambassador Kennedy's Trip to Europe," September 20, 1971.
82. Ibid.: memorandum, Peterson to President, "Kennedy Trip to Europe," September 16, 1971. See also *ibid.*: memorandum, Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, "David Kennedy's Trip to Europe," September 17, 1971.
83. Ibid.: memorandum from Kissinger to the President, undated (ca. late September 1971), "U.S. Follow-through on August 15 International Package."
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 957–58.
90. Ibid., p. 958.
91. Memorandum, Peterson to Nixon, November 15, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 544.
92. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 958.
93. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 62 (diary entry for November 3, 1971); see also p. 61 (diary entry for October 29, 1971); Peterson to Nixon, November 15, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 545.
94. Peterson to Nixon, November 15, 1971, p. 546.
95. Telegram, US embassy in France to State Department, November 15, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 549.
96. "Talking points for your meeting with George Shultz, Tuesday, November 2, at 8.45am," information memorandum, Hormats to Kissinger, November 1, 1971, *ibid.*, pp. 525–26.
97. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 62 (diary entry for October 29, 1971).
98. Ibid., p. 63 (diary entry for November 5, 1971).
99. Memorandum of conversation, Kissinger, Burns, and Hormats, Washington, July 25, 1972, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 639.
100. "Editorial Note," *ibid.*, p. 566; see also *ibid.*, pp. 564–67.
101. The Group of 10 (G-10) or Paris Club was set up in 1962 and consisted of the following members (Switzerland joined as the eleventh member in 1994): Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the US.
102. See Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, pp. 63–66 (diary entry for November 26, 1971).
103. For the Rome meetings, see "Editorial Notes," in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 578–79, 582–83; telegram, Connally to the White House, November 30, 1971, *ibid.*, pp. 580–81; also telegram, Connally, *ibid.*, pp. 589–90. See Matusow, *Nixon's*

- Economy*, pp. 173, 175–77; Connally with Herskowitz, *In History's Shadow*, pp. 243–45; and the brief account in Volcker with Harper, *Keeping at It*, pp. 77–78.
104. Quote: Volcker and Harper, *Keeping at It*, p. 77.
 105. Telegram, US embassy in the Netherlands to Department of State, December 6, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 587.
 106. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 66 (diary entry for November 26, 1971).
 107. See Tad Szulc, “Letter from the Azores,” *The New Yorker* (January 1, 1972), p. 54: http://www.newyorker.com/archive/1972/01/01/1972_01_01_054_TNY_CARDS_000302256
 108. “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 531–33.
 109. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 958.
 110. Richard M. Nixon, “Remarks in Bermuda Announcing Removal of Surcharge on Imports” (December 20, 1971), in *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard M. Nixon, 1971* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 1197.
 111. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 961.
 112. Nixon, RN, p. 959.
 113. “Call on Pompidou: international economic and monetary situation,” Shriver, US ambassador in Paris, to State Department, July 24, 1969, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 362.
 114. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy*, p. 177. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 961–62. For the Azores agreement, see “Framework for Monetary and Trade Settlement,” The Azores, undated, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 597–99; also “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 594–96.
 115. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 962.
 116. Quoted in “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 600. See also Claudia Hiepel, *Willy Brandt and Georges Pompidou. Deutsch-französische Europapolitik zwischen Aufbruch und Krise* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2012).
 117. For a useful table of new and old currency exchange rates, see “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 601.
 118. Robert Solomon, *The International Monetary System, 1945–1981*, updated and exp. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), pp. 209–10.
 119. Connally with Herskowitz, *In History's Shadow*, pp. 246–48; Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 208. See “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 599–601. For Nixon's speech, see “Remarks Announcing a Monetary Agreement Following a Meeting of the Group of Ten. December 18, 1971,” in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1971*, pp. 1195–96.
 120. Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 216; Michael D. Bordo, Owen F. Humpage, and Anna J. Schwartz, “U.S. Intervention and the Early Dollar Float, 1973–1981,” Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, Working Paper (old series) 1023 (revised, December 7, 2010), p. 6: <https://ideas.repec.org/p/fip/fedcwp/1023.html>.
 121. Conversation, Nixon, Burns, Ash (the new director of the Office of Management

