Chapter IV

ADMINISTRATION TACKLES A CHALLENGE FROM THE SENATE, 1966-68
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Prior to 1966 Congressional pressure for a reduction of the level of American troops in Europe was neither significant nor formidable. In earlier years, there had been sporadic suggestions favouring reduction from some Senators. On 2 January 1961, Senator Mike Mansfield, the Senate Majority Leader, made the point forcefully in a statement issued to the Associated Press:

...if the U.S. commitment were to consist of two or three divisions...that would be an important step towards easing tensions in Europe.... It would permit us to save a substantial amount of dollars in gold, which we are now draining out of the country, in no small part because of the number of troops with dependents and supporting structure which we maintain in Europe. At the same time the removal of two or three divisions with all its [sic] dependents might make it possible to ease up on the financial pressure.... Finally, if the Europeans felt their security weakened by a withdrawal of the American forces, they are in a financial position now to strengthen their own military forces, and could do so. (1)

Apart from Mansfield's demand, the troop reduction issue did not figure significantly in the Congressional debates in 1961. In fact from August 1961, after the Berlin crisis, there was a demand for an increase and not a decrease in US troop levels in Europe. In 1962, as the Administration and the Congress believed that the Berlin crisis was not over, and as the Cuban missile also occurred, the general trend of Congressional debate was in favour of either retaining the existing troop levels or in

1 Cited in Congressional Record, vol. 114, Part 17, p. 22527.
increasing them.

In 1963, however, one of the most influential Senators, Richard B. Russell, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, raised the issue of troop withdrawal. A staunch advocate of military preparedness, the veteran Senator was immune to any charge of "softness" towards the Soviet Union. On 6 September during the Senate Armed Services Committee's hearings on the Department of Defence appropriations, Russell asked defence officials about the possibility of withdrawing some US military personnel and their dependents stationed in Europe and elsewhere overseas. A withdrawal of some US troops from Europe, Russell suggested, would solve the unfavourable balance of payments. In October 1963, when the US Army demonstrated its ability to airlift a full division from Texas to Europe in three days, Senator Herman E. Talmadge (Democrat, Georgia) expressed the view that the United States could withdraw some of its troops from Europe because of the increased US airlift capability. Neither Russell nor Talmadge sought to press home their suggestions. Apart from their expressions of opinion, there was no significant Congressional pressure for troop withdrawals from Europe.

The issue of troop reduction did not figure appreciably


in the Congressional debates during the following year, 1964. Most of the debates in the Congress were focused on French intransigence on the question of sharing control of nuclear weapons committed to NATO and also on the American scheme to create a multilateral nuclear force of NATO nations.

In 1965, however, a few Senators demanded withdrawal of some troops from Europe. A new factor, the South Vietnam War requirement was added to the already existing list of reasons for withdrawal of some troops from Europe. There was no budgetary problem in 1965. But the Administration itself was under tremendous pressure to withdraw some troops from Europe to meet the increasing Vietnam war needs because it was facing a shortage of trained manpower. Though the Administration declared that the Vietnam requirement would not necessitate any withdrawal of troops from Europe, it did move in the direction of withdrawing some "specialists" from troops stationed in Europe in 1966. This aspect has been dealt with in Chapter III. Later, when American forces in South Vietnam suffered reverses in 1968 and when the Administration was considering reinforcements, certain Senators demanded the transfer of some US-based units in Europe to Vietnam. The balance of payments problem also figured in the demand for withdrawal of some troops. On 17 March 1965, the


5 Baltimore Sun, 2 November 1965.
Joint House-Senate Economic Committee suggested that a reduction of American military forces in Europe be made to stem the outflow of gold or to reduce the foreign exchange cost of stationing US troops in Europe. The role of the balance of payments issue as a factor is discussed separately in Chapter V. On the whole it could be stated that prior to 1966, the troop level issue was a debate within the Administration than in the Congress.

Congressman Fino Initiates Move

The year 1966 was a landmark in the Congressional pressure for withdrawal of some troops from Europe. In that year on the question of US troop levels, the American Congress for the first time went beyond the function of voting budgetary appropriations. It exercised its other prerogatives, viz., Congressional resolutions, holding hearings and appointing special study groups on matters relating to the troop level question.

On 10 February 1966, Congressman Paul A. Fino (Republican, New York) introduced a "Sense of the House" resolution, requesting the President to undertake revisions of the American commitment in Europe to enable withdrawal of such troops as may be withdrawn without jeopardizing American security. The Congressman spoke of the strains on military capability caused by the task of protecting Europe while the United States was involved in "an ever-more-difficult war in Southeast Asia." His resolution, Fino claimed, would have the effect of "freeing more troops" for service on the home front and Southeast Asia. "If we shift some

troops from Europe to Vietnam, we can meet increased military needs in Vietnam without further resort to the draft of college students and other young Americans.... Perhaps the threat of troop withdrawal would make Europe take our Vietnamese effort more seriously," he argued.

Fino, a member of the House Banking and Currency Committee, also told the House that a substantial US troop withdrawal would be a great relief to the United States in economic terms. He pointed out that US European commitment was not only "very costly" in budget terms but it was "costly in balance of payments terms."

The scale of American military presence in Europe, he said, kept "US taxes high" and held out the promise of even "higher taxes." "This year, our commitment is helping to unbalance our budget," Fino declared.

The Congressman was of the view that while the European Allies showed little disposition to ease America's burden in Southeast Asia, they were strong supporters of the US military presence in Europe. They knew well enough that it was a "great boon" to them. It kept European taxes low and eased the strain on European budgets through lower defence expenditure. "The European nations, in effect, subsidize their industries through the lower tax rates made possible by American provision of military defense that Europe should be paying for." Some of the US troops in Europe were there for "Europe's benefit" and not America's, he asserted. "Let us withdraw those who are protecting

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European and not American interests," Fino said.

The House took no action on the Fino resolution. In the Senate too views similar to Fino's were expressed. On 14 March, Majority Leader Mike Mansfield declared: "The responsibility and burden still borne heavily by the United States [in NATO Alliance] might be properly reduced..., especially in view of our commitment in Vietnam." Declaring that the situation in Europe had changed since the year when NATO was established, the Senator stated that the time had arrived for a re-examination of the structure of the Alliance. "From the point of view of the United States," Mansfield said, "it seem to me that one aspect that is clearly worthy of consideration in this respect is the question of reducing U.S. day-to-day obligations and forces in Europe."

On 4 May 1966, in a formal news conference, Senator Stuart Symington, a member of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees, stated that the idea of "tripwires" and "shield" often used to justify the stationing of American troops in Europe were obsolete concepts that originated in the years immediately after the Second World War. The commitment of American troops to South Vietnam, when added to the US forces in Europe, had resulted in a trained military manpower shortage, Symington said. He called these commitments a heavy drain on the "American taxpayers." "I don't think," said Symington, "the economy can keep up the expensive [commitment]." "Several" of

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., vol. 112, Part 5, pp. 5597
the U.S. Army divisions in Europe could be safely removed without impairing Europe's defence, said the Missouri Senator, who was widely regarded as a very knowledgeable person in the national security area.

On the following day, Mansfield, spoke to newsmen in even more specific terms than Symington. He declared bluntly that the United States was "overcommitted" in Europe and should reduce the number of its divisions from "five to one or two" divisions.

The Debate Gains Momentum

The Administration could not brush aside such statements from two stalwarts of the Democratic Party. The situation called for a marshalling of its own artillery in the Senate. On 6 May, Henry M. Jackson (Democrat, Washington), a strong supporter of Administration's troop levels policy, put a leading question to a witness, the former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, General Lauris Norstad. He asked what the veteran soldier thought about the demand for a troop reduction in Europe. "I think this would be a bad time to make any substantial reduction in our forces in Europe...," General Norstad responded. "If you cut down to one or two divisions, you have taken the heart out of the conventional defense which is of tremendous importance, in my mind, and you are substituting nothing therefor."

11 Baltimore Sun, 7 May 1966.
12 Testimony of General Lauris Norstad, Former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces, US Senate, Congress 89, session 2, Subcommittee on National Security and (Contd. on next page)
Norstad asserted that during several crises over Berlin, he would not have been able to handle the situation without having "large numbers" of ground troops available. "But if you cut the forces down to the point where they are simply a trip wire just a few troops that gives the warning that there has been an attack of some kind, then you have backed into a policy of massive retaliation...to a choice between all-out war or nothing." A cutback would destroy the effectiveness of the conventional force and "lower the nuclear threshold," Norstad said. Troops on the ground should be of a sufficient number to deter the Soviet Union. Norstad warned that a reduction would "give substance" to President Charles de Gaulle's charges that the United States was not really determined to maintain its commitment in Europe.

Norstad conceded that the "large number" of American troops and dependents in Europe added to the American balance of payments problem. But he warned that any hint that the US was preparing a curtailment of forces would evoke sharp "adverse reaction" from the West Germans. "This is not because they [Germans] are holding you to a specific line or figure," said Norstad, "but because the confidence of those people who still feel themselves exposed depends upon us. You have to provide some security by


13 Ibid., pp. 87-88.
Mansfield was not deterred. In an interview on 16 May, he went a step ahead of his earlier demand. He asserted that the US could cut its forces in Europe to "a token force" to meet the growing manpower problem. He argued that the problem in Europe was "more psychological than military," and that in the event of an attack "one division would guarantee our prompt response to it just as well as six."

Two prominent "defence intellectuals" now sprang to take issue with Mansfield. Without mentioning Mansfield, Thomas C. Schelling, Director of the Harvard Center for International Affairs, and Malcolm W. Hoag, a Senior Staff Member and Economist and Systems Analyst of the RAND Corporation, told a Senate Subcommittee on 19 May, that reducing the six US divisions in West Germany would be seriously misinterpreted by both Western and Eastern Europe. Schelling said that "just in the interest of good communication of what our intention is, we should avoid any such reduction unless it proves to be absolutely essential for the use of those troops elsewhere, in which case we should do everything we can to indicate that the reduction is temporary."

Hoag stated that "undiminished American strength in Central Europe" should remain a matter of "high priority." "It seems to

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14 Ibid., p. 90.
me politically and symbolically to be fully as important as... militarily...," Hoag added. Commenting on the political significance of the continued presence of US forces in Europe, Schelling said that if the United States withdrew "a sizable fraction" of American troops strength in Germany, it would be difficult to keep even the British and Belgian contribution there. Worse than being simply "a German-American alliance," Schelling pointed out, it would look like a purely German military force for the defence of Europe backed up at long distance by a strategic force of the United States. "This would go exactly counter to the problem of reassuring Eastern Europe...France and other Western European countries, even some Germans themselves, about the future role of Germany in the Center of Europe," Schelling warned.

In Congress, however, support for Mansfield's proposal began to grow slowly. On 20 May, Senators Stuart Symington and Thomas J. McIntyre (Democrat, New Hampshire), both members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, endorsed the proposal in separate interviews. Symington expressed fear that the United States was spreading itself "too thin" with world-wide commitments and was losing gold reserves while Allies like France and Germany were building up theirs. Another aspect of US world-wide commitment was underscored by Senator McIntyre. He pointed out that American commitment to South Vietnam had brought "no concrete support" from its Allies. Hence, the United States could and should consider the withdrawal of some of its land forces from Europe and put them to work in South Vietnam where they were "urgently needed".

17 Ibid.
to protect the lives of American soldiers who were already there. In place of American troops, McIntyre proposed, US Polaris submarines could be made ready "to bring the striking force of the United States to bear if Europe were attacked."

The Mansfield troop reduction proposal received additional publicity when the Associated Press published a survey of the views of 45 Senators on US troop levels in Europe. The survey revealed that while the forty-five Senators favoured some reduction of American ground forces in Europe, they did not see eye-to-eye on the extent and timing of the reduction. Only fifteen joined Mansfield in favouring a drastic reduction of US forces in Europe. The rest favoured a gradual withdrawal of a "substantial" number of American forces assigned to NATO.

