The Peace of Illusions

American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present

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Cornell University Press

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A volume in the series *Cornell Studies in Security Affairs,*
edited by Robert J. Art, Robert Jervis, and Stephen M. Walt

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First published 2006 by Cornell University Press

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Layne, Christopher.
The peace of illusions : American grand strategy from 1940 to the present / Christopher Layne.
p. cm. — (Cornell studies in security affairs)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-0-8014-3713-7 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 0-8014-3713-X (cloth : alk. paper)
1. United States—Foreign relations—20th century. 2. United States—Foreign relations—2001– 3. United States—Foreign relations—Philosophy. 4. Hegemony—United States—History—20th century. 5. National security—United States—History—20th century. I. Title. II. Series.
JZ1480.L38 2006
327.73009'045—dc22 2005032191

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Cloth printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Gabriela
—whose love fills my life with joy and makes all things possible

Contents

been willing to accept—as it did in Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia in 1946–1947—a "Finlandized" Eastern Europe.

Could Germany have been reunified in the first decade following World War II? Certainly between 1946 and 1949 there were opportunities had the United States been willing to explore them.[137] Again, in 1952 and 1953 the Soviet Union made diplomatic overtures on the subject. There is an ongoing debate about whether the 1952 and 1953 proposals represented a real chance to achieve Germany reunification.[138] There is too much we still do not know to reach a definitive conclusion about the sincerity of Moscow's overtures. But we know this: the United States was not in the least bit interested in probing the Kremlin's position and testing "the relative strength of the Soviets' preference for settlement versus socialism in negotiations" about Germany.[139] Washington categorically had decided that German reunification would not serve U.S. interests—unless, of course, the Kremlin capitulated and accepted reunification on the basis of Washington's maximalist conditions.[140] For the United States the Open Door in Western Europe was more important than rolling back Soviet power in Eastern Europe.[141] U.S. policy provides one answer to the question of whether 1952 and 1953 were "lost opportunities" to achieve German reunification. They were neither lost nor opportunities, because the United States was not interested in German reunification.

* * *

Extraregional hegemony theory is a useful tool with which to reexamine the cold war's origins. Seen through its lens, it is apparent that America's hegemonic ambitions contributed hugely to the fact that U.S.-Soviet frictions escalated into the cold war. The hegemonic ambitions driving America's postwar grand strategy were evidenced in the U.S. attempt to force Moscow to accept an "open sphere" of influence in Eastern Europe, in NSC 20/4 and NSC 68, and in America's German policy. Washington's German policy is important in another respect, too, because it underscores that America's Open Door aims in Western Europe were more important than reaching an agreement with the Soviet Union on German reunification, which might have precluded the Continent's division.

This brings us to perhaps the most important truth about America's postwar European grand strategy: fundamentally, it was driven by the Open Door, not by cold war concerns. Although U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union was affected by Washington's Open Door policy, the Soviet Union was only a secondary—not the primary—factor in America's postwar European grand strategy. Thus, even if the Soviet Union had not existed, after World War II, America's Open Door aims on the Continent would have led to the establishment of U.S. hegemony in Western Europe.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Open Door and American Hegemony in Western Europe

In this chapter I explain why, in the late 1940s, the United States established its hegemony over Western Europe. I begin by focusing on the Open Door—economic and ideological—dimensions of America's postwar Western European grand strategy. Then I discuss the military and security aspects of America's postwar European grand strategy. Boiled down to basics, mine is a two-pronged argument. First, as I have already made clear, America's post–World War II Western European strategy was driven primarily by Open Door imperatives and not by cold war exigencies. Second, it was the Open Door's *logic* that required the United States to exercise hegemony over postwar Western Europe, because the United States could attain its Open Door objectives in Europe only by acting as a stabilizing hegemon on the Continent.

My argument is, in a sense, "counterfactual," because I contend that even if there had been no Soviet threat to Western Europe—actual or perceived—the broad outlines of Washington's grand strategy on the Continent would have pretty much resembled the strategy that it followed from the end of World War II until 1990, and which it has continued to pursue since the Soviet Union's collapse. It is important, however, that my argument not be misconstrued. I am not arguing that America's Open Door economic aims in Western Europe did not affect the cold war (or vice versa). Obviously, they did. The Marshall Plan and the American decision to divide Germany were big steps toward Europe's final division into rival Soviet and U.S. spheres and the downward spiral in U.S.-Soviet relations.[1] My argument is simply that the Open Door economic objectives underlying America's European grand strategy existed prior to and independently of cold war considerations, a point nicely made by Carolyn Woods Eisenberg: "In reality, the Truman administration's concern about European recovery predated the Soviet-communist threat, and would have existed anyway. Even during wartime, the State Department planning committees had emphasized reconstruction and the establishment of a multilateral trading order on the Continent."[2]

The Grand Strategic Logic of the Open Door

To grasp the complexity of America's post–World War II continental grand strategy, it is necessary to unpack the Open Door's logic. U.S. strategy rested on a fundamental premise: that America's postwar prosperity was linked to Western Europe's economic revival. Moreover, for economic—and political—reasons U.S. policymakers wanted to supplant Western Europe's prewar division into national markets with a single, integrated market. There also was an important ideological dimension to America's Open Door strategy in Europe. After World War II, Washington fostered Western Europe's economic recovery to ensure its political and social stability, specifically by preventing Communist parties from coming to power, because it feared such regimes would sabotage America's Open Door strategy by adopting autarkic (or nationalist) economic policies. If the forces of closure triumphed, the United States would be isolated in an ideologically hostile world, with possibly portentous implications for America's own core values. To ensure that domestic political conditions in Western Europe were conducive to its Open Door interests, the United States, as Alan Milward notes, used the economic leverage it wielded through the Marshall Plan to forge a Western European political consensus in favor of liberal political values.[3]

Before Western Europe could integrate economically, the predicate security conditions had to be created. Specifically, the United States needed to prevent postwar Europe from becoming "re-nationalized"—from backsliding into its traditional pattern of great power politics—lest the resultant instability prevent the United States from realizing its Open Door economic objectives. The Open Door thus was the motor for America's postwar continental commitment: to realize its Open Door goals, the United States needed to keep the peace in Western Europe by acting as that region's hegemonic stabilizer. At the same time, U.S. policymakers invested the economic Open Door with a key security dimension, because they believed that economic integration and interdependence would contribute to peace and stability in Europe. Economic nationalism, or autarky, was believed to fuel great power competition and cause war.[4] Here, the security and economic aspects of America's Open Door strategy in Europe led back to the Open Door's ideological component.