- and Budget), Stein (chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers), Shultz, and Volcker, March 3, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI: *Foreign Economic Policy, 1973–1976* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), p. 58.
122. C. Fred Bergsten, *Dilemmas of the Dollar: The Economics and Politics of United States International Monetary Policy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996), pp. 491, 399.
 123. See Connally's account, in *History's Shadow*, pp. 270–86; Reston, *The Lone Star*, pp. 461ff., 482ff.; Bergsten interview, July 29, 2011. See the contemporary article “Watergate: Connolly's Spilt Milk,” *Time*, Vol. 103/17 (April 29, 1974): <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,911215,00.html>.
 124. Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, pp. 209–11.
 125. Bordo, Humpage, and Schwartz, “U.S. Intervention and the Early Dollar Float,” p. 6.
 126. For a good analysis of the post-Smithsonian developments, see Meltzer, *A History of the Federal Reserve*, pp. 778ff.; also Paul A. Volcker and Toyoo Gyohten, *Changing Fortunes: The World's Money and the Threat to American Leadership* (New York: Times Books, 1992), pp. 103–4; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 30–31; Wells, *Economist in an Uncertain World*, pp. 93ff.
 127. “French Concern about Strength of the Dollar,” urgent information memoranda from Hormats and Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, January 24, 1972, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 601–3.
 128. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 752, Folder “France, Pompidou, 1972”: letter, Pompidou to Nixon, dated February 4, 1972 (also printed in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 604–7).
 129. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 752, Folder “France, Pompidou, 1972”: memorandum, Sonnenfeldt to General Haig, dated February 4, 1972.
 130. Eichengreen, *The European Economy since 1945*, p. 247.
 131. Sonnenfeldt to Haig, February 4, 1972.
 132. NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Presidential Correspondence 1969–1974, Box 752, Folder “France, Pompidou, 1972”: letter, Nixon to Pompidou, dated February 16, 1972 (also printed in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 608–11).
 133. *Ibid.*
 134. *Ibid.*
 135. Eichengreen, *The European Economy since 1945*, p. 247. The Basel agreement formally led to the termination of the sterling area.
 136. *Ibid.*
 137. Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 218.
 138. Robert L. Carbaugh, “The Weakened Snake: Exchange Rate Market Adjustments,” *Nebraska Journal of Economics and Business*, Vol. 16/1 (winter 1977), pp. 58–59.
 139. For a brief overview, see Jerry Mushin, “The Euro and Its Antecedents,” in Rob-

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140. Quote: “Editorial Note,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, p. 655. For a good US assessment, see NARA: Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, WHCF, Staff Member and Office Files, Marina v. N. Whitman, Subject Files, Early Price Warning, Economic Intelligence Weekly, Box 9: CIEP Study No. 19, “US-EC Relations: An Assessment,” dated November 22, 1972 (IEP/OG-SM 12C); also *ibid.*: memorandum and long paper for the Trade Policy Steering Group Members from Ambassador William R. Pearce, “US Response to developing US-EC Trade Confrontation,” dated August 21, 1972.
 141. For the controversial circumstances of Schiller’s resignation, see Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, pp. 222–23. See also Torben Lütjen, *Karl Schiller (1911–1994). “Superminister” Willy Brandts* (Bonn: Dietz, 2007).
 142. Information memorandum between Schmidt and Kissinger, Washington, July 20, 1972, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 634–38; also Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 217–19.
 143. Conversation, Nixon, Kissinger, and Shultz, March 7, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 112.
 144. Information memorandum between Schmidt and Kissinger, July 20, 1972, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 636, 638.
 145. Telegram, Martin Hillenbrand, US embassy in Bonn, to State Department, August 1, 1971, on his conversation with Schmidt on July 31, 1971, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 649.
 146. “Editorial Notes,” in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 654–55 (quotes: p. 655). See also Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, pp. 221–22.
 147. “CIEP Executive Committee Meeting,” memorandum of conversation, September 11, 1972, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 259–60. For the EC’s preference agreements with Spain and Israel, see “European Community Trade Agreements with Spain and Israel,” memorandum, Irwin to Nixon, October 20, 1972, *ibid.*, pp. 275–79.
 148. Nixon, RN, pp. 520–22.
 149. Rick Perlstein, “The Election of 1972,” in Melvin Small (ed.), *A Companion to Richard M. Nixon* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2011), pp. 164–84.
 150. Telephone conversation, Nixon-Heath, November 8, 1972, 3:08 p.m.–3:11 p.m. (conversation no. 33-73), Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Nixon Tapes, telephone conversations: http://nixon tapes.org/transcripts/1972-11-08_WHT33-73_ERGH.pdf.
 151. For a convincing account, see Niklas H. Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969–1974* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); also Andrew Scott, *Allies Apart: Heath, Nixon and the Anglo-American Special Relationship* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
 152. Quoted in Thomas Robb, “Henry Kissinger, Great Britain and the ‘Year of Eu-

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153. Alexander Spelling, "Edward Heath and Anglo-American Relations, 1970–1974: A Reappraisal," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 20/4 (2009), p. 647; Edward Heath, *The Course of My Life: My Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1998), pp. 491–92; also Thomas Robb, *A Strained Partnership? US-UK Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969–77* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), chap. 2. See also chapter 6 of this book.
 154. Letter, Lord Cromer, British ambassador in Washington, to Sir Thomas Brimelow, Deputy Under-Secretary, at the Foreign Office in London, March 7, 1973, in *Documents on British Policy Overseas* (DBPO), Series III, Vol. IV: *The Year of Europe: America, Europe and the Energy Crisis, 1972–74; Brimelow Papers*, ed. Stephen R. Twigge, Patrick Salmon, and Keith Hamilton (London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2005).
 155. *Ibid.*
 156. See "Editorial Note" and US ambassador Watson's reporting from Paris on March 11, 1972, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. III, pp. 613–14.
 157. Notes of a telephone conversation between Shultz and Bennett (Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs) in Washington, DC, and Volcker in Paris, February 11, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 44.
 158. "Editorial Note" and US ambassador Watson's reporting from Paris on March 11, 1972, p. 614.
 159. Conversation between Nixon, Shultz and Burns, February 6, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 11.
 160. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 161. Trachtenberg, "The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy," pp. 19–20.
 162. The figures are mentioned in the letter Heath sent to Nixon, March 4, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 96.
 163. Bordo, Humpage, and Schwartz, "U.S. Intervention and the Early Dollar Float," p. 6.
 164. "Editorial Note," in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 47, also *ibid.*, pp. 48–49.
 165. Salomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 213.
 166. *Ibid.*, p. 231. Helmut Schmidt, interview with the author, Hamburg, March 15, 2005.
 167. Bordo, Humpage, and Schwartz, "U.S. Intervention and the Early Dollar Float," p. 6.
 168. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
 169. In fact, Aichi quoted the phrase originally coined by the previous Federal Reserve chairman, William McChesney Martin. See "Memorandum of Conversation," February 8, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 29. Present were the Japanese minister and vice minister of finance, some of their advisers, Volcker, the US ambassador, and two US embassy officials.
 170. Eichengreen, *The European Economy since 1945*, p. 248.