On the Administration side too voices were raised that were no less knowledgeable and no less responsible and they counselled against any reduction in US forces. Strong testimony in opposition to a reduction came from John J. McCloy, Special Envoy of President Johnson on NATO Affairs and former American High Commissioner in Germany. On 25 May 1966, McCloy told a Senate Subcommittee that "a substantial reduction" of the American contingent would, "coincidental with the French attack on NATO... probably be the death knell of NATO...." The US, McCloy affirmed, should continue to keep its troops in Europe to maintain the confidence and continue the "sense of security" which had meant

so much to Europe. He contended that he would not recommend reduction or withdrawal of troops until some important political decisions were taken on the basis of which the US could, with confidence, reduce its strength. McCloy was even opposed to the discussion of maintaining only "a token" force in Europe. That would, McCloy believed, confirm the skeptics in their claim of American unreliability and confound loyal partners.

Rusk and McNamara Warn Against Cuts

Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defence McNamara also voiced the Administration's opposition to troop reductions. In a news conference on 27 May, Rusk asserted that the United States Government had "indicated" to its Allies that American troops would remain in Europe "as long" as they were "needed and wanted." There would be "no major reduction," he added, unless there was "some major change in the European scene." McNamara declared on 2 June that there was "absolutely no foundations whatsoever," for a London Times story that the US had decided to cut its military forces in Europe to one division.

Rusk and McNamara stressed the same theme in their testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations of the Committee on Government Operations, on the future of the Atlantic Alliance. On 16 June 1966, Rusk

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21 Baltimore Sun, 28 May 1966; and Philadelphia Inquirer, 3 June 1966.
told the Subcommittee that it would be "inappropriate" to take up the question of reduction at then existing circumstances. He emphasized that the US should "be very careful" about repeating its experience of 1945, "when rapid and unilateral demobilization invited pressures from the East." Rusk was not even prepared to speculate on the possibility of reduction in the future. He pointed out that changes in US troop levels policy in the long run would depend upon the Eastern European situation, the progress of East-West relations, the deployment of Soviet and other forces, and the agreed judgement of all the NATO countries on the nature of the threat and the nature of measures needed to reduce that threat.

Senator Edmund S. Muskie (Democrat, Maine) asked Rusk to comment on whether the US should remain frozen "to the immediate postwar solution and arrangements to meet cold war problems."

The Secretary warned against succumbing to so-called "new ideas" that were neither new nor sensible. "I particularly don't think much of so-called ideas which would take us right back to 1945 and involve the unilateral dismantling of our defense and the exposure of countries in Eastern Europe to temptation which they succumbed to in 1945," he asserted.

Rusk tried to rebut the view that important changes had already taken place in Europe—the potentialities of detente, the increasing desire of many in Western Europe for a new

22 Testimony of Secretary of State Dean Rusk, US Senate, Hearings, The Atlantic Alliance, n. 12, Part 5, p. 158.

23 Ibid., p. 164.
approach to the Eastern European countries, and the unlikelihood of aggressive action by the Soviet Union in Europe in view of its problems with China. "The problem a democracy has is to avoid tempting thieves [the Communist States]... If we dissolve our defenses, we undermine the possibilities of a political settlement... because the other side's demands would rise, and they would be tempted to explore points of pressure that otherwise prudence would now suggest they leave alone," the Secretary said.

Senator Jackson, who headed the Senate Subcommittee hearings, suggested that perhaps some people in Europe would not talk so much about detente or about the Soviet Union having changed, and about the absence of a Soviet threat if the United States actually began withdrawing its forces. Rusk neither endorsed the view nor even commented on it. The Secretary answered diplomatically that a reduction would be very inadvisable because "... the NATO forces seem to be close to the minimum level that prudence requires, given the size of deployment of forces on the other side."

Jackson asked Rusk whether a US troop cutback should be linked to the reduction and redeployment of armed forces by the Soviets. Rusk replied that "any reduction in the forces of NATO" would have to be linked to a reduction and redeployment of armed forces of the Soviet Union. "I do not believe that unilateral action in this field would be wise or prudent under the present

24 Ibid., p. 179.
circumstances," Rusk affirmed. More such statements were to follow later. But the Administration as it would be indicated later did not think such a reciprocal reduction would be possible under then prevailing situation. Nonetheless, the Administration proposed reciprocal reduction, ostensibly to forestall the growing unilateral troop reduction demand by Senators.

McNamara's testimony relating to US troop levels in Europe, was even more comprehensive than that of Rusk. On 21 June, McNamara told the Senate Subcommittee that there were many reasons for the presence of US forces in Germany. They were there, by reason of the fundamental consideration of US security. They contributed to the deterrent and "force posture" of the Alliance. Their presence in Germany was necessary because of US responsibilities for "a final settlement" of the consequences of Second World War, and because of the US and Allied responsibility for the "freedom of Berlin." They were there, McNamara asserted, to make "crystal clear" the US interest in and commitment to European security and stability.

McNamara acknowledged that there was no "magic number" for the US troop levels in Europe. American "combat capability" in Western Europe was the factor of primary importance while personnel strength secondary. This view which was different from Rusk's stress on personnel strength, rested on the concept of "combat capability" which was an abstract term. It could be used to justify maintaining existing troop levels or an increase or decrease in the troop levels for attaining the desired combat

26  Ibid.
capability. McNamara had perhaps a reason for not giving primary importance to personnel strength. The DoD had announced in April 1966, withdrawal of 15,000 troops from Europe. Any emphasize on retaining existing troop levels after the disclosure of troop withdrawal would have appeared contradictory and confusing. So McNamara perhaps used the term "combat capability" to gain for the DoD and the Administration sufficient flexibility to interpret its troop level policy.

In his testimony McNamara did not overlook some of the pressure that were operating for reducing the size of US forces--the balance of payments problem, and West European capability to increase its contribution to the Alliance. He conceded that "increased airlift and sealift capability" of the US defence establishment required a revision of "traditional ideas" about the time and effort required to put "major combat force" into the field. "All these pressures for the reduction of the current level of US forces in Europe are legitimate" and deserved serious consideration, McNamara said. But the pressures should be weighed against the "political and military security needs" of the United States and its Allies before any decision was arrived at.

Despite McNamara's assurances that there was "no plan to diminish combat capability" and "no withdrawal of major units from Europe," the developing debate in the United States evoked concern in Western Europe. These were aggravated by press

27 Ibid., Part 6, p. 194.
reports to the effect that high US officials were considering withdrawing some 75,000 supply troops from Europe. The report was first carried on 13 July 1966 by a responsible American news agency which stated that "authoritative sources" said "the second-echelon troops might begin leaving as early as next year." The story was picked up by West German dailies and evoked considerable attention. The US Defence Department hastened to describe the report as "rubbish". Once again spokesmen of the Department came out with the familiar statement that no major combat units would be withdrawn to the United States or anything would be done to weaken American fighting strength in the continent.

DPC's Call For "Substantial Reduction"

Amidst rumours and denials of troop withdrawal, the 13-man Senate Democratic Policy Committee discussed the US troop level policy on 13 July. Senator Mike Mansfield was Chairman of the Committee and among other members were Democratic Whip and Chairman of the Finance Committee Russell B. Long (Louisiana); Chairman of the Armed Services Committee Richard B. Russell; Chairman of the Commerce Committee Warren G. Magnuson (Washington); Vice-Chairman of the Atomic Energy Committee John O. Pastore (Rhode Island); Chairman of the Appropriations Committee Carl Hayden (Arizona); Edmund S. Muskie (Maine); George Smathers (Florida); Lester Hill (Alabama); Stuart Symington; Philip A.
Hart (Michigan); Daniel Brewster (Maryland); and Daniel Inouye (Hawaii). Traditionally, this Committee had acted as a legislative "traffic cop", deciding which bills were to be called up and when. But on 13 July the Senate Democratic Policy Committee (DPC) started operating for the first time in a new field. It was reported that during the 13 July session, on Symington's initiative, the question of troop deployment in Europe was raised in connection with a general discussion of the international position of the United States. The response of members of the Committee was "spontaneous," said Mansfield, in a Senate speech later on 31 August reporting on the DPC's deliberations. "It became at once the focus of the proceedings and in the end, the membership by unanimous agreement directed the Chairman to advise the President of the Committee's deep concern over what appeared to be an excessive and unchanging departmental deployment of ground troops in Western Europe," the Majority Leader added.

On 14 July Mansfield informed the President through a letter about the DPC's concern over the "excessive" deployment of US troops in Europe. At that time the President was overwhelmed with problems like the war in South Vietnam, the inflation at home, unrest in the cities and the oncoming Congressional elections. Under such circumstances he was in no position to adopt a cavalier attitude to a communication from a powerful

group of Senators of his own party. He politely requested them to explore the issue further with Secretary of State Rusk, Secretary of Defence McNamara and Secretary of the Treasury Fowler for further expert consideration of the question.

On 18 July, the DPC had a meeting with the three Secretaries at the Department of State. It was reported that some of the Senators felt after the meeting that the Cabinet officers had fobbed them with outdated arguments and an unwillingness to be frank. Rusk and McNamara reportedly indicated to the Senators that their sentiments would be useful to the Administration in its effort to show the Europeans how strongly the Senate felt about the necessity of Europeans bearing a fair share of the NATO burden. The Senators were not satisfied that such could be the only goal that was to be attained.

Two days after the meeting with Cabinet officers, the DPC convened in camera for further consideration. It was reported that the Committee reached a consensus favouring troop reductions in Europe. The results of the Committee's discussions were "brought to the attention of the President and the appropriate Secretaries of his Cabinet." But the Administration had not shown itself to be very responsive. It was reported that the Committee's insiders were of the view that their consensus were not accepted by the Administration.

The growing political pressure for troop reduction, however, was not totally ignored. At any rate, there was the

31 Washington Post, 1 September 1966; Ibid., 3 September 1966.
factor mentioned to the DPC by Rusk and McNamara—citing to the Europeans the growing domestic pressure to make them more accommodating. At the meeting of the NATO Defence Ministers in Paris on 25 July, McNamara made an oblique but important shift in the tactics on the US troop levels question. The repeated "pledging sessions" that the US had no intention to reduce forces or pull major units of Europe were not a feature, it was reported. McNamara, in his address to the assembled defence ministers, drew attention to the fact that there was a strong political pressure in the US for the reduction of US forces in Europe and a demand for transporting some of the men from Europe to South Vietnam. The United States, however, McNamara said, did not want to see any reduction of its military "capability" in Europe. He asserted that combat capability was more important than a head count of troops. But he added that that "capability" depended on balance of forces, on modern weapons, and readiness for action. In these respects, McNamara pointed out, American forces in Europe were well ahead and were deployed alongside other forces which were much more lightly manned and supported. The United States could withdraw some men without "reducing the American military capability," in Europe, the Secretary said, according to the Chicago Tribune.

33 Los Angeles Times, 26 July 1966.
35 Chicago Tribune, 26 July 1966.
These reports did not slow down the demand of the DPC Senators for a substantial reduction of US forces in Europe. In a Senate speech on 27 July, Mansfield noted that there were just under "a million" US troops and dependents in Germany and Western Europe. "In the view of many members of this body, that number is totally unnecessary and wholly unwarranted, especially in the light of our commitments elsewhere and of the international financial strain which this elaborate military establishment which we maintain in Europe represents to the United States." In addition, Mansfield claimed that there was a definite desire in the Senate to end the continuing excess of US defence effort as compared with that of Western Europe. He charged that "inertia" had kept the American military commitment in Europe virtually unchanged despite changes in Europe during the past nineteen years.

Citing the "great" financial pressure of the Vietnam war, changing conditions in Europe, and the need for American troops elsewhere, the Majority Leader urged two steps. First to return to the United States "the approximately 75,000 members of the armed services and their dependents" who were stationed in France. That course, Mansfield pointed out, should be preferred following the French eviction notice of US troops by de Gaulle rather than expansion of US installations and garrisons elsewhere in Western Europe to make a berth for them. The second step suggested by Mansfield was "the initiation of an overall

10-per cent reduction of U.S. troop strength in Germany and elsewhere in the Western European continent." He insisted that overall reductions should be mandatory but it should be left to the best military judgement to determine where and how that cut could be made. His own belief was that, eventually, the presence of "one or two American military divisions" actually in the ground in Europe, barring some turn for the worse in East-West relations, would be ample evidence of "American good faith" and its "resolve" to meet NATO obligations.