U.S. ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN POSTWAR WESTERN EUROPE

After World War II the United States set out to reconstruct Western Europe. Even though U.S. economic well-being did not objectively depend on trade with Western Europe, policymakers in Washington *believed* that America's prosperity was tied to its access to export markets abroad—especially in Western Europe, which accounted for nearly a third of U.S. exports (but only for

1.3% of its GDP).[5] As Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs Will Clayton said, "We need markets—big markets—in which to buy and sell."[6] U.S. officials were haunted by the specter of the Great Depression, and it was an article of faith that exports and an open international economy would be vital to America's postwar economic health and political stability. Postwar Western Europe's ability to serve as a vital export market was in doubt, however, because the Western European countries were suffering from a "dollar gap." Simply put, they lacked enough dollars to buy American products.[7]

The optimal solution would have been for the Western Europeans to increase their exports to the United States. However, they were in no position to do so, because the Continent's export capacity had been crippled by wartime economic dislocations. Much of Western Europe's industrial plant and infrastructure (especially transportation networks) had been heavily damaged. Economic recovery also was constricted by the disruption of the complex pattern of prewar intra-European trade, which exacerbated the dollar gap.[8] Moreover, to jump-start their economic recoveries, the Western European states were forced to deplete their scarce dollar reserves purchasing products and raw materials from the United States that, under normal economic conditions, they would have purchased from one another. Finally, Western Europe's economic recovery—and its ability to earn dollars by exporting—was hamstrung by low productivity (stemming in part from obsolete plants), bottlenecks caused by raw material scarcities, and malaise in the labor force caused by inflation and food shortages.[9] The apparent gravity of Western Europe's economic condition was underscored by the famously harsh winter of 1946–47, which appeared to have stopped Western Europe's 1946 economic recovery dead in its tracks. Doubtless, the bad weather exacerbated the economic crisis, but it did not cause it. The causes were the dollar gap and the very structure of Western Europe's political economy, which was still organized along national lines.

Western Europe's dollar shortage had implications both for America's economic prosperity and for Washington's Open Door grand strategy. U.S. policymakers worried about the economic consequences of (in Paul Nitze's words) a "bankrupt world"—that is, a world lacking dollars to buy American products.[10] U.S. officials *believed* the United States would suffer economically unless the dollar gap was solved and Western Europe was revived. As an April 21, 1947 report of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) pointed out, "A substantial decline in the United States export surplus would have a depressing effect on business activity and employment in the United States."[11] Moreover, the report observed, should a drop in U.S. exports coincide with a U.S. recession—which the Council of Economic Advisers expected within the coming year—"the effect on production, prices, and unemployment might be most serious."[12]

Fears that Western Europe's dollar gap would adversely impact America's own economic health reinforced Washington's concern that the Continent's foreign exchange shortage could undermine the broader postwar U.S. Open Door objective of constructing an open, multilateral international economic system. As the SWNCC report observed, "The great weight of evidence indicates that even the current volume of United States foreign financing, and particularly its distribution between countries, is not adequate to the accomplishment of either world economic stability and the type of world trading system which is the object of our trade policy, or of our political objectives in several critical countries."[13] To ensure its own economic well-being and create an open international economic system, the SWNCC report concluded, the United States would have to increase its foreign economic assistance substantially. However, for that assistance to be efficacious economically while simultaneously advancing broader U.S. objectives, it would have to be tied to Western Europe's economic and political integration.[14]

The Marshall Plan—formally known as the European Recovery Program (ERP)—was Washington's dramatic response to Western Europe's economic crisis. Although the Marshall Plan came to be invested with cold war implications, its underlying impetus was to promote U.S. Open Door interests in Europe.[15] U.S. officials perceived that America's own economic well-being—and broader Open Door ambitions—were threatened by Europe's crisis.

In the initial study prepared in May 1947 by the newly formed State Department Policy Planning Staff, its director, George F. Kennan, argued that Communist subversion was not the cause of Western Europe's economic travails. Those, he said, resulted "in large part from the disruptive effect of the war on the economic, political, and social structure of Europe, and from a profound exhaustion of physical plant and of spiritual vigor."[16] Although Kennan recognized that U.S. security could be threatened if Western European Communist parties successfully exploited the Continent's economic malaise, he argued that the main thrust of U.S. assistance to Europe "should be directed not to the combating of communism as such but to the restoration of the economic health and vigor of European society."[17] Washington should correct the misimpression engendered by the Truman Doctrine that "the United States approach to world problems is a defensive reaction to communist pressure and that the effort to restore sound economic conditions in other countries is only a by-product of this reaction and not something we would be interested in doing if there were no communist menace."[18]

Two months later, in July 1947, Kennan reiterated that Washington's interest in aiding Western Europe's economic recovery transcended the Communist threat and was independent of it: "The United States people have a very real economic interest in Europe. This stems from Europe's role in the past as a market and as a major source of supply for a variety of products and services."[19] Although certain costs would be imposed on the United States if it helped Western Europe to recover economically, these would, he observed, be outweighed by the economic benefits.[20] By the same token, if Western Europe remained mired in recession, the risk to America's economic well-being

would be considerable, because "past experience has taught us that the U.S. cannot achieve full prosperity in a world of depression."[21] These concerns were echoed by Undersecretary of State Will Clayton, who, after acknowledging the "awful implications" of Western Europe's political, economic, and social disintegration for the "peace and security of the world," cut to the economic bottom line, stating that "the immediate effects on our domestic economy would be disastrous: markets for our surplus production gone, unemployment, depression, a heavily unbalanced budget on the background of a mountainous war debt."[22]

America's postwar international economic policies—the Marshall Plan, building an open international economic system—required the United States to do what it had not done during the 1930s: assume the mantle of hegemonic leadership of the international economic system by acting as the world's lender, and buyer, of last resort.[23] U.S. officials understood that the Marshall Plan was only a stopgap, because the United States could not indefinitely pump dollars into Western Europe.[24] When Marshall Plan assistance ran out, there was a risk that trade between the United States and Western Europe would slump, with baleful consequences:

> Domestic and foreign production would be reduced; American exports and foreign imports would fall and become subject to increasing restrictions designed to safeguard foreign monetary reserves; sources and markets would be governed less and less by competition; standards of living would drop; and employment abroad and at home, especially in export industries, would suffer.[25]

To prevent these outcomes, over the longer term the United States would have to meet Western Europe's need for dollars by buying more of its products, which required "a change in our traditional attitude toward imports, and a willingness to place the economic interests of the nation as a whole . . . above the special interests of political groups which may have to face increased competition from abroad."[26]