171. Quoted in Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 227.
172. Letter, Burns to Nixon, February 1, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 3.
173. See for example Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, pp. 224–26; Bordo, Humpage, and Schwartz, “U.S. Intervention and the Early Dollar Float,” pp. 7, 56, n. 10.
174. Conversation between Nixon, Kissinger, and Shultz, March 3, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 76.
175. *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 77–78.
176. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
177. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
178. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
179. *Ibid.*
180. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
181. *Ibid.*
182. See Oliver Bange and Poul Villaume (eds.), *The Long Détente: Changing Concepts of Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1950s–1980s* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2017).
183. British embassy, Washington, DC, telegram No 2354, Ambassador Cromer to Foreign Office, London, on his meeting with Kissinger, November 24, 1973, in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT00922.
184. See Klaus Larres, “Germany and the West: The ‘Rapallo’ Factor in German Foreign Policy from the 1950s to the 1990s,” in Klaus Larres and Panikos Panayi (eds.), *The Federal Republic of Germany since 1949: Politics, Society and Economy before and after Unification* (London: Longman, 1996), pp. 303–18.
185. Conversation between Nixon, Kissinger, and Shultz, March 3, 1973, p. 79.
186. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
187. *Ibid.*
188. *Ibid.*
189. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
190. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
191. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
192. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
193. Letter, Nixon to Brandt, March 3, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 92.
194. Letter, Nixon to Heath, March 3, 1973, *ibid.*, p. 93.
195. Conversation between Nixon, Kissinger, and Shultz, March 3, 1973, pp. 74ff., 79.
196. Nixon to Kissinger, draft memorandum, dated March 10, 1973, in United States Declassified Documents Online Reference System (Gale Cengage), doc. no. CK3100517379, declassified September 23, 2002. See also the beginning of chapter 2 of this book.
197. *Ibid.*; also in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 119.
198. *Ibid.*
199. *Ibid.*
200. “Editorial Note,” conversation between Kissinger and Simon on March 14, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 123.

201. Ibid.
202. Ibid., pp. 125–26.
203. Letter, Nixon to Brandt, March 3, 1973, p. 92. For the whole situation in March 1973, see convincingly Trachtenberg, “The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy,” pp. 21–22.
204. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 94 (diary entry for April 3, 1973); also quoted in Luke A. Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe: The Reshaping of the Transatlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 123.
205. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 95 (diary entry for April 3, 1973).
206. For some of the international and US discussions and considerations leading to this decision, see FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, pp. 40ff.
207. Conversation between Nixon, Shultz, and Burns, February 6, 1973, p. 12.
208. Ibid., p. 64.
209. See the telegram from the Department of State to the US Mission to the EC on the conversation between Brandt and Shultz in Washington, March 19, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, pp. 129–32.
210. Schmidt, *Men and Powers*, pp. 157, 161.
211. Carbaugh, “The Weakened Snake,” pp. 61, 62.
212. For the complex history of the EMS, see Peter Coffey, *The European Monetary System—Past, Present and Future* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984); Michele Fratianni and Jürgen von Hagen, *The European Monetary System and European Monetary Union* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992); also Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, *The Road to Monetary Union in Europe: The Emperor, the Kings, and the Genies* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1994).
213. See in great detail Emmanuel Mourlon-Droul, *A Europe Made of Money: The Emergence of the European Monetary System* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).
214. Eichengreen, *The European Economy since 1945*, p. 248; Meltzer, *A History of the Federal Reserve*, pp. 754–57.
215. Backchannel message, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC, to Brent Scowcroft, Deputy National Security Adviser, March 17, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 128.
216. Solomon, *The International Monetary System*, p. 233.
217. Notes of a telephone conversation between Shultz and Bennett (Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs) in Washington, DC, and Volcker in Paris, February 11, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, p. 44.
218. Message from Brandt to Nixon, March 2, 1973, *ibid.*, p. 49.
219. Conversation between Nixon, Burns, Ash (Director of the Office of Management and Budget), Stein (Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers), Shultz, and Volcker, March 3, 1973, *ibid.* p. 62.
220. Ibid., p. 68.
221. See Otmar Franz (ed.), *European Currency in the Making* (Sindelfingen, Germany: Libertas, 1989); also Rainer Hellmann, *Gold, the Dollar, and the European Currency System: The Seven Year Monetary War* (New York: Praeger, 1979).