It may be pointed out that while the Administration had already announced on 15 June its decision to remove troops from France, Mansfield demanded that they should not be relocated elsewhere in Western Europe. Even though Mansfield's second proposal included suggestions for withdrawing troops from Germany and other parts of Western Europe, it should be noted that the emphasis was on the quantum of troop withdrawal rather than withdrawal of troops from specific geographical locations. A possible explanation why Mansfield did not specifically propose withdrawal of troops from Germany (where the major portion of US troops in Europe was stationed) could be his feeling that such a proposal would be rejected or objected to by the Administration because of its earlier promise in April to restore the US Army personnel strength in Germany from 210,000 to 225,000 by the end of the year.

As Mansfield's proposal followed soon after McNamara's troop withdrawal warnings in the NATO Defence Minister's meeting, there was some speculation in Europe that it reflected the
Defence Department view or even of the Administration itself. To put an end to such speculation, the Administration had to state its position. Pentagon officials steadfastly emphasized that Mansfield reflected neither the DoD view nor that of the Administration. In more concrete fashion, the DoD announced on 3 August 1966 that six US squadrons would leave France to bases in Britain by October—an action that could be interpreted as an indication of Administration had rejected Mansfield's proposal.

The DPC convened in camera again on 10 August 1966. The meeting ended without a decision on the line of action to be adopted. However, on 25 August, the Committee at a secret session decided to work out a new resolution. On 30 August it was reported that it had reached agreement on the text of a "Sense-of-the-Senate" resolution. On 31 August, less than an hour before dropping his blockbuster on the Senate floor, Mansfield sent the texts of his statement and the Sense-of-the-Senate resolution to the White House and the Department of State. By the time President Johnson read it and reached for the telephone, it was too late and Mansfield had already introduced on behalf of the DPC the Sense-of-the-Senate resolution seeking "a substantial reduction" of American forces stationed in Europe. The text of the Senate Resolution 300 is as follows:

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38 Washington Post, 1 September 1966.
Whereas the foreign policy and military strength of the United States are dedicated to the protection of our national security, the preservation of the liberties of the American people, and the maintenance of world peace; and

Whereas the United States in implementing these principles has maintained large contingents of American Armed Forces in Europe together with air and naval units for twenty years; and

Whereas the security of the United States and its citizens remain interwoven with the security of other nations signatory to the North Atlantic Treaty as it was when the treaty was signed but the condition of our European allies, both economically and militarily, have appreciably improved since large contingents of forces were deployed; and

Whereas the means and capacity of all members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to provide forces to resist aggression has significantly improved since the original United States deployment; and

Whereas the commitment by all members of the North Atlantic Treaty is based upon the full cooperation of all treaty partners in contributing materials and men on a fair and equitable basis but such contributions have not been forthcoming from all other members of the organization; and

Whereas relations between Eastern Europe and Western Europe were tense when the large contingents of U.S. forces were deployed in Europe but this situation has now undergone substantial change and relations between the two parts of Europe are now characterized by an increasing two-way flow of trade, people and other peaceful exchange; and

Whereas the present policy of maintaining large contingents of U.S. forces and their dependents on the European Continent also contributes further to the fiscal and monetary problems of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That--

1. It is the sense of the Senate that, with changes and improvements in the techniques of modern warfare and because of the vast increase in capacity of the United States to wage war and to move military forces and equipment by air, a substantial reduction of U.S. forces permanently stationed in Europe can be made without adversely affecting either our resolve or ability to meet our commitment under the North Atlantic Treaty.

2. Senate Resolution 99, adopted in the Senate April 4, 1951, is amended to contain the provisions of this resolution.
and where the resolution may conflict, the present resolution is controlling as to the sense of the Senate. (39)

After introducing the resolution, Mansfield made a statement in the Senate. At the outset he briefly reported in a general way the deliberations of the DPG session and its meeting with the Cabinet officers. Later, Mansfield pointed out that the decision of members to present their judgement in the form of a Sense-of-the-Senate resolution was influenced by an earlier action of the Senate. He said:

In April 1951, the Senate adopted Senate Resolution 99,... which expressed the sense of the Senate that the United States should deploy an additional four military divisions in Europe to serve with the equivalent of two.... The resolution 1951 was welcomed by President Truman and the executive branch.... Fifteen years later, it is the considered view of the cosponsors of this resolution that the Senate should express its sense that the deployment of U.S. forces should be reduced substantially with the expectation that the executive branch will again welcome the sentiment of the Senate on this matter. (40)

Mansfield cited the greatly improved economic, political and military situations in Western Europe as justification for a troop reduction. He argued that Western Europe had "long since rehabilitated itself," and was "a thriving and dynamic region." The NATO Allies, by not meeting adequately their NATO military commitments, were recognizing "a significant change in the earlier East-West European confrontation." According to perceivable indications, the U.S. military establishments in Western Europe were excessive in terms of what was actually needed. It was unwarranted, Mansfield contended, to sustain an

40 Ibid.
unnecessary dollar exchange drain which contributed to America's deficit in the international balance of payments. 41

A few observations on the DPC's Sense-of-the-Senate resolution at this point would be relevant. The resolution, an effort mounted by a small band of powerful Senators, was an unprecedented challenge to one of the fundamental tenets of postwar American foreign policy. Under attack was the doctrine that the United States must keep sizeable military forces in Western Europe. That concept, followed almost without deviation throughout the post-war period, was challenged by the Senate resolution which called for a "substantial reduction" of US forces stationed in Europe. The reasons cited by the DPC in its Senate resolution for a "substantial" withdrawal of US forces from Europe appeared to be quite weighty. However, an obvious question that could arise in the proposition would be whether the relaxation of tensions in Europe was of such an order as could warrant a process of reduction. Mansfield and his associates asserted that there was little risk in initiating the process but the Administration took a different view.

The foreign exchange loss associated with the stationing of US troops in Europe, pointed out by the DPC in its resolution, was factually correct and could not be denied. Nor could the Administration challenge the contention that with the increased utilization of modern technology and airlift capability, a reduction of troop levels in Europe was less of a risk than in

41 Ibid., p. 21443.
earlier years. The Administration itself had claimed the opera-
tion "Big Lift" of 1963 was a great "success". However, it
could be argued by critics of the DPC that the United States
would attain adequate airlift capability only by the beginning
of 1969 with the operation of C5A transport aircraft.

In the 1951 debate, the Senate had voted (69 to 21) for
dispatching four military divisions to Europe. Out of the 13
DPC members who called for a "substantial" troop withdrawal in
1966, seven had taken part in the debate of 1951--Long, Russell,
Pastore, Smathers, Hill, Hayden, Magnuson and Symington. Magnu-
son had been recorded as being in favour of dispatching troops
to Europe, and the other six Senators had voted "yea" in 1951.
Senator Russell who was one of the co-authors of the Senate
Resolution 99 authorizing dispatch of US troops to Europe, was
in 1966 one of the co-authors of the DPC's Senso-of-the-Senate
resolution favouring a "substantial" withdrawal of US forces
from Europe.

The DPC's resolution created an embarrassing situation for
the Johnson Administration. Speculation and suspicion persisted
among European Allies that there might be some sort of collusion
between the 13 Senators and the President. The part of the rea-
son for such a suspicion was the general belief that Johnson was
a wily person skilled in manipulating legislators. It was, how-
ever, a mistaken impression in this case. Senators had acted
independently of the President. Mansfield declared that "the
President disapproves of it [the DPC move], and he was not con-
sulted." In effect the President faced a palace revolt by some
of the most powerful leaders of his own party.

Jackson And Javits Counter
Attack

A few minutes after President Johnson received by messenger a copy of the Sense-of-the-Senate resolution and Mansfield's remarks, he telephoned the Senator to voice his objection. "He disapproved in strong terms," Mansfield told a reporter, adding that the objection was centered more on "the matter of timing." An hour later, White House Press Secretary William D. Moyers told reporters: "They two Secretaries [Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defence McNamara] have informed Senator Mansfield that in the Administration's view this would not be helpful at this time...and this is a NATO matter and should involve consultation with our allies."

Meanwhile in the Senate, soon after Mansfield had spoken, an objection was voiced by Senator Thomas H. Kuchel (Republican, California), the Republican Whip. He objected to a resolution being presented directly to the floor of the Senate, without going through Committee consideration. But Senators Symington, Long and Pastore disagreed, arguing that a floor debate could be held without Committee consideration. Mansfield had got around the procedural problem through an agreement with the

43 Washington Post, 1 September 1966.
44 New York Times, 1 September 1966; and Los Angeles Times, 1 September 1966.
Chairmen of the two Committees most directly involved, William Fulbright of the Foreign Relations Committee and Russell B. Long of the Armed Services Committee. However, Kuchel did not consider the arrangement to be acceptable. "...I should like to have the Secretary of Defence, the Secretary of State, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff come before a Committee and be cross-examined on the subject matter embodied in this resolution. That is the normal procedure," he asserted.

On 1 September, the debate grew in intensity and interest. Most of the opposition to the resolution came from the Republican side of the aisle. There was, however, one notable exception, Jackson of Washington, who accused Mansfield and other members of the DPC of "trying to ram" their resolution through without Committee hearings. "This...looks to me as though the sponsors of this resolution lack confidence in the wisdom of their own proposal," Jackson said.

Jackson was also disturbed because the resolution had made no distinction between combat forces and logistic or support elements in the US forces stationed in Europe. He conceded that there could be some adjustments in logistic and support forces. But any cut in combat strength, without a reciprocal cut on the Communist side, Jackson argued, "would confirm European skeptics in their claims of American unreliability" and thus play "right into the hands" of de Gaulle. Jackson asserted that "any suggestion for a unilateral cut of American combat forces in

46 Ibid., p. 21576.
Europe...constitutes foolish advice to the President of the United States, and it is not worthy of the US Senate." 47

Republican Senators Kuchel, Norris Cotton (New Hampshire), Strom Thurmond (South Carolina) and Jacob K. Javits (New York) supported Jackson's stand. Senators Cotton, Thurmond and Leverett Saltonstall (Republican, Massachusetts) endorsed Kuchel's demand for Committee hearings. Cotton highlighted yet another aspect of the troop reduction issue. He said that for the Senate to discuss withdrawing troops from Europe "is likely to...put the United States of America in the position of being the nation to proclaim definitely its intention to resort to nuclear weapons--which in my opinion would be a supreme disaster.

Javits asserted that he was appalled that the DPC could recommend a reduction without insisting on a similar move by the Soviet Union. "It could be the straw that would break the camel's back in terms of world peace," Javits said. The Senate Minority Leader, Everett McKinley Dirksen (Illinois), told newsmen on 1 September in his folksy style: "I wish we could bring 'em all home. I wish we could put them all on the boat this morning. But we have to look at the consequences. We've put our chips on it [NATO]. Do we now suddenly withdraw?" He also indicated that he would support a move to refer the resolution to the appropriate committee for hearings. "We ought to

47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., p. 21580.
know what this is all about?" Dirksen asked.

Some Republican Senators parted company with their colleagues and spoke against Jackson's stand. Peter H. Dominick of Colorado argued that the DPC resolution was only an appeal from the Senate to the President indicating that troop reduction could be carried out without adversely affecting American resolve or ability to meet American commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Dominick said:

What the resolution says is not that we can rely on the Soviet Union, not that we can simply pull out and leave NATO to fend for itself, but that there is room, with the economic development and improved conditions in the European theater, to get our allies there up to their strength, and that we can still support NATO by reducing our forces, and still be able to meet our commitments. (50)

Meanwhile on 1 September, the Mansfield group suffered a defection on the question of Committee hearings. The Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Fulbright, while stating that the resolution contained "a great deal of merit," backed away from his earlier agreement with Mansfield to forego hearings. He said that in view of the furore that the proposal had caused, there should be joint hearings by the two Committees as was the case in 1951 when the Senate advised President Truman to add four divisions to the two then in Europe.

As a new Congressional debate about the extent of the US military commitment to NATO was getting under way, the Associated

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Press polled Senators and obtained responses from sixty-five. Forty-eight Senators favoured a resolution to put the Senate on record as urging an early withdrawal of at least two of the six American divisions assigned to NATO. The remaining seventeen favoured hearings at which all aspects of the impact of US troop reduction would be examined.