THE OPEN DOOR AND WESTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Beyond solving the dollar gap, America's Open Door economic interests also were deemed to require Western Europe's economic integration. The United States wanted to promote "unification"—which for U.S. officials meant creation of a "large single economic unit in Europe"—and to establish supranational institutions to superintend Western Europe's economic integration.[27] Specifically, U.S. policymakers believed a large, single market would be more efficient than a Europe divided into national markets and would permit the Western Europeans to increase productivity—and attain a higher rate of economic growth—by reaping the advantages of specialization, achieving a more optimal allocation of resources and taking advantage of economies of scale.[28] Paul Hoffman, director of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA)—the U.S. government agency charged with administering the Marshall Plan—spelled out the link between a large, integrated, competitive market and U.S. economic objectives in Europe: "Europe could not be self-supporting until it had made great progress towards unity and until there was a wide, free, competitive market to lower costs, increase efficiency, and raise the standard of living."[29]

Conversely, Washington held that a Western Europe organized on narrow, national economic lines would be inefficient, because Western Europe's "existing trade barriers (a) clog the flow of Europe's trade and (b) will set an uneconomic pattern for any reconstruction efforts."[30] As the British Foreign Office observed, Washington attached "importance to avoiding the perpetuation of uneconomic rivalries between the countries of Europe."[31] By promoting Western Europe's economic unity, integration would eliminate "the small watertight compartment into which Europe's pre-war and present economy is divided."[32]

American officials also feared that the persistence of national economies in Western Europe could cause the Continent to revert to 1930s-style economic nationalism and autarky. This could fuel political rivalry and geopolitical instability on the Continent, and threaten America's interlinked strategic, and Open Door, interests.[33] By surmounting what Washington regarded as Western Europe's archaic division into multiple sovereign states through integration and supranationality the United States aimed to banish the specter of nationalism that had made the Continent, in the minds of U.S. policymakers, the "cockpit" of "power clashes" and the "breeder of wars."[34] U.S. policymakers, as Michael Hogan observes, held a "world view rooted in political conviction as well as in economic interests," which explains why they regarded economic integration as a policy that would cause the giving way of "national rivalry to rapprochement, economic autarky to economic regionalism and, then, to a multilateral system of world trade."[35] For economic and strategic reasons, therefore, the United States supported Western Europe's step-by-step process of economic integration beginning with the European Payments Union, then the European Coal and Steel Community, and ultimately the creation of the European Common Market by the 1957 Treaty of Rome.

The Interplay of Economics, Ideology, and Security

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, U.S. policymakers worried that Communist governments could come to power in Western Europe—especially in France or Italy. Washington had three concerns. First, American officials feared the economic consequences if such regimes addressed the dollar gap by adopting nationalist economic policies, including state-directed economic planning, import limits, foreign exchange controls, and preferential bilateral trade agreements.[36] Second, Washington feared the geopolitical consequences of a return to prewar economic nationalism, which might presage a reprise of 1930s-style power politics that, in the minds of U.S. officials, had been the prime cause of World War II.[37] Washington's concerns were expressed by ambassador to France David Bruce, who worried about "a return to the worst continental type of autarchy, with each nation retiring behind its national boundaries, as they have so frequently and tragically in the past."[38]

Finally, although these concerns would have shaped U.S. policy even if there had been no cold war, rising tensions with Moscow heightened them. Communist governments in Western Europe might enter into bilateral trade arrangements with the Soviet Union and drift into Moscow's orbit. If this happened, the result could be a Soviet-directed "continental system" that would exclude the United States economically from Western Europe.[39] The United States would then be compelled to respond to Western Europe's closure by adopting its own state-directed economic policy. As Will Clayton put it, "We would have to reorder and readjust our whole economy in this country if we lost the European market."[40]

Importantly, Washington's apprehensions about an autarkic Western Europe tied to Moscow were not primarily military in nature. That is, Washington did not fear that a continental hegemon would be able to threaten the United States by mobilizing the resources of the European continent. Rather, just as had been the case in 1939–40 (and, arguably, in 1917–18), U.S. policymakers were concerned that America's core values at home—the American way of life—would be imperiled if an *ideologically* hostile great power dominated the Continent and closed it to the United States. Not only would the United States be forced to regiment its own economy to cope with an autarkic Europe but it would also be forced—or so it was believed—to maintain a vastly increased military establishment during peacetime. As a State Department memo said, "The change in the power relationships involved would force us to adopt drastic domestic measures and would inevitably require great and burdensome sacrifices on the part of our citizens."[41] The United States would have to become a "garrison state" to defend its core values.[42] The change in the configuration of power in Europe would jeopardize American democracy and its free market economic system. "Geopolitical considerations provided the *connecting tissue* between foreign economic distress and the prospective decay of liberal capitalism at home."[43] The defense of America's core values required that Europe be kept open, both economically and ideologically.

U.S. policy toward France illustrates the interaction between Open Door economic interests and U.S. security concerns. Because France was seen as the linchpin of America's European grand strategy, the United States determined that it would have to support France economically in order to forestall the French Communist Party (PCF)—which was banking on its ability to exploit the political discontent engendered by economic hardship—from coming to power.[44] Well before the Marshall Plan, in May 1946, the United States extended France a package that included a $650 million loan from the Export-Import Bank, cancellation of France's $2.8 billion Lend-Lease debt, and other economic help.[45] The aid package was finalized on the eve of France's national elections; Washington wanted to influence the outcome by bolstering the non-Communist Center and Center-Left parties.[46]

After World War II, the United States used diplomatic and military sticks, as well as economic carrots, to make sure that the Communists did not come to power in France or in other important Western European countries. It did not hesitate to intervene in French domestic politics. As Marshall said, "It is of prime importance that the French people be made to realize the essential necessity for France's own good of developing a strong, unified and cooperative non-Communist government."[47] The United States made clear to the French and Italian governments that Marshall Plan aid would be withheld if the Communists were allowed to join the ruling coalitions.[48] As Melvyn Leffler observes, "Once having encouraged the expulsion of the Communists from the governing coalitions of France and Italy, American officials were determined to keep them out lest they hamstring the initiatives desired by the United States."[49] Finally, if necessary, the U.S. was prepared to use raw military power—either directly or indirectly by threatening to intervene militarily—to keep the Communists out of power in France and Italy.[50]

DOMESTIC POLITICAL STABILITY IN POSTWAR WESTERN EUROPE

The U.S. goal of keeping the Communists out of power in postwar Western Europe illustrates how intertwined the political and economic Open Doors were and how both fused with American strategic concerns. Keeping Western Europe open economically led the United States to pursue political stability by helping Western Europe get back on its feet economically. The Marshall Plan was designed specifically to act as a political balm and to prevent the Communists from making political gains.[51] By promoting increased productivity and economic growth—creating "stable abundance" (in Hogan's phrase)—the United States aimed to alleviate the divisive politics of redistribution that had bitterly split Western European politics along social and class lines before and after World War II. As Michael Hogan and Alan Milward each have pointed out, through the Marshall Plan the United States ambitiously sought not only to reconstruct Western Europe's economies but to reorder their domestic politics. The United States used the Marshall Plan to forge a political consensus in Western Europe in support of liberal values.[52]