222. See for instance Adam S. Posen, “Why the Euro Will Not Rival the Dollar,” *International Finance*, Vol. 11/1 (2008), pp. 75–100: <https://www.piie.com/commentary/speeches-papers/why-euro-will-not-rival-dollar>.
223. See the gist of the conversation between Nixon, Burns, Ash, Stein, Shultz, and Volcker, March 3, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI, pp. 22–24.

Chapter 6. Turning Point

1. Memorandum of conversation between Henry Kissinger and Lord Cromer, White House, October 31, 1973, 9:05–9:40 a.m., in William Burr (ed.), *The October War and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: National Security Archive, October 7, 2003): <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/octwar-90.pdf>. For the entire archive of documents regarding the war, see <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/>.
2. Douglas Brinkley, “Dean Acheson and the ‘Special Relationship,’ The West Point Speech of December 1962,” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 33/3 (September, 1990), pp. 599–608; Michael F. Hopkins, *Dean Acheson and the Obligations of Power* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).
3. Quoted in Alexander Spelling, “Edward Heath and Anglo-American Relations 1970–1974: A Reappraisal,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 20/4 (2009), pp. 644.
4. Alexander Spelling, “Lord Cromer, 1971–74,” in Michael F. Hopkins, Saul Kelly, and John W. Young (eds.), *The Washington Embassy: British Ambassadors to the United States, 1939–1977* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 189–208; also Spelling, “Edward Heath and Anglo-American Relations,” pp. 638–58.
5. Alistair Horne, “Kissinger’s Man from Moscow,” *The Spectator* (April 24, 2010): <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2010/04/kissingers-man-from-moscow/>.
6. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and Cromer, October 31, 1973.
7. Telephone conversation between Kissinger and Cromer, October 25, 1973, in the Situation Room, in William Burr (ed.), *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 263: The Kissinger Telephone Conversations* (Washington, DC: National Security Archive, December 23, 2008): <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB263/19731025-Cromer.pdf>.
8. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the “wise men,” a number of US foreign policy experts (Dean Rusk, Douglas Dillon, David Rockefeller, McGeorge Bundy, Cyrus Vance, John J. McCloy), State Department, Secret, November 28, 1973, p. 10, in William Burr (ed.), *The Kissinger Transcripts: A Verbatim Record of U.S. Diplomacy, 1969–1977*, Digital National Security Archive (Washington, DC: National Security Archive, last updated August 2020), item no. KT00928.
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- wealth Office, 2005). Also quoted in Richard Aldrich, *GCHQ: The Uncensored Story of Britain's Most Secret Intelligence Agency* (London: HarperCollins, 2011), pp. 288–89.
10. Ibid.
 11. Quoted in Spelling, “Edward Heath and Anglo-American Relations,” p. 652.
 12. See “Your luncheon with John Freeman,” memorandum for Mr. Kissinger, authored by Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Secret, July 21, 1970, Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library and Archives, digital collection: <https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/virtual-library/releases/dec10/69.pdf>.
 13. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the “wise men,” November 28, 1973, p. 9.
 14. Nixon was clearly grateful for Heath’s public support of the “Christmas bombings.” See also chapter 5 of this book; and Spelling, “Edward Heath and Anglo-American Relations,” p. 647; Edward Heath, *The Course of My Life: My Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1998), pp. 491–92; Thomas Robb, *A Strained Partnership? US-UK Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969–77* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), chap. 2.
 15. “The President’s News Conference, January 31, 1973,” in *The American Presidency Project: Richard M. Nixon* (Santa Barbara: University of California, Santa Barbara): <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3930>.
 16. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the “wise men” (a number of US foreign policy experts), State Department, Secret, December 5, 1973, p. 7, in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT00934.
 17. Heath, *The Course of My Life*, pp. 354–95.
 18. Edward Heath, “European Unity over the Next Ten Years: from Community to Union,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 64/2 (spring 1988), p. 207.
 19. Maria Gainar, “Aux origins de la diplomatie européenne: Les neuf et la Coopération politique européenne de 1973 à 1980,” *Relations Internationales*, Vol. 154/2 (2013), pp. 91–105. See also Gainar’s book with the same title (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2012); also Panayiotis Ifestos, “European Political Cooperation (EPC): Its Evolution from 1970 to 1986, and the Single European Act,” *Journal of European integration*, Vol. 11/1 (1987), pp. 47–62. For a good account of EPC, see Simon J. Nuttall, *European Political Co-operation* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1992).
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21. Stephen Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II: *From Rejection to Referendum, 1963–1975* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 394.
22. “CIEP Executive Committee Meeting,” memorandum of conversation, September 11, 1972, 10 a.m. (participants: President, Rogers, Shultz, Peterson, Butz [Agriculture], Rush [Deputy Secretary Defense], Weinberger [OMB], Stein [CEA], Eberle [STR], Haig [NSC], Flanigan [Executive Director, CIEP]), in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1969–76, Vol. III: *Foreign Economic Policy; International Monetary Policy, 1969–1972* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2001), pp. 261–64.
23. “Memorandum of Conversation,” President Nixon, Secretary of State Rogers, Treasury Secretary Shultz, and other economic advisers, September 11, 1972, *ibid.*, p. 264. Connally’s original remark was made in August 1971. See chapter 4 of this book.
24. “CIEP Executive Committee Meeting,” September 11, 1972.
25. Leonard Garment was a White House counselor, and William Safire was one of Nixon’s best speechwriters. Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, “40 Years after Watergate, Nixon Was Far Worse than We Thought,” *Washington Post* (June 8, 2012): https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/woodward-and-bernstein-40-years-after-watergate-nixon-was-far-worse-than-we-thought/2012/06/08/gJQAlslsioNV_story.html?utm_term=.549a1ef4d616.
26. Quoted in John A. Farrell, *Richard Nixon: The Life* (New York: Doubleday, 2017), p. 499. See also chapters 1 and 4 of this book.
27. John Prados and Margaret Pratt Porter (eds.), *Inside the Pentagon Papers* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).
28. George Lardner and Walter Pincus, “Nixon Ordered Tapes Destroyed,” *Washington Post* (October 30, 1997), p. A01: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/nixon/103097tapes.htm>.
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30. Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), p. 105.
31. See Farrell, *Richard Nixon*, pp. 510–11.
32. Quoted in CBS News, “Last of the President’s Men” (October 11, 2015): <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/last-of-the-presidents-men/>. See also Bob Woodward, *The Last of the President’s Men* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016).
33. John W. Dean, *The Nixon Defense: What He Knew and When He Knew It* (New York: Viking, 2014), pp. 53–62.
34. Arthur Frank Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration: The Secret Diary of Arthur Burns, 1969–1974*, ed. Robert F. Ferrell (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), p. 110 (diary entry for August 19, 1973), also p. 113 (diary entry for December 6, 1973).
35. Kissinger in conversation with Arthur Burns in late October or early November 1973. See Farrell, *Richard Nixon*, p. 524.
36. Burns, *Inside the Nixon Administration*, p. 122 (diary entry for April 4, 1974).