Perhaps the press poll was an encouragement to the DPC and a warning for the Administration and to those Senators who opposed the Sense-of-the-Senate Resolution. By 6 September eleven more Senators joined the DPC in co-sponsoring the resolution. Fulbright added his name to the list of Senators favouring "substantial" reduction of US troops in Europe.

The Debate Continues

On 6 September Jackson's stand was challenged on the Senate floor by Symington. He pointed out that Jackson was "not correct" when he asserted that the DPC was trying to "ram this resolution through" or that the matter had not been considered previously by the "substantive Senate Committees having jurisdiction upon these issues." He asserted that the question of reduction of US troop strength in Europe was discussed in hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Armed Services Committee, and the Subcommittee on Department of Defence of the Committee on Appropriations. "As a matter of fact," Symington said, "this question was also discussed before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations,...

52 Ibid., 4 September 1966.
chaired by the Senator from Washington."

Symington filled more than half a dozen pages of the Congressional Record with transcripts from the testimony of witnesses made before the above-mentioned Committees. The witnesses were all acknowledged experts. However, Symington perhaps hurt his cause somewhat because several of the extracts that Symington placed in the Congressional Record indicated some opposition to troop reductions.

Nonetheless, on his own Symington presented a strong case in favour of a troop reduction using various arguments cited earlier. "For over 20 years we have done our best to try to be of service to friends and neighbors...perhaps [now] the time has come to give a little less attention to the problems of the world, and a little more attention to the problems of the United States," the Senator asserted.

Symington came under vehement attack from Senators Albert Gore (Democrat, Tennessee), Jacob K. Javits and Frank J.


54 Thomas C. Schelling, Director of the Harvard Centre for International Affairs; Malcolm W. Hoag, Economist and Systems Analyst of the RAND Corporation; Henry A. Kissinger, the Harvard Professor and Strategist; Secretary of Defence McNamara; Under Secretary of State George W. Ball; Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs John M. Leddy; former US High Commissioner in Germany and Special Envoy of President Johnson on NATO Affairs; and former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces in Europe Lauris Norstad.


56 Ibid., p. 21832.
Lausche (Democrat, Ohio), Gore, who had sided with Fulbright and Mansfield in criticizing the Administration's course in Vietnam argued that an American troop curtailment in Europe would compound the error made by US involvement in an Asian land war. "When we consider our responsibilities and the challenge on a global basis, South-east Asia simply cannot be equated with Western Europe from a military standpoint, an economic standpoint, or from a moral standpoint," Gore declared. "To weaken our position in Europe in order to strengthen further our forces in Vietnam would be unwise...," he asserted.

Gore also strongly expressed the opinion that if the US followed the course of action suggested by the resolution, it would be extending an open invitation to the Soviets to test American will, if not its ability, to resist successfully a move by them in Berlin or perhaps elsewhere in Western Europe. Unilateral reduction of US forces, Gore contended, would surely affect adversely the delicate balance of power which had existed in Europe over the past decade, and would give a powerful nudge toward further nationalistic fragmentation of Western Europe.

Javits was even more critical of the DPC resolution than Gore. Javits condemned it as reflecting "a policy of resentment for a policy of leadership." He argued that the balance of payments problem was given exaggerated importance. Since America was "still solvent" and was "far from broke," it was the correct course to give greater importance to national security than to

57 Ibid., p. 21833.
other considerations. "If we are broke or non-solvent, we should not advertise it to the world because our credit is sustaining the whole world." A better way of tackling the balance of payments problem could be restrictions on spending by American tourists abroad or reduction in less urgent defence expenditure. "I think this resolution...would declare the bankruptcy of American purposes and intentions, and I hope not to be in the chamber the day it is passed," Javits exclaimed.

Senator Lausche, who, unlike Gore, had supported the Administration's Vietnam policy, joined Gore in scoring the DPC resolution. Lausche said that if the resolution was adopted, the US would be taking an unilateral action in a matter on which the United States, since the establishment of NATO, had reportedly declared that it would act cooperatively in attempting to stop "the threat of the communist against the captive and satellite nations and the free nations of Western Europe." Lausche also argued that any reduction of US troops would dishearten the people of Eastern Europe: "If we agree to this resolution, we will be sending word to the Poles, the Czechs, the Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Slovaks, Bulgarians, the Hungarians and others that: 'you are doomed. You shall never again see the light of day as a free people'." 59

Strong support for the Administration on the troop levels issue came from the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Thomas E. Morgan (Democrat, Pennsylvania), on 6 September.

58 Ibid., p. 21834.
59 Ibid., p. 21835.
He said in an interview that it was definitely "the wrong time to make any sort of unilateral decision on troop reductions." He pointed out that there were already unstable conditions existing in Europe because of the French withdrawal and warned that a withdrawal of US troops from Europe could mean the end of NATO Alliance. On the same day, Senate Minority Leader Dirksen also reiterated his support for the Administration's troop levels policy. He said in an interview that he was against the reduction as a result of an hour-long discussion he had with President Johnson on 1 September. Ignoring all rules of grammar, the Senator drawled: "There are so many angles and aspects that I cannot disclose, which was discussed in confidence, that they were sufficient for me to know what some of the inside problems are," Dirksen commented.

The growing opposition to Senate Resolution 300 did not deter Mansfield. On 6 September, he said in an interview that he was not in the least shaken by the resistance of the President or Senators. He claimed that his mail indicated overwhelming public approval of the proposal to curtail the size of US contribution to NATO defence. He announced that he was determined to press the resolution to a vote.

On the following day, Mansfield spoke in the Senate to rebut some of the criticism directed against S.R. 300 and the DPC. He complained that the members of the Policy Committee had been called "arrogant," "foolish" and "bankrupt," and regretted that the attack in part was personal. On the resolution itself,

60 Baltimore Sun, 7 September 1966.
Mansfield pointed out that it was suggested that it called for a total US withdrawal from Europe when, in fact, all it suggested was a return to the United States of only some of the almost one million American personnel stationed in Europe. Holding further hearings on the issue would be irrelevant because six sets of relevant hearings had already been held as pointed out by Symington. In any event the question of reference to Committee would be for the Senate, as a whole, to decide. "There is nothing to stop this sense resolution from being referred to a Committee, or Committees, or to joint Committees, if that is the will of the Senate," Mansfield said.

Referring to the criticism that the resolution was "poorly timed," the Majority Leader said that he would agree with the point, not because it came too early—as held by Senators opposing the resolution—but because it had come up "very very late." That view, Mansfield said, was not based on the competing needs of South Vietnam or anxieties over the "gold flow." "It is based on the fact that Western Europe has recovered from the war and gone far beyond economic recovery and entered into a dynamic new phase in its history. The nations of that region are now able as once they were not, but are unwilling to meet military commitments to NATO which they previously had accepted as essential for their defense."

The resolution received strong support from Senator Ernest Gruening (Democrat, Alaska). In a Senate speech on 7

62 Ibid., p. 21885.
September, he said that the resolution was "reasonable and proper", and did not justify the "violence" with which it was criticised. He was firmly of the view that the European Allies themselves did not believe that the development of a large capability for conducting a land war in Europe along conventional line was necessary or desirable. There was a general feeling among these countries, Gruening said, that any overt Soviet aggression would have to be met quickly by nuclear weapons, and that the defence of Western Europe depended upon the atomic capability of the United States.

The President's Moves to Undercut DPC Drive

To counter the growing Congressional support for the resolution, President Johnson took the offensive in a news conference on 8 September. He asserted that the way to handle questions relating to American troop strength in Europe was through discussions in NATO and not through a Senate Resolution. He emphasized that "every step we take, we want to take with the knowledge of our allies, and we would hope with their approval." The resolution indicated a desire on the part of its supporters to bring American troops back home. But the issue should be viewed not in terms of desires but the necessities posed by the situation. The best course for the US was to collaborate with its Allies to determine what strength would be necessary, how to equitably apportion it, and to arrive at

63 Ibid., p. 21386.
a joint agreement, the President declared.

Support was forthcoming for the Administration's stand from several leading newspapers. The Christian Science Monitor wrote that the DPC resolution was "most unfortunate," and expressed the hope that the Administration would be able to convince the Senators of the "inappropriateness of the proposal." A reduction of US troops in Europe, in itself, the editorial pointed out, would not only leave Europe dangerously unprotected but also manifest the psychological effect of the proposal on the United State's Allies and above all on West Germany. "Nothing should be done to shake that wise arrangement [NATO] so long as an over-all European settlement is outstanding," the Monitor asserted.

The Washington Post also characterized the resolution as ill-timed, "unfortunate," and open to serious objection on three grounds. First, it would substitute a unilateral decision for what ought to be a matter of deliberate strategic determination by NATO. Second, it would undercut the "pause" doctrine with the result that enough conventional strength would not be available to establish enemy's intentions before a resort to nuclear weapons was necessary. Third, a unilateral withdrawal announced in advance would impair American ability to bargain with the Soviet Union for a similar reduction. These, of course,


were objections that had also been voiced by several Senators and spokesmen for the Administration.

The Baltimore Sun called the resolution as "irresponsible and even mischievous." The New York Times did not directly criticise the resolution but expressed strong reservations. A substantial unilateral reduction of US forces in Europe on the scale proposed by the DPC would "fundamentally alter the bases of American foreign policy, not only in Europe but in the world," the newspaper wrote. Questions based on military and political realities and involving strategy, force levels, burden-sharing, and a possible increase in West German forces would crop up. As complex interrelationships were involved the proposal required consideration as thorough as that of "Great Debate" of 1950-51. "But a call for unilateral American disengagement, rammed through the Senate without hearings or Committee study, is no way to go about it," the New York Times declared.

President Johnson's statement of 8 September indicating that there would be no unilateral withdrawal and that the way to handle US troop strength in Europe was through discussions in NATO was, as mentioned earlier, a move to counter the growing sentiment in the Senate favouring troop reductions. It was reported that Johnson, did not react kindly to what he regarded as gratuitous advice on problems involving US security abroad. He was especially unreceptive, a Washington Post report said.

67 Baltimore Sun, 2 September 1966.
when such advice happened to come from a group of Senators, who contended, as a matter of general philosophy, that the United States was "overextended" in its foreign commitments.

Mansfield was equally determined to maintain pressure on the Administration. He revealed that on the same day that the President had declared his opposition to the resolution, the members of the DPC met and reaffirmed their unanimous support for the resolution. "This is offered in the greatest good will by members of the Policy Committee representing every political spectrum," Mansfield said. The Senator declared that the resolution was in no way an attempt to dictate to the President or to undermine his authority or responsibility. It was simply a recommendation by the Senate for action toward an ultimate objective.

The Administration, for its part, sought to strengthen its case before the bar of public opinion through the press. On 15 September press reports stated that US officials who declined to be identified had made it clear that there was no intention on the part of the United States to reduce troops stationed in Europe. Any major cuts in Europe might precipitate Soviet "probes", and thereby endanger the Western defence. None of the West European countries was ready to take up the slack that would be left by a large US troop withdrawal. The European Allies could not increase their armed forces because of their own economic and political problem. There could

69 Washington Post, 3 September 1966.
possibly be some "adjustments" but no significant withdrawal
was possible so long as the Soviet Union retained twenty divi-
sions in East Germany, the officials were quoted as having
emphasized.

The unnamed officials, however, followed the tried
Administration tactic of using the Senate sentiment to convey
mild warnings and exhortations to the European Allies. They
reportedly agreed with the view that European members of NATO
were not bearing a defence load proportionate to the United
States. While the disparity was marked, European defence efforts
were increasing, and that any move to "punish" Europe by with-
drawing four or five US divisions would be "foolish". Not only
was NATO still recovering from the crisis produced by President
de Gaulle's withdrawal from the integrated military command
system, officials said, but there was also no sign of any Soviet
accommodation in Central Europe. They stressed that the Soviet
Union repeatedly, as in 1961 and 1962, sought to "probe" for
Western weakness around Berlin and elsewhere. "If the United
States brings back four or five divisions, how do you respond
to Soviet probes," an official said.