U.S. policymakers believed that sustained economic growth would lead to pluralist democracy.[53] "At a certain level of *per capita* national income," Milward observes, "a set of political and social values would emerge akin to those in the United States and, in a world made safe for democracy, communism would appear as a political and economic anachronism."[54]

Beyond the worries about economic closure was a deeper, more pervasive ideological anxiety. The Open Door always has required—as it still does—*openness* not only to American trade and investment but equally to American political ideals, values, and culture. America's security, prosperity, and domestic stability have required an Open Door *world.* Following World War II, the darkest fear of U.S. policymakers was—as it arguably had been in 1917 and 1941—that if the forces of closure triumphed on the Continent, the United States would be left alone in an ideologically hostile world.

To head off possible ideological isolation, the United States—in today's inside-the-Beltway jargon—sought to "shape the international environment" by planting America's liberal political ideology in the Old World's political soil. This objective transcended the cold war. As the U.S. diplomat Charles Bohlen put it in July 1948, "The present world situation is not viewed primarily as a struggle between the United States and Russia. The United States is interested not only in the military revival of Europe but also in its cultural, spiritual, and economic restoration, so that, in general there can be created the kind of world in which the people of the United States would like to live."[55] Even the archrealist Kennan dreaded the possibility that the United Sates could be left isolated ideologically. If the United States lost Western Europe, he said, "We would be placing ourselves in the position of a lonely country, culturally and politically. To maintain confidence in our own traditions and institutions we would henceforth have to whistle loudly in the dark. I am not sure that whistling could be loud enough to do the trick."[56]

The Marshall Plan aimed to keep Western Europe open politically as well as economically, to keep the United States from becoming a "lonely country" ideologically. The Marshall Plan reflected U.S. policymakers' belief that "values would follow aid, rather as in previous centuries trade had been thought to follow that flag, and that these values would deeply influence the political development of the European countries in a favorable direction."[57] It aimed to create a political grouping—a "stable, loyal political bloc"—of Western European states that would share America's political, economic, social, and cultural values.[58]

THE PRIMACY OF THE OPEN DOOR

Although U.S. Open Door ambitions existed independently of the cold war, it is an open question whether policymakers could have rallied congressional and public support for their policies absent the Soviet, and Communist, "threats." When Truman administration officials tried to sell Congress on the

Marshall Plan by pointing to the economic benefits the United States would reap from creation of a single large, integrated Western European market, its sales pitch tended to fall flat. On the other hand, "the words that were really electrifying up on the Hill were 'Communist threat,' and that was theme that the salesmen [Truman administration officials lobbying for the Economic Cooperation Act, the Marshall Plan bill] tended to return to again and again as they worked the halls of Congress."[59] However, as Michael Hogan observes, in truth "American leaders had goals besides Communist containment, goals that would have shaped their diplomacy regardless of the perceived Communist menace."[60] Cold war considerations were superimposed on the already extant Open Door foundations of American strategy. When U.S. officials defined American interests, Open Door concerns were never far from the surface. One can point to innumerable statements like those of George C. Marshall and Will Clayton that stressed that, although Western Europe's economic collapse could have adverse effects geopolitically, it would also be very harmful to American prosperity.[61] Or, as a 1950 State Department report stated, even if the "strengthening of the non-Soviet world" was a "more important" reason for the United States to revive Western Europe economically and embed it in an open international economic system, the United States nevertheless had "a large measure of economic self-interest in such a development."[62] What these statements demonstrate is this: If the cold war concerns had been removed from the equation, U.S. Open Door economic interests would have remained, and these would have shaped America's European strategy.

Economic interests—and the concomitant geopolitical need for stability and the ideological need for an "open" international system in which U.S. core values would be secure—impelled the United States to revive Western Europe and to incorporate it into the postwar international economic order.[63] The cold war heightened the importance of these interests, but it did not cause them.[64] Here it is important to remember that all of the Open Door's components *predated* the cold war: the perceived link between American prosperity and overseas economic expansion; the need for stable governments abroad that would favor openness rather than closure; the fear that autarky abroad would have inimical economic and strategic consequences for the United States; the belief that geopolitical stability was a prerequisite for an open international economy; and the conviction that the United States could be prosperous and free only in a world molded by America's political, economic, and cultural values. Moreover, America's Open Door objectives in Western Europe were the same in 1945 as they had been after 1918, when it had sought to "integrate markets, expand trade, and stimulate growth" in Western Europe to ensure American prosperity and stabilize the Continent.[65] Given the "lines of continuity" linking Washington's Open Door goals in Europe after the two world wars, there is every reason to believe—or, more correctly, no reason not to believe—that the United States would have

pursued those objectives even in the absence of a clash with the Soviet Union.[66]

America's Role as Regional Stabilizer

Following World War II, U.S. policymakers viewed Western Europe's traditional balance of power security architecture as a "firetrap" that had involved the United States in two world wars, and as Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett said, Washington was going to make certain that this firetrap was not rebuilt.[67] Just as postwar U.S. officials regarded as unhealthy a Western Europe fragmented economically along national lines, during both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations Washington viewed Western Europe's division into sovereign nation-states as the primary source of the instability that had caused two world wars. Warning of the risks if Western Europe returned to its traditional geopolitical patterns of behavior, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles stated in 1953, "Surely there is an urgent, positive duty on all of us to seek to end that danger which comes from within. It has been the cause of two world wars and it will be disastrous if it persists."[68] Thus, U.S. policymakers were determined that "European security must be built on a much sounder basis than in the past."[69] The kind of Western Europe central to postwar U.S. grand strategic objectives was one in which the freedom of the Western European states to act as sovereign national entities would be severely constrained. In the realm of security, as well as that of economics, the U.S. sought to curb the power of Western Europe's states by fostering integration.