37. Ibid. p. 131 (diary entry for July 25, 1974).
38. For good accounts, Stanley I. Kutler, *The Wars of Watergate: The Last Crisis of Richard Nixon* (New York: Norton, 1992); Keith W. Olson, *Watergate: The Presidential Scandal That Shook America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003); Fred Emery, *Watergate* (New York: Touchstone, 1995); also Samuel R. Rushey Jr., “Listening to Nixon: An Archivist’s Reflections on His Work with the Nixon Tapes,” *Prologue: Quarterly Journal of the National Archives* 39 (fall 2007), pp. 42–51; also Dorrance Bowers, *Nixon: Acclaim and Shame* (Kelowna, BC: XLibris, 2009), pp. 273ff. See also Stanley Kutler (ed.), *Watergate: A Brief History with Documents* (Chichester, UK: Wiley/Blackwell, 2010); Keith W. Olson, “Watergate,” in Melvin Small (ed.), *A Companion to Richard M. Nixon* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2011), pp. 481–98.
39. This arrangement was approved by the G-10, and the world entered the post-Bretton Woods monetary era. As noted earlier, the Group of 10 (G-10) was set up in 1962 and consists of the following members: Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the US. Switzerland joined as the eleventh member in 1994.
40. Helmut Schmidt, *Men and Powers: A Political Retrospective* (New York: Random House, 1989), p. 157.
41. Ibid., p. 158.
42. “CIEP Executive Committee Meeting,” September 11, 1972, pp. 265.
43. Conversation between President Nixon, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors (Burns), the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (Ash), the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers (Stein), Secretary of the Treasury (Shultz), and the Under Secretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs (Volcker), Washington, DC, March 3, 1973, in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XXXI: *Foreign Economic Policy, 1973–1976* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), p. 68.
44. For a good account, see Luke A. Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe: The Reshaping of the Postwar Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 103ff.
45. Richard M. Nixon, 1999: *Victory without War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), p. 207.
46. Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe*, p. 107.
47. Douglas Brinkley and David R. Facey-Crowther (eds.), *The Atlantic Charter* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1994); George Catlin, *Kissinger’s Atlantic Charter* (Gerrards Cross, UK: C. Smythe, 1974).
48. National Security Study Memorandum 164, “United States Relations with Europe,” Instruction by the President passed on by Kissinger to the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, Treasury and Agriculture, dated November 18, 1972: https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nssm-nixon/nssm_164.pdf; also available in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. XLI: *Western Europe; NATO, 1969–1972* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2012), Document 84.

49. Ibid.
50. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, interview with the author, Washington, DC, June 9, 2003. See also chapter 3 of this book.
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52. Sonnenfeldt to President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, "Analytical Summary—NSSM 164, U.S. Relations with Europe," p. 5.
53. Ibid., p. 12; Sonnenfeldt interview, June 9, 2003.
54. See Farrell, *Richard Nixon*, pp. 499–500.
55. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 499.
56. For a good impressionistic account, see Rebecca Kesby, "North Vietnam, 1972: The Christmas Bombing of Hanoi," *BBC World Service* (December 24, 2012): <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-20719382>.
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58. Quoted in Farrell, *Richard Nixon*, p. 499.
59. Quotes (from a Vietnamese website run by the government of Vietnam): Trung Hieu, "The Christmas Bombings of Hanoi in Retrospect," *VOV: Voice of Vietnam* (December 29, 2007): <http://english.vov.vn/society/the-christmas-bombings-of-hanoi-in-retrospect-20548.vov>.
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61. Secretary's Staff Conference, Tuesday, April 23, 1974, 3:10 p.m., Secret, p. 15, in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT01114.
62. Quotes from Frederik Logevall, "The Swedish-American Conflict over Vietnam," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 17/3 (July 1993), pp. 440–41; also B. Vivekandan, *Global Visions of Olof Palme, Bruno Kreisky and Willy Brandt: International Peace and Security, Cooperation and Development* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 22–23.
63. See Logevall, "The Swedish-American Conflict over Vietnam," p. 441; U. Alexis Johnson, *The Right Hand of Power* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), p. 539.
64. Quoted in Anthony Lewis, "At Home Abroad," *New York Times* (December 30, 1972): http://www.nytimes.com/1972/12/30/archives/madness-in-great-ones.html?_r=0.
65. See Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, p. 457.
66. Quoted in Ronald E. Powaski, *American Presidential Statecraft during the Cold War and After* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 155–56; also Larry