In a Senate speech on 16 September, Mansfield made sharp
comments concerning the reported views of the unidentified
officials. "Either these 'United States officials' speak for
this government or they do not. If they are speaking in accord

71 Baltimore Sun, 16 September 1966; and New York Times,
16 September 1966.

with the policy of the President of the United States, they ought to have no compunctions about identifying themselves..." he declared. The Senator contended that there had been Soviet "probes" even with six divisions in Europe, and similar "probes" were always possible whether or not there were cuts in US forces. "There are any number of other dire possibilities in Europe, which might grow out of U.S. cuts," Mansfield said. The Albanians, he continued sarcastically, could be emboldened to move against the Yugoslavs or the Greeks; the Austrians might decide to retake the Tyrol from Italy, and the East Germans might probe against the West Germans or the West Germans might probe against the East Germans. The catalogue of the dire consequences could be as endless as the "imagination of the cataloguer." "It is always possible to find not one but a dozen reasons for inertia, for doing nothing...," he declared. Mansfield also announced that he would call the resolution for debate during the latter part of the month or early in October.

The President by this time, was engaged in another manoeuvre to counter the DPC's drive. In the last week of August he had proposed to Britain and Germany the holding of trilateral talks on the troop levels issue. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson's response was prompt and favourable. The reply from Bonn, however, at first apparently was non-committal. "But after candidly exchanging views with me during his visit to Washington late in September, Chancellor [Ludwig]
Brhard agrood to the talks," Johnson wrote in his memoirs.

Significantly, subsequent to the Johnson-Erhard meeting in Washington, there was some change in Mansfield's tone. On 29 September, he said in an interview that regardless of any action in the House or Senate, any troop reduction would have to result from negotiations with America's North Atlantic Treaty partners.

In spite of Mansfield's statement, the President continued his manoeuvre to undercut the DPC's action. On 7 October, in a speech before the National Conference of Editorial writer at New York, Johnson offered "a gradual and balanced revision of force levels on both sides." He said that meanwhile the United States would continue to study what strength the NATO would need in the light of existing Soviet threat, but added, "Reduction of Soviet forces, in central Europe would, of course, affect the extent of the threat."

The President offered other conciliatory proposals in the hope of sweetening a deal to achieve "a new political environment" in Europe. Among these were relaxation of trade with the Communist bloc; providing materials and support for the Fiat automobile Company of Italy in establishing in the

75 Chicago Tribune, 29 September 1966.
76 Washington Star, 7 October 1966; and Chicago Tribune, 8 October 1966.
Soviet Union automobile plants; easing the burden of Communist Poland's debts to the United States; extension of Export-Import bank credits to Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia; and agreement on consular representation in cities other than Washington and Moscow.

It may be pointed out that the President had proposed mutual withdrawal of Soviet and American forces along with other conciliatory proposals. Apparently the speech was intended to project the image of Johnson as a man of peace who would be responsive to constructive moves by the adversary. By stressing the need for mutual reduction of forces, the President sought to induce the public to look upon his Congressional critics as advocates of unilateral action that would weaken US security. Johnson probably calculated that the general mood of the public was not in favour of unilateral action by the United States to reduce its troops with no assurance of corresponding action by the Soviet Union. The speech was also intended to dovetail with the President's approaching "peace" mission to the Pacific, where a conference in Manila was to consider the possibility of ending the war in Vietnam. The President's proposal was a tactical move to tone down the growing Congressional pressure for a unilateral withdrawal of some troops and to reassure the Allies. It is doubtful whether the Administration had any expectation that the move would evoke any positive response from the Soviet Union. The Administration

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believed that the Soviet response to mutual troop withdrawal would be negative because agreeing to such withdrawal would invite criticism from China that the USSR had helped the US to withdraw troops from Europe to be employed in the Vietnam war. Yet the President made the proposal, ostensibly to arouse public opinion in favour of the Administration, and thereby weaken the Congressional moves for unilateral withdrawal of some troops. It may be noted that the Press, an important element of public opinion, was on the side of the Administration opposing the Congressional demand. The Administration took advantage of this development, and the President chose as his forum the National Conference of Editorial Writers to announce his proposal of mutual troop withdrawal.

The President's manoeuvres brought some relief from the Congressional pressure for withdrawal of some troops from Europe. On 18 October, two days before the trilateral talks was to commence, Mansfield said: "It may be informative to the Senate to see what emerges in the way of tangible adjustments in developments during the next few weeks." While announcing that he would favour postponement of Senate action on S.R. 300, the Senator added that President Johnson's move to hold tripartite negotiations in Bonn had reduced only the urgency--not the need--for the Senate to record its views on the troop question. His proposal had 33 sponsors, he asserted. Postponement

78 U.S. Senate, Congress 90, session 1, Combined Subcommittee of Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committee, Hearings, United States Troops in Europe (Washington, D.C., 1967), pp. 8, 58, 63.
of the resolution was "not to bury the question but to enhance it, to sharpen it and prepare for a consideration of the substance of the issue--early in the new Congress," the Majority Leader declared.

Mansfield Introduces Resolution 49

Initially, the trilateral talks had given hopes of an early agreement leading to a possible reduction in US troop levels in Europe, and a resultant reduction of US foreign exchange expenditure. However, by 30 November 1966, when the third session of the trilateral talks had ended, the hopes remained unfulfilled. Indeed, US foreign exchange expenditure increased as the United States agreed to aid Britain by an additional arms purchase in Britain in return for a British promise to maintain its troop strength in West Germany. Whatever might have been the rationale behind such an action, it was bound to alarm Senators.

On 16 December, Mansfield complained that by aiding Britain to meet the cost of its army of the Rhine, the US was "ignoring the essential question" of reduction of its own troops in Western Europe. The Senator who had agreed in October to wait for three months while trilateral talks continued, said that he would not accept "another delay". He announced that he would reintroduce his resolution in the following session and request the Senate to decide whether it

79 Baltimore Sun, 19 October 1966.
would act on it directly or refer it to the concerned Committee.

On 19 January 1967, just a few days prior to the convening of the 90th Congress, the DPC met. By a vote of 12 to 1 the DPC decided that S.R. 300 offered in the 89th Congress should be reintroduced without delay. It was also agreed that the President should be informed of the DPC's intention, and that other members of Senate should be invited to co-sponsor the resolution if they so desired.

Mansfield introduced on 19 January 1967, the Sense-of-the-Senate Resolution 49 calling for "a substantial reduction of United States forces stationed in Europe." The resolution was co-sponsored by 41 Senators—an impressive show of strength. Eight of the co-sponsors were Republicans and the rest were Democrats, including such strong Administration supporters on military issues as Senators Richard B. Russell and Stuart Symington. Soon after introducing the resolution, Mansfield declared that he would leave the resolution on the Senate desk for more signatories before sending it to the Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees for a joint hearing.

Opponents of the S.R. 300, who had objected to Mansfield's efforts in 1966 to get direct Senate action without hearings, lauded Mansfield's decision to accept hearings. But their opposition to the resolution was clearly indicated. In a round of sharp debate Senator Jackson said he looked forward to the testimony of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on a move which, in his

80 Ibid., 17 December 1966.
view, could have "a shattering effect on the strength and morale of the NATO alliance." Senator Albert Gore also expressed a similar view.

Senator Javits made a hard-hitting attack on the resolution. He warned that West Germany might be inclined to make a "deal" with East European countries if it lost faith in America's commitment to the Atlantic Alliance. Germany was in a "terrible state of flux and ambivalence," and there were indications of incipient "neo-Nazism". De Gaulle's hard position on the admission of Britain to the Common Market, would be further stiffened if the United States began pulling out of Europe. There was a possibility of the Soviet Union misunderstanding US troop withdrawal as "a sign of reduced will and dedication to Europe."

In view of such circumstances, it was necessary to counter the Mansfield resolution with an alternative for the Senate's consideration. "I will try to work up some resolution, and see if other similarly minded can join in it, and see if that will perhaps represent an alternative to the resolution of the Senator from Montana," Javits said.

Mansfield responded that the fear voiced over the rise of "neo-Nazism" in Germany was imaginary. He would judge the Germans from what they were in 1967 and not from what they were in 1870, 1914 or 1940. Javits and others who shared his fears were "prisoners of the past." Expressing confidence in the new German Coalition Government of Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger

81 Congressional Record, vol. 113, Part 1, p. 998.
82 Ibid., pp. 1005, 1006.
and Foreign Minister Willy Brandt, Mansfield pointed out that it would be in Germany's own interest to get foreign troops off its soil. "How long are we going to keep them on the Rhine? As long as the Roman legions were there?" the Senator asked.

Jackson interjected that a better question was "how long will the cold war last?" Jackson warned that the Soviet "threat" still remained in Central Europe despite the changes taking place in Eastern Europe. If there were changes for the better in the relations between Eastern and Western Europe, they could only be attributed to the "firm posture of strength" maintained by the Western Allies through the years. Jackson did concede, however, that "we can make some selective cutbacks in manpower."

Mansfield rejected Jackson's version of the "threat in Europe." "Times have changed. We cannot afford to remain prisoners of the past, saying in effect, that our six divisions must stay in Western Europe as long as the cold war is in effect," he asserted.

Chairman Fulbright of the Foreign Relations Committee told the Senate that on the basis of discussions with the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator Russell, it had been tentatively agreed that a Joint Subcommittee should be set up to which resolutions on the troop levels issue were to be referred. Fulbright expressed hope that Mansfield would act as Chairman of the Subcommittee.

83 Ibid., p. 1007.
84 Ibid., p. 1009.
85 Ibid., p. 1010.
It was now time for opponents of the resolution to initiate moves to dilute the resolution and introduce conditional clauses. Senator Joseph S. Clark (Democrat, Pennsylvania) introduced an amendment calling for a "substantial" reduction of forces in Europe only if there was a "parallel" reduction of Soviet forces. Thomas J. Dodd (Democrat, Connecticut), introduced another amendment seeking an extensive Committee study of ways to "reinvigorate" NATO and a report to the Senate on the desirability or otherwise of reducing forces in Europe. His amendment did not exclude the possibility of a significant reduction of American forces stationed in Europe at some future date. A reinvigoration of NATO, combined with improvements in the techniques of modern warfare, might make such a reduction possible, Dodd said.

With the support of such Republican colleagues as Senators Thruston Morton of Kentucky, Edward Brooke of Massachusetts and Robert Griffin of Michigan, Javits introduced a counter resolution--Senate Resolution 83--affirming that the United States should maintain "substantial and effective combat forces in Europe to meet any continuing military threat" in Europe. Any reduction should be made only after consultation with Allies. The resolution also directed the Administration to urge the European partners of NATO to make a greater contribution to the collective security of NATO area commensurate

with their growing economic strength.

After introducing his own resolution, Javits challenged the Mansfield resolution on numerous particulars. He said that the latter was based on the wrong assumption that the breakdown of the Soviet power in Eastern Europe was virtually complete, and that the Soviet challenge to the West had virtually abated.

"The Soviet Union still maintains about 500,000 troops in eastern and central Europe. Its fire power has increased manifold. The Soviet capability is great. We cannot afford to base our policy solely on unknowable Soviet intentions; our prime concern must be Soviet capability, and that is strong and growing," he asserted.

Javits pointed out that there was an assumption in the Mansfield resolution that America's European Allies no longer deserved a substantial US troop commitment in Europe or that by withdrawal of substantial number of troops the United States would somehow pressure it Allies into a greater effort on their own behalf. The assumptions, Javits said, were open to serious question. The best way to convince European Allies to meet their obligations would be for the United States to meet its own obligation. If the US as the leader of the Alliance, were to pull out "three or four" of divisions, it would lead to "panic and disarray" in the Alliance. Western Allies, instead of trying to do more for NATO, "may well feel compelled to make

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87 For the Text of the Senate Resolution 83, See Appendix I.

concession to Moscow that they would later regret," Javits warned.

Javits also challenged what he said was another Mansfield assumption that a substantial reduction in US force in Europe would promote an East-West understanding. He said that while it was hard to speculate on what would make Moscow cooperative or aggressive, it was known that the Soviet Union respected power. "If we were to withdraw both the substance and the symbol of the U.S. Commitment to the defence of Europe—and make no mistake, pulling back three or four divisions at this time would do just that--the Kremlin could well change its colors on very short notice," Javits warned.