AMERICA'S GERMAN DILEMMA AND THE IMPERATIVES OF "SINGLE CONTAINMENT"

The biggest challenge facing Washington was what to do about Germany. The conventional wisdom is that America's post–World War II Western European grand strategy was—as Wolfram Hanreider famously described it—one of *double* containment; that is, containment of both the Soviet Union and Germany.[70] With the cold war's onset, Washington wanted to add the economic and, eventually, military resources of a revived Western Europe—especially of West Germany—to the anti-Soviet coalition. However, because the prospect of a revived Germany aroused obvious fears in Western Europe, U.S. policymakers needed to figure out how "to reconcile the economic and security imperatives underlying American policy: Germany's revitalization had to be harnessed to the causes of European recovery and Soviet containment without restoring its prewar hegemony or reinvigorating the economic autarky that had twice led to world war."[71] Hence, the description of American strategy as "double" containment. Yet we should not be blinkered by the cold war: the United States would have had to contain Germany even if there had been no Soviet threat, and no cold war.[72] Put another way, had the United States not needed to pursue a European grand strategy based on double containment, the Open Door's logic would have impelled Washington to adopt a strategy of *single* containment directed at Germany.[73]

The German Problem and West European Economic Revival Germany and its long-standing rivalry with France was the most specific manifestation of the West European "firetrap." France and Germany were the two most important states in postwar Western Europe, but they had been at each other's throats three times in seventy years. When World War II ended, the last thing France—and the other Western European states that had been victims of German aggression—wanted was to see Germany back on its feet either economically or geopolitically. U.S. policymakers, too, were also concerned, and they were no less resolved than their French counterparts to keep Germany in check.[74] A State Department paper nicely summarized Washington's thinking about Germany: "the right kind of Germany" would be an important "economic and political asset to the West," but the "wrong kind of Germany"—a Germany in which nationalist forces were ascendant—would be an "imminent danger" to American interests in Europe.[75] Consequently, Washington was "fully determined to end the German menace once and for all."[76]

Yet, as U.S. policymakers recognized, Western Europe's postwar economic recovery was linked to a rejuvenated German economy.[77] Germany still "was the pivot of the continent's international trade and payments and the driving force in its technological advance."[78] If Germany remained down and out economically, Western Europe would be unable to regain its economic footing. Yet, given the worrisome geopolitical implications, for U.S. officials the fact that Germany was Western Europe's economic motor could not be viewed as anything other than a "bitter economic reality."[79]

Even while World War II was ongoing, U.S. policymakers realized that Western Europe's postwar economic fate was linked to Germany's. The decision to revive the German economy was made for Open Door reasons, and, as Carolyn Woods Eisenberg makes clear, it "predated the East-West rift."[80] Washington understood clearly that without a productive German economy, the Marshall Plan stood no chance of succeeding, and the United States would be unable to realize its Open Door goals. In 1947 Secretary Marshall, Navy Secretary Forrestal, and Secretary of War Robert Patterson concurred "that Germany must cooperate fully in any effective European plan, and that the economic revival of Europe depends in considerable part on recovery in German production—in coal, in food, steel, fertilizer, etc., and on efficient use of such European resources as the Rhine River."[81] Indeed, it has been argued, notably by John Gimbel, that, far from being a response to the Soviet Union or the cold war, the Marshall Plan's real purpose was to make Germany's economic reconstruction politically acceptable (in both the United States and in Western Europe) by presenting it as a *Western European* eco-

nomic recovery program.[82] For the Open Door policy to work in Western Europe, however, Washington had to reassure France—which U.S. policymakers considered "the keystone of continental Europe"—that Germany's economic resurgence would not result in the restoration of German predominance in Europe.[83]

Resolving the Franco-German Rivalry At the end of World War II, the primary concern of French policymakers was to reduce Germany's relative power advantage over France, constrain German independence, and enhance French influence in Europe.[84] France's German policy during the early postwar years conflicted with Washington's.[85] Whereas American aims in Europe required Germany's economic rehabilitation, France's security required that Germany be kept down.[86] Indeed, Germany's defeat seemingly paved the way for France to reassert its own ambitions for continental preeminence and to defang permanently its rival across the Rhine by following policies similar to those it had pursued from 1919 to 1924, including territorial annexations in the Rhineland, the Ruhr, and the Saar.[87] In contrast to the post–World War I period, the outcome of World War II appeared to offer some prospect that the French could be successful the second time around. As Alan Milward observes, Germany's unconditional surrender in 1945 was viewed "as an opportunity not to be missed. Germany was to be permanently weakened by being turned once more into a weak confederation of states with no central institutions."[88]

The flip side of Paris's post-1945 strategy of weakening Germany was strengthening France economically. In 1945–46 France aimed to obtain German coal and iron ore by dismembering Germany, which would kill two birds with one stone.[89] If the Rhineland, Ruhr, and Saar could be detached from Germany, Paris would be able to gain control over the coal and iron ore it needed to build up its own industrial base while weakening permanently Germany's industrial and military potential. However, Paris's annexationist strategy ran directly counter to Washington's policy of reviving Germany's economy to kick-start trade within Western Europe, and the French were forced to abandon it.

Although compelled to give up on annexation, France sought to attain its security and economic objectives through other means. The postwar French economic plan—the Monnet Plan, named after its architect, Jean Monnet—was more than a roadmap for France's industrial modernization and revival. It also had important strategic implications and, as Hogan notes, was designed to make "France, rather than Germany, the economic and political hub of the European system."[90] In essence, the Monnet Plan aimed at France supplanting Germany as Western Europe's leading steel producer.[91] Paris sought to cripple German industry once and for all by using the postwar occupation to dismantle many German steel mills and impose stringent controls on the output of Germany's remaining steel industry. At the same time, the Monnet Plan called for expanding French steel production capacity so that French steel exports would displace Germany's, with France becoming the prime supplier to the rest of Western Europe.

To facilitate the vastly expanded steel output called for by the Monnet Plan, France sought privileged access to West German coal and coke.[92] "Far from being based on a liberal internationalism," Milward observes, "the Monnet Plan was based on the crudest possible expression of mercantilist principles. It was aimed at seizing German resources in order to capture German markets."[93] Simply put, the Monnet Plan's objective was to enable France to absorb Germany's economic base and thereby "shift political power from Germany to France permanently, and thereby guarantee French security after the occupation ended."[94] As with its annexationist strategy, France's Monnet Plan clashed with Washington's Open Door strategy. This became especially apparent when the United States launched its Marshall Plan initiative.