- Berman, *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger, and Betrayal in Vietnam* (New York: Free Press, 2001), p. 8. See also Farrell, *Richard Nixon*, pp. 500–502.
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 68. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 130.
 69. See Serge Bernstein and Jean-Pierre Rioux, *The Pompidou Years, 1969–1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 17–19 (quote p. 18).
 70. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 130.
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 72. Matthew Jones, “‘A Man in a Hurry’: Henry Kissinger, Transatlantic Relations, and the British Origins of the Year of Europe Dispute,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 24/1 (2013), p. 86.
 73. Niklas H. Roszbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969–1974* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 143–44.
 74. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the “wise men,” November 28, 1973; also M. Jones, “A Man in a Hurry,” pp. 88–89; Stephen R. Twigge, “Operation Hullabaloo: Henry Kissinger, British Diplomacy, and the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33/4 (September 2009), pp. 689–701.
 75. “Operation Hullabaloo: Britain’s Role in Kissinger’s Nuclear Diplomacy, 1972–1973,” in DBPO, Series III, Vol. IV.
 76. Memorandum of conversation, “Meeting with French Ambassador Kosciuszko-Morizet,” State Department, Secret, December 3, 1973, in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT00932.
 77. British embassy, Washington, DC, telegram no. 2354, Ambassador Cromer to Foreign Office, London, on his meeting with Kissinger, November 24, 1973, *ibid.*, item no. KT00922. See similar sentiments expressed by Kissinger in his conversation with the “wise men,” November 28, 1973, p. 9.
 78. “The President’s News Conference, January 31, 1973.”
 79. Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe*, p. 116.
 80. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
 81. Farrell, *Richard Nixon*, pp. 506–12.
 82. Willy Brandt, *My Life in Politics* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992), p. 192; also Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, pp. 128ff., 151ff.
 83. See “Text of Kissinger’s Speech at A.P. Meeting Here on U.S. Relations with Europe,” given on April 23, 1973, Waldorf-Astoria, New York, *New York Times* (April 24, 1973): <http://www.nytimes.com/1973/04/24/archives/text-of-kissingers-speech-at-ap-meeting-here-on-u-s-relations-with.html>. For a video of Kissinger delivering the speech, see Kissinger, “Synd 24 4 73 Kissinger Addressing Press and Outlines Nixon’s Europe Visit,” uploaded by AP Archive, YouTube, July 23, 2015: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TB-vBTvzSo>.

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85. Henry A. Kissinger, conversation with the author, New York, October 10, 2002. See chapter 3 of this book for an analysis of Kissinger's thinking prior to 1969. See Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger, 1923–1968: The Idealist* (New York: Penguin, 2015).
86. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the "wise men," November 28, 1973, p. 28.
87. See "Text of Kissinger's Speech at A.P. Meeting Here on U.S. Relations with Europe."
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Memorandum of conversation, "Conversation between the Secretary and FRG Foreign Minister Scheel," Waldorf Towers, New York (Secretary's apartment), Secret, September 25, 1973, 5:00–6:00 p.m., in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT00812.
91. Hella Pick, "Walter Scheel, Obituary," *The Guardian* (August 24, 2016): <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/24/walter-scheel-obituary>; also Robert D. McFadden, "Walter Scheel, Leading Figure in West German Thaw with the East, Dies at 97," *New York Times* (August 24, 2016): https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/25/world/europe/walter-scheel-west-germany-obituary.html?_r=0.
92. "Conversation between the Secretary and FRG Foreign Minister Scheel," September 25, 1973.
93. Quoted in Matt Schudel, "Walter Scheel, Influential West German President and Foreign Minister, Dies at 97," *Washington Post* (August 24, 2016): https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/walter-scheel-influential-west-german-president-and-foreign-minister-dies-at-97/2016/08/24/b5b88018-6a15-11e6-99bf-f0cf3a6449a6_story.html?utm_term=.4fbbai8c9b5f.
94. For Scheel's performance of the song, see "Hoch auf dem Gelben Wagen" ("High Up on the Yellow Wagon," 1973), Vimeo, uploaded by Thorsten Eichelbacher: <https://vimeo.com/180069581>.
95. Schudel, "Walter Scheel."
96. "Text of Kissinger's Speech at A.P. Meeting Here on U.S. Relations with Europe."
97. Memorandum of conversation, "Talk with Gaston Thorn and Jean Wagner," (respectively, Foreign Minister and Ambassador of Luxembourg), Secret, State Department, October 2, 1973, 12:30 p.m., in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT00827.
98. Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe*, p. 123.
99. Memorandum of telephone conversation between Nelson Rockefeller and Kissinger, March 14, 1973, 12:51 p.m., in William Burr (ed.), *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 263: The Kissinger Telephone Conversations* (Washington, DC: National Security Archive, December 23, 2008), item no. KA09755.

100. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the “wise men,” November 28, 1973, p. 3.
101. Kissinger, however, repeatedly rejected this accusation. See, for instance, *ibid.*; also Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe*, pp. 121–23.
102. This was disputed by Kissinger as well as by most members of his staff whom I spoke to. Nichter, in *Richard Nixon and Europe*, quite rightly writes that there was “a flurry of diplomatic activity that led up to the speech” (p. 121). See also *ibid.*, pp. 121–23. Also Henry A. Kissinger, interview with the author, Washington, DC, June 6, 2003.
103. Heath, *The Course of My Life*, p. 493.
104. James E. Goodby, interview with Charles Stuart Kennedy, December 10, 1990 (The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project), deposited at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC: <https://cdn.loc.gov/service/mss/mfdip/2004/2004g0004/2004g0004.pdf>.
105. For the bilateral meeting at Reykjavik, Iceland, that eventually took place between May 31 and June 2, see Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe*, pp. 127–29.
106. See Mark Trachtenberg, “The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy during the Nixon-Pompidou Period, 1969–9174,” in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 13/1 (winter 2011), p. 27; Pietrantonio, “The Year That Never Was,” pp. 164–65.
107. See Youri Devuyt, “American Attitudes on European Political Integration—The Nixon-Kissinger Legacy,” IES Working Paper 2/2007 (Brussels: Institute for European Studies / Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2007); William Burr and Robert A. Wampler, “With Friends like these . . . Kissinger, the Atlantic Alliance and the Abortive Year of Europe, 1973–74,” conference paper, Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies, Dobbiaco, Italy (September 2002); Trachtenberg, in “The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy,” writes, “the basic point was that the United States was not pursuing a hostile or confrontational policy” (p. 28). See also Geoffrey L. Williams, *The Permanent Alliance: The European-American Partnership, 1945–1984* (Leyden, the Netherlands: A. W. Sijthoff, 1977), pp. 267–77.
108. This conviction comes across in his memoirs but also in virtually all the conversations and documents that deal with Kissinger’s approach to Europe.
109. See Wilfried Loth, *Building Europe: A History of European Unification* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), p. 208.
110. For details, see Nichter, *Richard Nixon and Europe*, pp. 129–32.
111. Michel Jobert, *Mémoires d’avenir* (Paris: Grasset, 1974), p. 232. For the aftermath of Kissinger’s speech, see Keith Hamilton, “Britain, France, and America’s Year of Europe, 1973,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 17/4 (2006), pp. 876–83; memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the “wise men,” November 28, 1973, p. 28.
112. Douglas Johnson, “Michel Jobert: Independent French Politician Who Served Many Masters” (obituary), *The Guardian* (May 27, 2002): <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/may/28/guardianobituaries>.
113. Memorandum for the Record, Top Secret, undated, attached to memorandum

- from Helmut Sonnenfeldt to Henry Kissinger, "Nuclear Cooperation with France—Galley-Schlesinger Meeting, September 25, 1973," Top Secret, September 25, 1973, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, digital archive: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113238.pdf?v=43f2dc3c70007e78cc3fa1004c7c09bc>.
114. William Burr, "U.S. Secret Assistance to the French Nuclear Program, 1969–1975: From 'Fourth Country' to Strategic Partner," in Wilson Center (ed.), *Nuclear Proliferation International History Project* (Washington, DC, July 12, 2011): <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/us-secret-assistance-to-the-french-nuclear-program-1969-1975-fourth-country-to-strategic>. Initially it was Richard Ullman who revealed US-French nuclear collaboration. See Ullman, "The Covert French Connection," *Foreign Policy Magazine*, No. 75 (summer 1989), pp. 3–33; also Kenneth Weisbrode, *The Atlantic Century: Four Generations of Extraordinary Diplomats Who Forged America's Vital Alliance with Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2009), pp. 256–58; Trachtenberg, "The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy," pp. 7–9.
115. Burr, "U.S. Secret Assistance to the French Nuclear Program"; Ullman, "The Covert French Connection"; Weisbrode, *The Atlantic Century*; Trachtenberg, "The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy."
116. Memorandum from William Hyland to Henry Kissinger, "US-French Missile-Nuclear Cooperation," Secret, August 16, 1973, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, digital archive: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113238.pdf?v=43f2dc3c70007e78cc3fa1004c7c09bc>.
117. Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense from John S. Foster, "Ballistic Missile Cooperation with France," Top Secret, May 21, 1973, *ibid.*: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113238.pdf?v=43f2dc3c70007e78cc3fa1004c7c09bc>.
118. Daniel Möckli, "Asserting Europe's Distinct Identity: The EC Nine and Kissinger's Year of Europe," in Matthias Schulz and Thomas A. Schwartz (eds.), *The Strained Alliance: U.S.-European Relations from Nixon to Carter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 202.
119. Memorandum of conversation (participants: Kissinger, Schlesinger, General Wickham, General Scowcroft), September 5, 1973, Secret, Pentagon, 8 a.m., Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, digital archive: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113232.pdf?v=d4c6e4898dac6676b5eacc586a82ff52>.
120. British embassy, Washington, DC, telegram no. 2354, November 24, 1973 (see note 77).
121. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, pp. 188–89; Catherine Hynes, *The Year That Never Was: Heath, the Nixon Administration and the Year of Europe* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2009), pp. 156–59; Trachtenberg, "The French Factor in U.S. Foreign Policy," p. 30.
122. Memorandum of conversation, "Discussion with Greek Foreign Minister Cava-
liaratos," Secret, Waldorf Tower, New York (during UN General Assembly session), October 5, 1973, 6:00 p.m., in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KTo0834.