Javits had placed Republicans in the position of supporting President Johnson on what the latter regarded as the vital matter of foreign policy in opposition to influential Senate Democrats. The Department of State which had been given an advance copy of the Javits resolution, informed the Republicans that it was in substantive agreement with what Javits was trying to do. The Administration, however, moved cautiously as it was reluctant to take public issue with the Senate Democrats by endorsing the competing, more pro-Administration resolution of Javits.

Mansfield knew the kind of opposition that was emerging, but he voiced confidence that his resolution would be successful.

89 Ibid., p. 3716.
90 Ibid.
"I am delighted," he said, "that Senators Javits and Dodd by their resolution do not oppose the principle of a possible reduction in Europe." He pointed out that 44 Senators had already co-sponsored S.R. 49 which while proposing a substantial troop reduction, left the President free to determine the quantum of reduction. "Personally, I am in accord with the view expressed in the past by President Eisenhower that the deployment of two U.S. divisions in Europe is sufficient at this time," Mansfield declared.

A report released at this time by the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe also favoured a reduction of US troop strength. The report, prepared after a study mission in Europe, emphasized that reduction should come only after full consultation with NATO members. The report expressed the hope that if trilateral talks on NATO strategy and force goals were pursued vigorously, an agreement could probably be reached providing for a "substantial reduction" in US troop levels in Europe.

A White House Meeting And Its Aftermath

On 27 February 1967, President Johnson invited key Congressional leaders to a meeting at the White House to discuss NATO troop levels and balance of payments problem. Those who attended the meeting were Senators Mansfield, Dirksen, Long, Robert Byrd, and Kuchel, House Speaker John W. McCormack,

Congressmen Carl B. Albert (Democrat, Oklahoma), Leslie G. Arends (Republican, Illinois), Hale Boggs (Democrat, Louisiana) and Gerald R. Ford (Republican, Michigan). During the discussion Johnson indicated to Congressional leaders his reluctance to reduce US troop strength in Europe because of his fear that any such reduction might jeopardize European security. Speaker McCormack strongly opposed troop reductions, and he was supported by Congressmen Albert, Arends, Boggs and Ford. However, the Senators were divided in their opinion. Mansfield expressed his opinion that there "was strong sentiment" in the United States for a reduction of US troop levels in Europe. Long and Byrd endorsed Mansfield's point of view. Dirksen was opposed to any reduction on the ground that the Soviet Union would misinterpret such withdrawal.

Moving skillfully the President indicated his eagerness to work for a suitable solution that would meet the sentiments in Congress without impairing security. He spoke of how the Administration was studying the possibilities of adopting a "dual-basing system" that may lead to some reduction in troops. He said:

...two of the three brigades in a division would be moved back to the United States, while the third brigade remained at its German base. From time to time, the German-based brigade would return home and be replaced by one of the other brigades. The entire division would remain ready for combat and committed to NATO. The same dual-basing technique was proposed for our air wings in Europe. (95)

94 Johnson, n. 74, p. 309.
95 Ibid., pp. 308-9.
Johnson assured the Congressional leaders that defense exports were confident that the United States could move the US-based planes and troops back to the central front in Germany on short notice. The dual-basing concept, could materially reduce the dollar flowing into West Germany's foreign exchange accounts. The troops involved would be spending most of their dollars in the United States, Johnson remarked.

Johnson wrote subsequently in his memoirs that none of the key Congressional leaders opposed the dual-basing concept.

On 1 March Fulbright and Russell announced the membership of the Joint Subcommittee to hold hearings on the troop reduction resolutions. Foreign Relations Committee members included in the Subcommittee were Democrats Sparkman, Church, Mansfield, and Fulbright; and Republicans Hickenlooper of Iowa, and Aiken of Vermont. Armed Services Committee members included were Democrats Symington, Jackson, and Stennis; and Republicans Jack Miller of Iowa and James B. Pearson of Kansas.

Significantly at this very point a Staff Study prepared on behalf of the Senate Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations of the Committee on Government Operations made its appearance. It had been prepared on the basis of testimony received on the future of the Atlantic Alliance, in the first half of 1966. It was an interesting coincidence that the study reflected substantially the point of view of the Administration. Its release was probably timed to help the Administration and the anti-reduction elements in Congress as

Ibid.
hearings were to open before the Joint Foreign Relations-Armed Services Subcommittee.

The study argued a "hold-the-line" case. The American military in Europe was "still the hard nub of the Western deterrent" and sufficient troops should remain there to leave "no uncertainty in the Kremlin about our intentions." Without sizable conventional forces, flexibility in times of crisis would be lost and the credibility of the NATO deterrent would be impaired, requiring reliance on nuclear weapons at the outset of any conflict. Further the NATO forces "fortify the diplomatic bargaining position of the West vis-a-vis the East." To cut them "unilaterally" would be to weaken the United States hand in bargaining over "reciprocal reduction" and "genuine European settlement," the report warned.

The study acknowledged that the technological advance in strategic and tactical mobility might eventually permit the redeployment of some combat forces without affecting the conventional deterrent strength of the NATO forces. But it argued that "the experience in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam" was not altogether encouraging in this respect. "A technological advance by one side was often been offset by an advance on the other side."

While conceding that Moscow had moderated its earlier


98 Ibid., p. 7.
truculence, the report warned that it would be dangerous to assume that the future would provide no "tempting" opportunities for the Soviet Union to contrive "a local crisis or conduct probing operations." The Soviet Army was the major conventional military force in Europe, with reserves superior to NATO's, and Russia had "700 to 800 missile launchers" aimed at Western Europe. "A possibility that the Soviet Union may prove willing to make some East-West adjustments does not constitute a reason to pay less attention to the defense of Western Europe."

The study warned that once a substantial body of troops was redeployed from Europe to the US, sending them back to meet exigencies would necessitate a "difficult political decision." Returning too few troops would look "irresolute" while returning too many would look "belligerent." In either case they might get there too late to "prevent a crisis from getting out of control."

The study argued that any decision on troop level changes should flow from decisions by the North Atlantic Council or its Defence Planning Committee, and should be executed with a view to minimizing the danger that their significance would be misinterpreted by the Soviet Union or by the Allied Governments. Security considerations should outweigh financial ones in any troop level decision. While all the Allies had their respective financial problems, they should respond to the common

99 Ibid., pp. 3, 11.
100 Ibid., p. 6.
cause by raising the share each contributed, rather than by pulling out troops and weakening the NATO defence. The report argued that the security mechanism in Europe built over the years should not be lightly discarded. Its unimpaired maintenance was essential to the gradual growth of conditions favourable to a genuine European settlement that would serve "the legitimate security interest" of all concerned.

Senator Jackson enthusiastically endorsed the views emphasized in the study. But a strong attack was launched on arguments featured in it by Senator Pearson in a Senate speech on 22 March 1967. He said that the study sought to convey the explicit or implicit suggestion that those who favoured troop reductions were proposing "a general retreat" from the problems and concerns of the European theater. The suggestion was untrue. Nor would it be true to suggest that proponents of S.R. 49 favoured abrupt or unilateral withdrawal of troops. S.R. 49 did not even attempt to set up a time schedule for unilateral reduction. The resolution in no way precluded a thorough discussion between the American Government and Governments of other NATO countries. Indeed, the co-sponsors assumed that such discussions would automatically flow from the passage of S.R. 49, Pearson said.

Pearson challenged the argument that even such a resolution would erode the credibility of the United States among the

101 Ibid., pp. 8, 9, 15.
Allies. "If the credibility of our pledge to resist the spread of Communism in Europe is still not established, there is little hope it ever will be." Citing a variety of statistical information, the Senator argued that economic indicators left little doubt that the West European countries possessed the economic capacity to maintain the necessary conventional forces. In reality the US troops were in Europe as symbol of a "paternalistic posture." "In essence, it encourages too many Europeans to continue to rely too heavily on the United States," Pearson added.

Pearson's criticisms were endorsed by Mansfield in a Senate speech on 22 March. The Majority Leader was specially critical of any move to depict his resolution as advocating "unilateral" action. He went on to contend that every other nation in Europe except the US had indeed acted unilaterally in many matters. The Danes, the Dutch and the Belgians had reduced their conscription and Luxembourg too was thinking in terms of scrapping conscription. France had not only issued its eviction notice but also withdrawn its committed forces from the NATO command. "All this and more has been done unilaterally by various European nations not as a result of NATO agreements. But when this nation considers doing acting on a similar basis, the cry is raised, 'we should not act unilaterally'," Mansfield said.

104 Ibid., pp. 7559-60.
105 Ibid., p. 7561.
warned.

In reply to a question on the broad political and military purposes served by US forces deployed in Europe, Rusk stated that an effective deterrent against Soviet aggression in Europe required not only nuclear capacity but also sufficient conventional forces to contain hostilities started either by design or accident. The US forces in Europe, and particularly, those stationed in Germany formed the principal element of the effective deterrent. A significant reduction in US forces committed to NATO might result in a corresponding Allied reduction which would affect the military capabilities of NATO to deter Soviet aggression. That would mean a significant increase of Soviet influence. Even a modest increase of Soviet influence in Europe, Rusk continued, would be an "unacceptable political risk" because exploitation of military strength for political purposes would be almost inevitable.

Rusk was, however, careful enough not to take the position that no troop reduction would at all be possible. "Given increasing US airlift capacity and making somewhat broader assumptions as regards probable warning time, we believe that we can redeploy to the US a portion of our forces now stationed in Germany." (This, of course, was the dual-basing concept that Johnson had held up to the Congressional leaders earlier). Rusk argued that it would be imprudent to make any "significant
reduction in the combat capability" of NATO forces because such a course could lead the Soviet Union to believe that the US interest in Europe had diminished.

A number of "security deletions" figure in the reply that McNamara sent to Mansfield. In replying to a question on his estimate of the most likely contingencies which NATO forces should be prepared to meet, McNamara stated:

The most likely contingencies which NATO forces must be prepared to meet within the next few years, in the opinion of the Department of Defense, are (1) limited unexpected conflicts, which might then give rise to larger hostilities; and (2) crises preceded by a period of political tension which could well occur over a period of several weeks, if not months. (108)

On 26 April, the Subcommittee met in executive session at which time McNamara, Katzenbach and Under Secretary of State Walt W. Rostow testified. McNamara informed the Subcommittee that in the trilateral talks with Britain and Germany the US had proposed a redeployment to the United States of approximately 36,000 military personnel from Germany under the dual-base concept. With them 25,000 dependents would return, and 5,000 foreign nationals would also get off the payroll. The Twenty-fourth Infantry Division would be one involved in the rotation plan. At least one brigade of that division and some divisional command and control units would be in Germany at all times. The other two brigades and an appropriate share of divisional and non-divisional support units would be redeployed

108 Correspondence Between Senator Mansfield and Secretary of Defence McNamara, Ibid., p. 117.
from Germany to the United States. The rotation plan provided that the three brigades would succeed each other in Germany—each brigade in turn remaining in Germany, on temporary duty status. Once a year, however, all the three brigades would be in Germany for exercises involving the entire Division. The Army rotation plan would save more than $70 million in balance of payments costs annually, McNamara estimated.

The Defence Secretary revealed that some Air Force fighter, reconnaissance and air defence aircraft would be also redeployed to the US from Germany. The units involved in the rotation would be three tactical fighter wings, based in Germany. While five squadrons would be in Germany at all times, four squadrons would be redeployed to the United States. All the aircraft, would be together in Germany once a year for exercises. McNamara estimated that Air Force rotational programme would result in savings of $16 million a year.

The Secretary informed the Subcommittee that the first movement under the Army-Air Force rotation programmes were planned to take place soon after 1 January 1968, and was expected to be completed by 30 June. The decision to redeploy US troops, McNamara emphasized, in no way affected or reduced the US military effectiveness. "I say that because I think that the Units we bring back to this country can be returned to Europe in less than the time of warning that we could expect Soviet attack...", McNamara said. He added that the ground and air units affected by the move, whether at their United States

109 Testimony of Secretary of Defence McNamara, Ibid., p. 7.
or German base, would remain fully committed to NATO.

When Senator Jackson asked whether it would be wise for the Senate to take action on a resolution calling for a reduction of forces in Europe, McNamara said that he believed it would be "unwise". "I think...that a resolution by the Senate at this time urging withdrawals substantially larger than those we are proposing would have serious political disadvantages to us." A substantially larger troop withdrawal than what was proposed would encourage the Soviet Union to attempt some probes in Western Europe or embark upon pressure tactics with an intention to divert American attention from South Vietnam.