The Marshall Plan confirmed an important shift in Washington's German policy, which reflected interlocking Open Door concerns and cold war exigencies. Instead of working with the Soviets to administer Germany as a single entity, Washington decided that American interests would best be furthered by Germany's division and western Germany's economic integration with Western Europe.[95] U.S. officials believed that a revived *West* German economy was the indispensable engine of Western European economic recovery, a view summed up in a State Department policy paper: "There can be no satisfactory future for Europe unless . . . the productive forces of Germany can again play a constructive part in the European economy."[96] Because the "predominant desire" of U.S. policymakers was, Eisenberg observes, "to use the German economy to create a free trading system in Western Europe," Washington had no patience with those—notably France—who regarded German economic revival as a security threat.[97]

The Marshall Plan compelled France to adjust its German policy. Washington's linked decisions to divide Germany, resuscitate western Germany's economy, and create a West German state made the Monnet Plan's German policy no longer viable. Paris, therefore, had to come up with new approaches, because even as the cold war intensified France continued to regard Germany as the primary threat to its security.[98] France adopted a dual-track policy. First, to control Germany, William Hitchcock notes, France abandoned its heavy-handed policy of coercion in favor of more subtle strategies, such as economic integration, regional planning, and political cooperation.[99] Second, France demanded—and received—military guarantees from the United States that it would be protected against German aggression. These military commitments made possible the pursuit of a policy of institutionalized collaboration and economic integration with Germany.

By 1948, U.S. and French policies began to converge. Officials in Washington understood that the United States could not achieve the Marshall

Plan's Open Door objectives without alleviating French apprehensions about Germany.[100] The source of French fears was clear to the Americans: "The crux of the problem is French concern over Germany's rapidly reviving economic power and the high level, relative to France, which it must be allowed to reach if it is to become self-sustaining."[101] To implement its policies, therefore, the United States needed to "take all possible steps to allay French fears consistent with conditions which would give Germany a chance for economic recovery."[102] Washington realized that Franco-German cooperation was key to Western Europe's stability.[103] Although Western Europe's political, economic, and security integration was the preferred American strategy for resolving the German problem—and for stabilizing the Continent—before integration could proceed the United States had to address France's security concerns. As Lewis Douglas, the influential U.S. ambassador to Britain, argued, if "assured of long-term United States defensive cooperation against German aggression . . . the French would relax in their attitude regarding German industry and reconstruction."[104]

Because the cold war dominates accounts of America's postwar European grand strategy, it is easy to overlook that the U.S. security commitment on the Continent was driven as much—indeed, arguably, more—by the need to reassure France that it would not again fall victim to German aggression than it was by concern with the Soviet threat. The 1948 Brussels treaty (Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence)—to which Britain, France, and the Benelux countries were signatories—was directed against Germany, not the Soviet Union. The impetus for the Brussels pact was British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin's January 1948 call for a "Western European Union." U.S. officials welcomed Bevin's initiative, because, as George F. Kennan put it, it was the only "hope of restoring the balance of power in Europe without permitting Germany again to become the dominant power."[105] At the end of February 1948, Marshall indicated that Washington would guarantee French security against Germany. France would be secure, he said, as long as U.S. occupation forces remained in Germany, and, given the deterioration in relations with the Soviet Union, he predicted that U.S. troops would remain in Germany for an "unforeseeable and indefinite duration, thus offering protracted security guarantees and establishing a firm community of interests."[106]

In early 1948 the three Western Allies met in London to concert their plans to incorporate western Germany into the Marshall Plan. The London meeting resulted in the announcement of the intention to create a federal state in western Germany, establish international control over the Ruhr, and set up a military security board to ensure that West Germany remained demilitarized. To secure French assent to the London agreement, the United States told Paris that U.S. troops would remain in Germany "for a long time."[107] The 1949 North Atlantic Treaty was designed in large part to assure France that it would not be menaced by a revived Germany, a fear that deepened with the impending end of the Allied occupation and the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany. For Washington, a—arguably, *the*—key goal of the North Atlantic Treaty was to assure the French that they would not be left alone to face Germany.[108] Ambassador Bruce said the United States would need to give France "binding security commitments looking far into the future," and, as Acheson acknowledged, this is what the North Atlantic Treaty was intended to do.[109]

By the late 1940s, the cold war's shadow came to loom over America's Western European grand strategy. Hence, America's policy of "keeping the Russians out" became entangled with its goal of "keeping the Germans down." The cold war forced Washington to deal with the complex issue of German rearmament and caused U.S. officials to worry that a renascent Germany would either play off the United States against the Soviets or align with Moscow in the hope of attaining reunification.[110] These issues were what double containment was all about. Yet the contours of U.S. strategy were shaped before the Soviet-American confrontation heated-up. Fundamentally, U.S. strategy was driven by the logic of the Open Door, which would have required that the United States "keep the Germans down" with or without the cold war. It was the Open Door that dictated that the United States had to stabilize Western Europe in order to facilitate the Continent's economic recovery and integration. It was the Open Door, not the cold war, that dictated that the United States address French concerns about German power. For Washington, Franco-German reconciliation was, as Klaus Schwabe observes, "a value, independently of the Cold War."[111] To gain French acceptance of German recovery Washington was compelled to make a long-term military commitment to Western Europe.[112] As Kennan said, the United States had "no intention of permitting Germany to become again a threat" to Western European stability, and to this end it would maintain troops in Germany until such time as ironclad safeguards were in place to prevent a resurgence of German military power.[113] Washington was under no illusions about what its role as Western Europe's hegemonic stabilizer entailed. As a 1949 State Department paper put it, the United States was pledged "not to withdraw from Europe until the peace is secure. And we shall neither evade nor withdraw from whatever obligations must be undertaken in order to maintain that peace *in perpetuity*."[114]

IMPLEMENTING AMERICAN HEGEMONY IN EUROPE THROUGH SUBORDINATION

America's military presence in Western Europe was the necessary condition for achieving the U.S. goal of European integration.[115] For U.S. policymakers, European integration had a double meaning: economic integration was the key to the realization of America's Open Door policy in Europe, and European political integration was a mechanism for ensuring that postwar

Western Europe would remain geopolitically stable. The United States regarded integration as the antidote to the two main threats to postwar Western Europe's stability: the specific problem of Germany, and the larger fear that postwar Europe would revert to its traditional pattern of multipolar security competitions.[116]

For U.S. policymakers, the lesson of 1914 and 1939 was clear: unless reined in, Germany, because of its population and economic strength, would become the preponderant power again in Europe. In facilitating Germany's economic revival, U.S. policymakers had no intention of allowing Germany to become a geopolitical rogue elephant capable of disturbing Europe's geopolitical equilibrium.[117] The solution was to "de-nationalize" Germany by integrating it into a wider Western European framework. As Kennan wrote, "Germany became a problem child in Europe only since it has begun to think in national terms, that is, since it has become a Reich . . . it will continue to be a problem, and an insoluble one, as long as its affairs are approached on a nationalist basis. There is no solution of the German problem in terms of Germany; *there is only a solution in terms of Europe*."[118] Integrating Germany into Western European political, economic, and military institutions would smother its ability to adopt an independent security policy.[119]