123. Memorandum of conversation, “Secretary’s Lunch with French Foreign Minister Jobert,” Secret, Waldorf Towers, New York (Secretary’s apartment), September 26, 1973, 1:15 p.m., *ibid.*, item no. KT00815.
124. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the “wise men,” November 28, 1973, p. 5; also Mary Hampton, *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890–2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 302.
125. British embassy, Washington, DC, telegram no. 2354, November 24, 1973.
126. Memorandum of conversation (participants: Sir Burke Trend, Sir John Hunt, Sir Thomas Brimelow, Richard Sykes, John Graham, Henry Kissinger, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Peter Rodman), Washington, DC, July 30, 1973, 3:00–5:30 p.m., in FRUS, 1969–76, Vol. E-15, Part 2, pp. 123.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
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129. British embassy, Washington, DC, telegram no. 2354, November 24, 1973. See also the similar sentiments Kissinger expressed in conversation with Brandt and Scheel: memorandum of conversation, “Meeting with German Leaders,” March 24, 1974, p. 10, in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT01082.
130. Memorandum of conversation (Trend et al.), July 30, 1973, p. 124. See also Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship*, pp. 154–55.
131. See John Tagliabue, “Egidio Ortona, Italian Envoy to U.S., Dies at 85,” *New York Times* (January 12, 1996): <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/12/world/egidio-ortona-italian-envoy-to-us-dies-at-85.html>.
132. Quoted in Roberto Fornasier, *The Dove and the Eagle* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), p. 165; Egidio Ortona, *Anni d’America: La cooperazione, 1967–1975*, Vol. 3 (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989), p. 145.
133. Fornasier, *The Dove and the Eagle*, p. 165; also Ortona, *Anni d’America*, p. 433.
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135. *Ibid.*
136. *Ibid.* See also the details Kissinger received from the visiting British delegation a week later: memorandum of conversation (Trend et al.), July 30, 1973, p. 118.
137. *Ibid.* On Kissinger’s contemplated trip to Europe and the possible timing of Nixon’s trip to Europe, see *ibid.*; and also memorandum of conversation, “Secretary’s Lunch with French Foreign Minister Jobert,” September 26, 1973.
138. The EC document was added as an attachment to the document referred to in the following note.
139. Memorandum of conversation, Henry Kissinger and Knud Borge Anderson, Foreign Minister of Denmark, State Department, September 25, 1973, in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT00811.

140. Ibid.
141. Memorandum of conversation, "Secretary's Lunch with French Foreign Minister Jobert," September 26, 1973; also memorandum of conversation of talk between Kissinger and Willy Brandt, September 26, 1973, p. 3, in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT00817.
142. Memorandum of conversation, Kissinger and Anderson, September 25, 1973.
143. Memorandum of conversation, "Secretary's Lunch with French Foreign Minister Jobert," September 26, 1973.
144. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the "wise men," November 28, 1973, pp. 6, 35.
145. Memorandum of conversation, "Secretary's Lunch with French Foreign Minister Jobert," September 26, 1973. See also the similar sentiments Kissinger expressed in his talk with the "wise men" on November 28, 1973, p. 29.
146. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and the "wise men," November 28, 1973, p. 34.
147. British embassy, Washington, DC, telegram no. 2354, November 24, 1973; also memorandum of conversation, "Bilateral Conversation between FRG Chancellor Brandt and the Secretary of State," September 26, 1973, p. 3, in Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, item no. KT00817.
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155. Ibid.
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199. See "Armed Shipments to Israel," Weiss to Kissinger, October 15, 1973.
200. Ibid.
201. Department of State Cable 212618 to US Embassy West Germany, "Secretary's Meeting with FRG Ambassador Von Staden, October 26," 27 October 1973.
202. Memorandum of conversation, "Kosciusko-Morizet call on Secretary," October 26, 1973, p. 3.
203. Donald Rumsfeld, interview with the author, Washington, DC, April 9, 2004. During the at times tense and forthright conversation, Rumsfeld strongly criticized the French government in particular but also the German government to a lesser extent as well as various other anti-Iraq War European governments.
204. See Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, p. 145. This statement in Rumsfeld's mem-

- oirs is based, the reader is informed, on “Nixon and Rumsfeld, taped conversation, 22 July 1971.”
205. US Mission to NATO Cable 4937 to Department of State, “NATO Implications of the Middle East Conflict: NAC Meeting of October 16, 1973,” Brussels, October 16, 1973, p. 3, in Burr, *The October War and U.S. Policy*: <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/octwar-32b.pdf>.
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Conclusion

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