Acting Secretary of State Katzenbach, after going over familiar ground, affirmed that if the United States were to make major withdrawals of troops from Europe, "I think there would be a major tendency in European countries not to try to fill that gap..." On the other hand, they might "begin to search for now and essentially nationalistic answers to this. I think there would be a much greater fear of Germany...."

When Senator Stennis asked about the prospects of mutual withdrawal of Soviet and American forces, Secretary Rusk said:

I am inclined to believe that the Soviets will not negotiate at this point on mutual withdrawal of forces because they are apparently nervous about being charged with negotiating a

110 Ibid., p. 8.
111 Ibid., p. 17.
112 Testimony of the Acting Secretary of State, Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, Ibid., p. 46.
mutual withdrawal in central Europe in a way that would release U.S. forces for Vietnam and bring them under the fire of China. (113)

Katzenbach and McNamara also expressed similar view on this issue in their testimony.

A Small Concession To Deflect A Major Challenge

The Administration's posture of offering to withdraw 35,000 troops and introducing the dual-basing concept was clearly intended to take some wind out of the sails of the Mansfield resolution. On 2 May, it was officially announced that the United States, Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany, after a series of discussions held since October 1966, had agreed to the US proposal to withdraw 35,000 US troops from Germany to America, under the dual-base system. The State Department affirmed that the troop withdrawal would remain committed to NATO, and would be retained in the United States in "full readiness," capable of returning promptly to Europe as and when required there.

The initial Senate reaction to the announcement was favourable. Even Mansfield said that the reductions were "an encouraging start." He added: "I, of course, have never advocated an abrupt, substantial reduction. This is enough for the time being. It is an indication of good faith and of facing up to the realities of 1967." At the same time, he emphasized

113 Testimony of Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Ibid., p. 63.
that his Subcommittee would "keep the issue on the front burner."

Fulbright commented that the announced troop reduction signified "progress". Senator Jackson, on the other hand, warned that the United States should not tempt the Soviet Union by making further cuts in US troop strength in Europe.

Two months later, on 7 July 1967, the West German Chancellor, Kurt Kiesinger, announced that Germany was planning to reduce its defence spending by an estimated €2.2 billion from 1968 through 1971. The West German defence officials, it was reported, stated that the reduction in defence spending would mean a 60,000-man reduction in the strength of the West German armed forces. Mansfield immediately seized the opportunity to raise the issue of reduction of US troops in Western Europe. "I hope we'll take Mr. Kiesinger at his word, and make no effort to take up the slack his policy will create if he goes through it and also will consider further reduction of U.S. strength in Europe," he said in an interview. The Senator also pointed out that the German action had reopened the whole question of Allied force levels in Europe.

On 13 July, Mansfield told the Senate that the American response to German troop curtailment should be a further redeployment of US force from NATO bases in Europe. Members of the Special Combined Subcommittee had been "solemnly assured" by the Administration, Mansfield said, that any reduction beyond


the 35,000 troops covered in the agreement "would have an extremely adverse psychological effect on West Germany." "But now West Germany's highest political officials have shown that their own estimate of the threat from the East permit substantial reductions in the defense budget and military effort." The German action indicated that the number of US troops in Europe was still "excessive". Bonn's announcement of its own troop reduction and a reduction in defence spending cost the trilateral agreement in an unfavourable light. "It now seems clear that the patchwork of financial concessions and agreements on token troop reductions produced by the trilateral negotiations is already coming apart at the seams." Nonetheless, Mansfield described Bonn's action as a "hopeful development." "For it is undeniable," Mansfield explained, "that West Germany's military potential has been a source of suspicion and even fear in both Eastern and Western Europe."

The Johnson Administration's reaction to the German decision was reported to be one of public caution and private dismay. US officials, it was stated, were piqued at Bonn's failure to discuss its plans with the United States after having long insisted on close consultation among NATO members. They feared that the German military curtailment would have a chain-reaction impact, with other nations also reducing their troop commitments to the NATO command.

On 12 July, Chancellor Kiesinger, in an obvious effort to calm the surprise and concern in Washington, wrote a personal letter to President Johnson assuring him that Bonn would make no cut in its troop levels without consultation with the NATO members. American newspapers reported on 11 August, that the West German Cabinet had adopted a long-range military planning guidelines that ruled out any "considerable" reduction in the size of its armed forces from 1968 through 1971. The decision was taken only 48 hours before the Chancellor Kiesinger left Bonn for his first official visit to the United States.

On 15 August, Kiesinger and Johnson had a two-hour meeting in the White House. Later the President said at a news conference that they had discussed the implications of some troop reductions by West Germany, and had agreed that "the strength of the alliance must not be impaired." They had also agreed that there should be full consultations before any decision was made on reducing American or West German forces in Europe.

On 15 September it was announced that the West German Government had decided that it would make no significant reductions in its armed forces in 1968.

The entire episode is quite intriguing. One even wonders

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whether it was a ploy worked out between Washington and Bonn to bring home two points to the American public and especially to Congressional supporters of the Mansfield resolution. First, if the US showed a disposition to take an unilaterial decision on troop levels in response to Congressional pressure, the Allies might do likewise and the Alliance would be in jeopardy. Second, it would be in the common interest if decisions relating to troop levels were made only on the basis of consultations and agreement among the Allies.

Mansfield's position was somewhat weakened by the development. He was also not in a position to raise the issue of troop levels in the Senate because of the civil-rights filibuster that was in progress on the Senate floor.

Three months later the issue of troop levels was again revived when the Administration was reported to be planning to send additional troops to South Vietnam following US military reverses in South Vietnam in January 1968.

**Why Not Transfer Europe-Based Units To Vietnam?**

On 31 January 1968, during the Tet lunar period the Viet Cong launched a major offensive in South Vietnam. North Vietnam and Viet Cong forces attacked thirty-six of Vietnam's forty-four provincial capitals. They hit five of the six largest cities and about one-fourth of the 242 district capitals. The Tet offensive was a major military reverse for US forces in South Vietnam. Even five weeks after the assault, the recovery had hardly begun. Without large American reinforcements,
the US military commanders felt, the situation could not be retrieved.

On 12 February, the Commander-in-Chief of US forces in South Vietnam, General William C. Westmoreland, sent to the Pentagon an assessment of the situation, which included a request for additional troops. The Chairman of the JCS, General Earle Q. Wheeler, forwarded the proposal to President Johnson. On 12 February Johnson and his advisers reviewed Westmoreland's proposal. But no decision was taken. Later the President decided to send Wheeler to Saigon for consultations with Westmoreland. Wheeler left on 21 February for three days of briefings and consultations. He presented his preliminary report on 25 February. The Wheeler-Westmoreland proposal called for additional troops numbering about 400,000.

Meanwhile in the Senate on 27 February, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee Russell voiced uneasiness over the US position in South Vietnam, and expressed the hope that additional US troops would be sent "to reinforce our troops there sufficiently...." Commenting on the Russell's statement, Senator Symington said that if there was a decision to dispatch more fighting men to Asia, the logical source would be trained US troops stationed in Europe. "If these troops in Europe are not utilized, and things in Vietnam get worse, there will not be much more than a corporal's guard of trained men left in the United States to defend this country," Symington asserted. Now

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122 Johnson, n. 74, p. 387.
draftees, Symington added, would have to be trained, but men in Europe were already ready for combat.

The course suggested by Symington was clearly not acceptable to the Administration. On 29 February, at a press conference in the Department of State, the American Ambassador to NATO, Harlan Cleveland, made a statement defining NATO, highlighting its usefulness, and warning against any troop reduction. "It would be an enormous boon to the Soviets if American pre-occupation with Vietnam and Korea, plus strains in the Atlantic Alliance, were to bring about the unilateral withdrawal to United States forces from Europe and the consequent unraveling of the NATO defense system." Raising the spectre of renewed Soviet militancy in Europe, Cleveland warned, that the Vietnam problem should not be allowed to undermine the Atlantic Alliance. A drastic reduction of US forces stationed in Europe would destroy the strategy of "flexible response" adopted by NATO in December 1967, Cleveland said.

Meanwhile, the President and his advisers carried out an intensive review of the Wheeler-Westmoreland proposal for reinforcements to South Vietnam. In a White House meeting on 21 March, Johnson unveiled to Congressional leaders the Administration's plan to call-up 100,000 reserves.


124 Baltimore Sun, 1 March 1968; and News American (Baltimore, Md.), 8 March 1968.

125 Johnson, n. 74, p. 409.
The Administration's move was sharply criticised by Senator Pearson in a Senate speech on 26 March. He suggested that the Administration should consider the major portion of the US military contingent in Western Europe as a part of the pool from which the South Vietnam requirement could be met. Symington too reiterated the same point in a speech the following day. The Missouri Senator was soon to challenge the Administration frontally.

Symington Amendment Seeks
To Impose Ceiling

On 31 March 1968, in a message to the nation, President Johnson announced his decision to send additional troops to South Vietnam. But he did not mention the total number involved in the reinforcements. In a Senate speech on 19 April Symington referred to the requirements of an additional troops in South Vietnam and the refusal of the Administration to draw on troops available in Europe. The financial drain caused by maintaining an unduly large number of US troops in Europe was continuing. Under such circumstances he had sent to the desk an amendment to the defense procurement bill which stipulated: "After December 31, 1968, no appropriation authorized by this or any other Act may be used to support more than 50,000 members of the Armed Forces of the United States on the continent of Europe."

Symington asserted that 50,000 American troops would be sufficient to make sure that no Soviet probe would succeed in Berlin.

or elsewhere in Europe without a direct confrontation with the United States.

Mansfield, Fulbright and Proxmire welcomed and commended the Symington amendment. However, Mansfield expressed the view that the amendment was "very drastic". He suggested that the reduction should be gradual and not carried out "almost immediately." Similar views were expressed by Democratic Senators Howard W. Cannon of Nevada, Joseph S. Clark of Pennsylvania and John J. McClellan. These Senators agreed that the United States had "too many troops in Europe." They favoured troop reductions but they expressed the view that it would be "a serious mistake" to reduce the strength to 50,000. Moreover, they indicated that they did not want to "tie the hands of the Administration arbitrarily to a flat fixed number."

Symington did not press his amendment for a vote in the Senate. Indeed, he withdrew his amendment on the same day. While withdrawing the amendment Symington said: "being a procurement authorization bill, that this is not the time and place to best handle it. I fully intend to bring it up again, however, when the military appropriation bill comes before the Senate."

Later, on 25 June, Symington informed the Senate that although he was urged by many of his colleagues in the Senate, including the Chairmen of several important Senate Committees not to withdraw his amendment, he had done so "at the request of the leadership." He claimed that the amendment would have passed the

127 Ibid., Parts 8 and 14, pp. 10036, 18498.
128 Ibid., pp. 10036-8.
Senate had he decided to put it up for a vote. "I doubt there would have been 10 votes against it," Mansfield said. The Majority Leader warned that if the Administration did not take the hint and did not take steps to bring about a substantial reduction, then Congress itself would face up to its responsibility and take necessary action before too long.

Symington's threat to attach an amendment to the military appropriations bill led a top State Department official, Ambassador-at-large George C. McGhee, to start intensive lobbying in Capitol Hill. The Washington Post reported that McGhee sought to drive home the point that further troop reductions would be very inadvisable unless some arrangements could be made for a similar reduction by the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, some significant events took place which added weight to the arguments of those who believed that the troops committed to NATO should not be reduced without corresponding action by the Soviet Union.

On 11 June 1968, the East German Government imposed restriction on West Germans, which included a passport and a visa requirement for West Germans using the autobahn between West Germany and Berlin. Another set of restrictions took effect on 1 July. These included new taxes and tolls on trucks, buses and barges crossing East German territory to West Berlin.