U.S. policymakers promoted the creation of supranational economic institutions in postwar Europe as a means of solving the problem of German power. As Kennan and Murphy argued, if integration was the only feasible solution to the German problem, an integrated Western Europe into which Germany could be fitted had to be created.[120] The impetus for initiatives such as the 1950 "Schuman Plan"—named after French foreign minister Robert Schuman—to create a European Coal and Steel Community really came from Washington, not from Western Europe.[121] The United States championed economic integration as a means of diluting Germany's control over its own economy, which furthered two important goals. First, Germany's key industries and resources were made available to serve the broad economic interests of Western Europe. Second, economic integration prevented Germany from transforming its economic muscle into military power and making a new bid to dominate Europe. For the United States, integration was "designed to prevent the resurgence of former tensions and conflicts among the free nations of Europe and against any future revival of aggressive militarism."[122] Indeed, integration was so central to resolving the German problem that Kennan and his colleague Robert Murphy said, "If this closer association of the other European countries were not called for by other requirements, it would be called for by their *common interest in handling the German problem alone*."[123]

PREVENTING MULTIPOLAR INSTABILITY WITHIN EUROPE THROUGH INTEGRATION

For the United States, the biggest threat to peace and stability in Western Europe was the region's potential reversion to multipolarity, which would lead to renewed security competitions and, possibly, war and thereby undermine U.S. Open Door economic interests.[124] The kind of Western Europe central to postwar U.S. grand strategic objectives, therefore, was one in which the freedom of the Western European states to act as sovereign national entities was constrained tightly. The U.S. diplomat Charles Bohlen cut to the heart of the U.S. de-nationalization strategy when he said "our maximum objective should be the general one of making common European interests more important than individual national interests."[125] Indeed, as Geir Lundestad observes, integration's attractiveness was precisely that it "would do away with old-fashioned nationalism" in Western Europe.[126] Attaining integration and unity was an explicit goal of U.S. policy from the Marshall Plan onward.[127] However, when they spoke of integration leading to Western European unity, U.S. policymakers really meant they wanted to tie the hands of the Western European states—especially France and Germany—so tightly that they would be unable to pursue independent, national policies in economic or security affairs.[128]

The United States pushed for European integration to ensure that "divisive nationalist trends" did not reemerge.[129] When U.S. policymakers invoked—as they often did—the specter of European "disunity," the were using the term as a code word for the possibility that Europe would backslide into its traditional, multipolar pattern of security relations.[130] The United States, in Dulles's words, saw Western European integration as a means "to create a situation where the Western nations will cease this suicidal strife in which they have been engaged in recent centuries."[131] By persuading the Western Europeans to "pool" their military and economic sovereignty, Washington aimed to strip them of the capacity to take unilateral, national action.[132] As Kennan put it, the United States wanted Western Europe integrated on terms that "would automatically make it impossible or extremely difficult for *any member*, not only Germany, to embark upon a path of unilateral aggression."[133] For the United States, the utility of institutions like NATO, the European Defense Community (EDC), the European Coal and Steel Community, and the Common Market was that they could help to constrain the Western Europeans.[134] As the State Department said, the United States hoped that "cautious initial steps toward military, political, and economic cooperation will be followed by more radical departures from traditional concepts of sovereignty."[135] U.S. officials sought to use institutions to subordinate the individual interests of the Western European states to the overarching interests of the Atlantic community, because they believed that a

"partial surrender" of sovereignty in the realm of security would "become a driving force toward further unification in Western Europe."[136]

NATO—and the Atlantic Community concept to which it was central—became the linchpin of the U.S. strategy of preventing the reemergence of European multipolarity. Through NATO and the Atlantic Community, and its Military Assistance Program, Washington made certain that Western European integration was harnessed to U.S. interests. The integration of Western European defense under an American supreme commander was intended to ensure that the Europeans did not return to defense policies based on purely national armies.[137] Western European integration was a means to prevent any Western European state from acquiring the military capability to support autonomous national security policies, and, more specifically, it was the preferred instrument to control the military power of a renascent Germany.[138]

The question of constraining Germany militarily became acute as the cold war intensified, especially after the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. Yet, even as U.S. grand strategy came to be increasingly dominated by cold war concerns, U.S. officials never lost sight of the purely Western European dimension of the German problem and its relation to the Open Door. Once the decision to revive Germany economically was implemented, Washington was keenly aware that German power was growing rapidly and that it threatened to upset the precarious Franco-German balance on which the realization of America's Western European objectives seemed to hinge.[139] The Franco-German relation was at the forefront of American concerns. According to McBride, who transcribed the minutes of a foreign ministers meeting, Dulles believed that "the history of the past two hundred years in Europe showed that *Western Europe would tear itself to pieces unless the Franco-German problem were resolved.* He said the results of the European wars had been a decline in the power and influence of Western civilization."[140] Thus, he said six months later, "As we see it, the post-war planning of Western Europe is designed to correct some of these serious mistakes of the past and to *create a situation where the Western nations will cease this suicidal strife* in which they have been engaged in recent centuries."[141] Because of its Open Door aims, the United States had foremost to solve the Franco-German problem and keep peace in Europe—a point underscored by Dulles himself.[142] To accomplish these tasks, the State Department Planning Staff observed, the United States needed to foster the emergence of "an integrated Europe in which German participation is so hedged by safeguards that it cannot develop into hegemony."[143] NATO and the abortive EDC were the instruments through which Washington sought to accomplish this goal.

From the outset, the North Atlantic Treaty—which morphed into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1950—was conceived of as more than a bulwark against the Soviet Union. It was intended to be a defensive alliance to "resist aggression, whatever its source," and specifically as a safeguard that would ensure that Germany could not "again plunge Europe into war."[144] German rearmament would frighten France (and the other Western European states) and imperil America's own strategic objectives in Western Europe.[145] So the trick, Acheson observed, was to incorporate German military power into Western Europe's defense "without disrupting anything else we were doing and without putting Germany into a position to act as the balance of power in Europe."[146] The answer was to absorb German military power into a broader Western European framework, by embedding its forces in supranational structures. In Acheson's words, Washington realized "only too well that we must not recreate a German national army which would be independent and a powerful separate force," and, therefore, German forces were to be organized "so that they could not function alone and separately."[147] At a minimum, the West Germany military would not be allowed to have an independent general staff, and "the dependent nature of German forces" would be maintained by preventing West Germany from building up an arms industry under its national control.[148] At a maximum, West Germany's contribution to NATO was to be incorporated into the proposed European Defense Community.