Though the situation did not assume a crisis proportion, it was

129 Ibid., Parts 8 and 14, pp. 10036, 18423-9.
130 Washington Post, 18 June 1968.
reported that American officials believed that the new flare-up over access to West Berlin would take some of the steam out of the Symington-Mansfield drive.

Also on 11 June it was reported that Bonn and Washington had again reached agreement on a formula to offset the cost of stationing American troops in Germany. It provided for German purchases in the United States some military hardware, and a substantial purchase of US medium-term Treasury bonds. The new one-year agreement was to be effective from 1 July 1968. The arrangement was in line with the Administration's effort to convince Congress and the American public that it would make vigorous efforts to tackle the foreign exchange drain, and make the European Allies to assume a fair share of the burden of NATO defence. Thereby the Administration hoped to counter the demand for a "substantial reduction of US troops in Western Europe.

The third significant event occurred on 25 June when the North Atlantic Council of Ministers in their semi-annual meeting at Reykjavik, Iceland, declared that they favoured "mutual and balanced reduction" of forces with the Warsaw Pact nations as the major concrete step in pursuit of an eventual peaceful settlement in Europe. The over-all military capability of the Alliance, the declaration said, should not be reduced except "as part of a pattern of mutual reductions balanced in scope


and timing." The declaration called upon the Soviet Union and other East European countries to "join in this search for progress toward peace." The Ministers declared that it was desirable that a process leading to a thin-out of military forces be initiated, and promised that "all necessary preparation for discussion on this subject" would be made. The communiqué was, however, not couched in language denoting any immediacy or urgency regarding the objective. Nor did it contain any indication to the Soviet Union and its allies concerning willingness on NATO's part to take the first step.

Perhaps more than the events mentioned, the developments in Czechoslovakia strengthened the Administration stand, and also the elements in Congress which opposed troop withdrawal. From January 1968, liberalizing trends in Czechoslovakia had commenced under the leadership of Alexander Dubček soon after he became the first Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. Press censorship was abolished in March. In April more liberalizing programme called "Action Programme" was launched. The Soviet Union was alarmed by the movement toward individual liberty and expression provided in the "Action Programme." The General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid I. Brezhnev issued a warning letter on behalf of the Central Committee against changing Socialist Community. The following month rumours of a Soviet build-up on Czech border

appeared, and troop movements along the Polish-Czech border was reported.

Though the situation had become tougher than before Symington and Mansfield continued to press their point of view. Both criticized the Washington-Bonn offset agreement and also the "mutual force reduction" declaration of the North Atlantic Council. Mansfield asserted in a Senate speech that the offset agreement did not "cover" the cost of maintaining US forces but only camouflaged those costs. Symington argued that by entering into the offset arrangement West Germany was not only not conferring any favour on the United States but actually reaping some benefit. He told the Senate that far from neutralizing the foreign exchange cost of US troops stationed in Germany, the offset agreement would increase US foreign exchange obligations because the United States would have to pay in Fiscal Year 1968 and 1969 an estimated $70 million interest payment on the Treasury bonds sold to West Germany under the agreement. It was natural, Symington said, that the West Germans and most other nations associated with NATO did not want to see the American forces reduced. "Why should they? They save money because we carry much of their defense burden...; furthermore, they earn a great deal of money from having our troops present in their countries," the Missouri Senator declared.

135 Congressional Record, vol. 114, Part 14, pp. 17731, 18498.
Symington recognized that the Administration had skillfully exploited the concern in Congress and the public over "unilateral" reduction of US forces and had tied the issue of reduction to similar action by the Soviet Union which was unlikely in the near future. Symington argued that it would not be a wise course for the United States to cling to the status quo in regard to troop levels. If the Russians did not reduce their troops, it was in part because of the problem they faced in Eastern Europe—upheaval in Czechoslovakia; moves towards "liberalization" in Poland and Hungary; and Rumania's assertion of its right to an independent course in foreign policy.

Symington said: "Given the present state of affairs in Eastern Europe, do we really think that the Soviets could begin to reduce their forces in East Germany, Poland, or Hungary, now or in the immediate future?" The Senator warned that if the United States waited for the Soviet Union to reduce its forces in Eastern Europe, "we will be waiting—and spending ourselves deeper and deeper into debt—for a long, long time." 136

Symington sought to widen the issue when he pleaded that not only should the United States proceed with reducing its troops in Europe but that it should review its entire commitments around the globe. "It is time, in fact, long past time, for us to begin to control our overseas commitments; and to stop permitting these commitments to control us," he declared. 137

136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
At the end of a two-week visit to East and West European countries, including Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Rumania, Mansfield stated in an interview at Frankfurt on 18 August 1968, that he was more convinced than ever that the United States should substantially reduce its military forces in Europe. The NATO and Warsaw Pacts, he asserted, were no longer "necessarily the answer to the problem of peace in Europe now." While he did not think that the Atlantic Alliance should be ended, he was firmly of the belief that the primary responsibility for military preparedness should be shifted to the European countries, and the United States should consider a "graduated withdrawal of one division and its dependents each year.

Mansfield asserted that large reductions would in no way diminish the American commitment to Western Europe. "The presence of a U.S. regimental combat team in Berlin alone makes it certain that if anything happened we would be involved," he said. The Senator dismissed the West German effort to retain major US forces in Germany by buying US Treasury bonds as "the phoniest deal I have ever seen." "That's no sharing costs," he remarked, "but making a profitable investment."

Support for the Symington-Mansfield position remained stationary and its prospects were not advanced in the context of the adverse developments in South Vietnam, concern over erosion of the NATO Alliance, and the compulsions of the election

138 Chicago Tribune, 19 August 1968.
campaign. Strong opposition to US troop reduction was voiced by a House Special Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee. The Subcommittee headed by Congressman Porter Hardy, Jr. (Democrat, Virginia) made public on 24 August its report prepared after a 13-month investigation of the Vietnam war and its impact upon world wide US military commitments. Members of the Subcommittee had visited US installations in Europe and the Mediterranean in April and May 1968. In its report the Subcommittee declared that US forces "in Europe and in the Mediterranean have suffered as a result of the high priority requirements in Vietnam for both men and equipment." The weakening of US forces in Europe and Mediterranean had proceeded to such a degree that the Soviets might be tempted to test them, the report said.

The report declared that strength of the Warsaw Pact was "not only growing but improving as a military force." The armed forces of the Warsaw Pact were receiving "extensive training in the use of new weapons and concepts," and possessed an "impressive" inventory of artillery and rockets. Communist equipment was "modern and effective", and the adversary also had a fighter plane which could fly at three times the speed of sound. On the other hand, US air power in Europe suffered from a shortage of aircraft and parts and sufficient crew strength. The expansion of Soviet naval activities in the Mediterranean had placed "the security of Southern Europe in a
very real jeopardy," the report asserted.

Summing up its comments on the military power of the Soviet Union and its Allies, the report observed:

Based on the foregoing capability of the Soviet bloc in Europe, the Subcommittee well understands the concern of our NATO military commanders in their assessment of threat. This is magnified by our own weakened force redeployments and drawdowns to support our forces in Vietnam.

It is the view of this Subcommittee that any reduction of force levels would be due more to political and financial pressures than to a realistic assessment of the threat. (142)

Soviet Action in Czechoslovakia
Styming Troop Reduction Demand

Though the report was released on 24 August, it had been written sometime earlier—well before 20 August. On 20-21 August, at the initiative of Soviet Union the Warsaw Pact forces entered Czechoslovakia, and subsequently Alexander Dubcek was ousted as the First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, and a new party and government leadership was established that was more amenable to the Soviet Union than the Dubcek group. The developments in distant Czechoslovakia dealt a severe

141 Ibid., pp. 53, 55.
142 Ibid., pp. 55, 52.
143 On 21 August, the First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Alexander Dubcek, Prime Minister Oldrich Cernik were arrested and later taken to Moscow. On 23 August the Czech President, Ludvik Svoboda joined them in Moscow. In Moscow, Leonid I. Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, did not demand Dubcek's resignation. However, he insisted that they must sign the Moscow Protocol, providing among other things the stationing of Warsaw Pact forces in Czechoslovakia. For the time being, Moscow left Dubcek, Cernik and Svoboda to continue in office till it found a

(Contd. on next page)
blow to reduction demand in the United States. On 22 August Mansfield said in an interview that the Czech crisis had forced him to abandon his position. "In view of the realities of the situation," he told newsmen, "it would be psychologically bad in my opinion to even consider at this time the possibility of reducing U.S. forces while the Soviet Union and its allies are carrying on the sort of activity which is now in effect." He announced that he expected no further action on his resolution urging a substantial reduction of U.S. forces in Europe. He had reversed his position with "greatest reluctance and sadness." There was "no choice but to maintain" the existing position, Mansfield declared. Senator William Proxmire (Democrat, Wisconsin) said dolefully that not only was the chance of a troop reduction gone, but "the prospect of an additional expensive U.S. build-up in Europe seems very real." 144

Senator Symington said that the new situation certainly called "for a reexamination," but he declined to join Mansfield in abandoning his earlier position. He said he would prefer to

suitable successor. By the end of 1968, Moscow found a trusted successor in former Deputy Premier and First Secretary of Slovak Communist Party Gustav Husak. Husak eroded Dubcek's power slowly with the connivance of Moscow. On 17 April 1969, the Central Committee elected Husak as the First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, replacing Dubcek. Fairly soon after Dubcek's removal from power, there was total elimination from position of influence all those who in 1968 had expressed any kind of view on individual liberty and freedom of expression. For details see, Eugen Steiner, The Slovak Dilemma (London, 1973).

144 Washington Post, 23 August 1968.
await further developments. Senator Jackson, the principal Senate opponent of troop reductions, said that he agreed with Mansfield's conclusions but not with his reasoning. "I don't think our troops are there just for psychological purposes but to end once and for all the idea that we would come back to Europe only after it had been invaded and overrun," Jackson declared.

In a Senate speech on 13 September Mansfield expressed the view that the United States could hardly make substantial reduction in US forces in Western Europe while the Soviets had increased their forces in Eastern European countries. He said:

...a reduction in the U.S. contingents in Europe in present circumstances could be subject to misinterpretation in both West and East, and might conceivably lead to serious miscalculations. That is a risk which, it seems to me, we would be unwarranted in taking at this time, in our interests and in the interest of peace. It was that risk which led me to suggest a temporary deferment of the question. (146)

Although Mansfield changed his stand in view of what he regarded as a greatly changed situation, he did not call for an increase in US troop levels in Europe. He told the Senate that he did not believe that the number of US forces in Europe should be increased because of the Czech crisis. But Senator Jackson had no such reservations. In a Senate speech Jackson insisted that with the "military balance in central Europe" favouring Moscow, it was imperative for the US and other NATO members to strengthen their "combat-ready forces" in Europe. "We should move promptly

145 Baltimore Sun, 23 August 1968.
to bring American combat units in Europe up to full strength, return needed specialists and longer experienced officers, and increase the scale and quality of U.S. troop training and maneuvers in Europe," Jackson demanded.

On 15 October 1968, the Senate Special Combined Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations and the Armed Services Committees, headed by Mansfield, reported that there was a division of opinion within the Subcommittee on the question of substantial reduction before the Czech crisis. However, after the Czech crisis all the members of the Subcommittee were agreed in respect of one conclusion: "The invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia have had a profoundly disturbing effect on the political atmosphere all over the world but particularly in Europe. In the present unsettled conditions, the time is obviously not propitious for substantial reduction of U.S. forces in Europe."

The troop levels issue cropped up again the Senate in 1969 when the tension and anxiety that surrounded the Czech crisis had subsided. The newly installed Nixon Administration continued the course of its predecessor. An EUSC meeting decided on 19 November 1970 against an unilateral withdrawal of US troops from Europe. In the Senate, Mansfield and others reacted by again introducing in May 1971 a resolution seeking a substantial withdrawal of US troops from Europe. The Administration

147 Ibid., Part 22, p. 29277.
prepared for a showdown. A major lobbying campaign was launched and finally the Mansfield and other troop withdrawal resolutions were defeated in a Senate vote. These developments, however, are outside the purview of the present study.