The EDC was conceived of as the security counterpart to the ECSC. The idea was to permit NATO to draw on West German troops for Western Europe's defense without fueling the rise of a German military phoenix that could threaten America's Open Door interests in Western Europe or imperil French–Western European security. As Dulles put it, Western Europe's security required a German contribution, and the EDC was an "orderly way to bring it about so Germany can be tied solidly to the West and at the same time not be a potential danger."[149] The EDC reflected the U.S. preference for a federal approach to European integration and security.[150] The United States, Kevin Ruane observes, was the strongest supporter of the EDC, because it was "seen in Washington as a vehicle for realizing the wider American goal of a United Europe."[151] The idea behind the EDC was simple: the West European states composing the EDC would appoint a common defense minister and raise a multinational Western European army, which would be placed under NATO command. Germany's military power would be controlled by limiting German units to regimental size and embedding them in larger divisional-level formations with other Western European troops. The EDC, the State Department Policy Planning Staff noted, went hand in hand with economic integration in addressing the German question: "The new German armed forces, whether in a realized EDC or otherwise, must be subject to supra-national organs of control and not be permitted to develop as a national army under national control."[152] Although the EDC foundered in 1954 on the shoals of French domestic politics, its larger purposes were realized when the London so-called Nine-Power Conference (September–October 1954) approved the proposals put forward by British foreign secretary Anthony Eden as an alternative to the EDC approach to West German re-

armament.[153] Although the Eden plan eschewed the EDC's federal approach to integrating a rearmed West Germany, it nonetheless achieved the same desired result of constraining Bonn's ability to take unilateral national actions in the realm of security.

Although the EDC was designed—against a cold war backdrop—to solve the issue of German rearmament through integration, it also was intended to serve the broader purpose of America's postwar European strategy: preventing Western Europe's reversion to multipolarity by diluting the sovereignty—in today's terminology, de-nationalizing—of all Western European states in defense and economic policy. Washington favored measures "which would tend to increase intradependence within the European community and its close association with and *dependence upon the broader Atlantic community*."[154] U.S. policymakers promoted the EDC because it was based on the voluntary surrender of sovereignty by the Western European states and because they believed it would thus be a spur to further integration.[155] Washington similarly used NATO—and especially the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)—to foreclose the possibility that the West European states would re-nationalize their security policies.[156] The last thing Washington wanted was a Western Europe—or a West Germany—organized militarily on the basis of separate national armies under the control of the individual nations.[157]

In his famous December 1953 threat to undertake an "agonizing reappraisal" of U.S. policy toward Europe if France did not ratify the EDC, Dulles gave voice to U.S. concerns about Western Europe reverting to its bad old habit of multipolar power politics, and about the relationship between West European integration and U.S. interests in Europe:

> Much has been done to make Western Europe a healthy and co-operating area but decisive steps remain to be taken. These steps must involve something more than treaties between sovereign states. Mere promises for the future are not enough to bury a past so replete with bitter memories. The need is for Europe to move onward to more complete and organic forms of union. . . . If, however, the European Defense Community should not become effective, if France and Germany remain apart so that they will again be potential enemies, then there would indeed be grave doubt as to whether Continental Europe could be made a place of safety. That would compel an agonizing reappraisal of basic United States policy.[158]

Dulles's threat to reconsider America's European strategy was a bluff. Although some U.S. policymakers—notably Dwight Eisenhower—hoped that some U.S. forces eventually could be brought home, during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations complete U.S. military disengagement from Europe never was seriously considered.[159] Withdrawal was not a realistic option precisely because it was America's role as Western Europe's hegemonic pacifier—and the concomitant presence of U.S. troops—that kept the Western Europeans from returning to the kind of multipolar, nationalist security rivalries that would have been fatal to America's Open Door interests.[160] In particular, the structures the United States promoted aimed at the "single containment" of Germany.[161]

NATO was central to America's postwar European grand strategy, because quite apart from containing the Soviet Union, it was the means by which the United States ensured that Western Europe would remain stable geopolitically. Consequently, U.S. policymakers knew that there was a big risk in justifying NATO primarily in cold war terms. As Acheson noted, NATO was much more than a "medium term mil[itary] coalition to cope with the present Sov. threat."[162] If NATO was perceived as being essentially an anti-Soviet alliance, the Soviets could, by following a detente policy, undercut the ostensible rationale for NATO and for the U.S. military commitment to Europe.[163] Some four decades before the cold war's end, U.S. policymakers recognized the dilemma the United States would face if the superpower confrontation in Europe cooled. John C. Hughes, the U.S. permanent representative to the North Atlantic Council, observed that "NATO must be more than a mere military alliance to survive beyond the immediate threat of military aggression. . . . NATO must be more than a military coalition, otherwise it would be at the mercy of any plausible Soviet peace offensive."[164] To make certain that NATO could outlive the waning of the Soviet threat, Hughes argued that Washington would have to take "imaginative steps designed to develop North Atlantic Community which holds out to the peoples composing it hope for objectives broader and more lasting than deterring or repelling military aggression."[165] U.S. policymakers never intended that NATO should go out of business if the cold war ended. Given NATO's centrality to America's hegemonic strategy in Europe, Washington could not afford to have NATO go away just because the Soviet threat did. In the early 1950s, the United States intended to remain in Europe permanently, even if the threat of Soviet aggression disappeared, and this tells us an awful lot about the actual nature of America's grand strategic ambitions on the Continent. It tells us that the United States never contemplated following the offshore balancing strategy of coming home from Europe after the Soviet challenge had been disposed of.

* * *

Following World War II, America's European grand strategy was driven by its Open Door ambitions, and it would have been even if there had been no rivalry with the Soviet Union. U.S. policymakers believed that America's prosperity was linked to its access to Western European markets. There was more to the Open Door than economic interests, however: the Open Door strategy in Europe had crucial ideological and security dimensions as well. As a consequence, Washington promoted Western European political and economic stability to thwart the forces of closure and autarky from coming to power.

Officials were convinced that the safety of America's core values required that Western Europe be open to U.S. economic and ideological penetration.

The Open Door's logic also compelled the United States to take on the responsibility of acting as Western Europe's hegemonic stabilizer. Germany was at the root of U.S. strategy, because to make its economic rehabilitation palatable to the Western Europeans the United States needed to reassure them that they would not again fall victim to German aggression. To facilitate its role as Western Europe's stabilizer, the United States promoted Western European integration for security, as well as economic, reasons. Through integration, Washington also sought to prevent a reversion to destabilizing multipolarity by "de-nationalizing" Western Europe, and thereby making war impossible among the Western European states. Moreover, by using integration to subordinate the Western European states to an "Atlantic Community" dominated by the United States, Washington consolidated its hegemonic role on the Continent. There also was another aspect to America's hegemonic strategy in Europe: the United States wanted to prevent the emergence of an independent, Western European pole of power in the international system.