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~~TOP SECRET~~

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T.A.G. CHARLTON  
SECRETARY

15th September 1950

New York

TOP SECRET

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL  
(Verbatim Record Initiated for the Information  
of Ministers only)

MR. ACHESON (United States): I shall be glad, as I suggested this morning, and as Mr. Bevin has just suggested, to give you the views of our government on this question, and I should be glad to do it by presenting the views on this particular question of German participation as part of our entire conception of a program and not as an isolated matter. In the first place, may I make one or two preliminary observations? It seems to me that we have developed around this table today a very large area of agreement. There is also an area which is fairly large, not of disagreement, but of uncertainty as to just what the program might be, of what the issues are, and lack of clarity as to whether we were talking about a decision or an announcement.

Perhaps we can throw some light on that also. Mr. Stikker pointed out, and I think everybody has agreed with it, that the very foundation of building security and defense is in the morale and will of the people who are called upon to do it. He has pointed out how impossible it is to get the necessary morale and will to resist and to fight, if necessary, unless the conception on which the whole defense system is based, and the magnitude of the effort, is such that the people who are called upon to make this effort have some hope of success, and are not told at the very outset that the plan is really unworkable and that large parts of their country have got to be abandoned to the enemy in the interval. So he went on to point out, and other speakers and I endorsed what he said, that the defense must be as far to the East as possible. That means defense in Germany. If that is true, it seems to me to follow inevitably that the morale and the will to resist of the German people has become a major element in the whole defensive system of the West.

Surely, no one would be mad enough to advise that forces of our countries should undertake to fight in Germany in the midst of a population whose morale had been allowed to go to pieces, where defeatism and collaboration with the enemy were rampant. That would be surely an invitation to disaster. So the morale of the German people is a matter with which we are concerned, as we are concerned with the morale of the whole area which we have undertaken to defend. Really, it must appear to the Germans and to all of our people that the consequences of giving up Germany, either through lack of military effort to hold it, or lack of preparation which even allows us to begin to hold it, are far too serious to admit of any doubt. If we move out of Germany or are thrown out of Germany by an enemy, what happens is, first of all, that the consequences, to the North Atlantic countries are

disastrous. Secondly, we would be turning over to a potential enemy, or an actual enemy resources of production and manpower which would so augment the enemy's strength that our problem would become, if not unmanageable, at least extremely unwieldy.

At our last meeting in London Mr. Bevin and Mr. Schuman and other Ministers made statements which were very moving because they were simple and very true. They bore on this question of the will to resist and morale. They pointed out that a successful defense of Europe could not be organized unless it were clearly understood at the beginning that what we were forging was defense and not liberation. Those statements and the profound truth which lies behind them has made a very deep impression on our Government. The Government of the United States has searched its intentions deeply in the months which have intervened and has come to decisions which I think can only be described as a complete revolution in American foreign policy and in the attitude of the American people. These conclusions I wish to lay before you - not as actions to be taken by us in isolation but as conclusions which are intended to fit in to a comprehensive effort by all of us and as conclusions which hang together as part of a unified program. No one of these conclusions is practicable if put forward by itself. Taken together we believe they will lead to a program - if sufficient effort is put into it - which would deter aggression against any of us and repel it if it should occur.

The first of these proposals is one which the President has referred to publicly. That is that the US Government will, at the very earliest possible moment, place in Europe, in addition to the forces which it has there now, very substantial bodies of troops. Those troops will go there, as I said, at the earliest practical moment.

In addition to that, it is ready to raise, identify and commit as reinforcements to those troops, to go whenever the need calls for them, additional bodies of troops.

This, of course, means that if there were troubles in Europe, the US would be involved in it from the very first moment and would be as deeply committed to the repulse of any attack as any member of the North Atlantic Community.

That, I say, is a far-reaching conclusion for our Government to make. In making it, of course, we must look to the next step and that is in connection with what other decisions about a force for the defense of Europe are made.

The mere presence of a body of American troops in Europe is not going to solve the problem. Therefore, we have thought further about the matter and it has seemed to us that our present conceptions are inadequate and that we must press on with a much bolder conception - one of creating a military force completely integrated, as Mr. Bevin has said, a force made up of identifiable units which have been contributed and turned over by their Government to this unified force for the defense of Europe, units which will be increased as other men are called to the colors and further equipment is made available for them - a force to which we can look, believing it will be adequate for the task which it is called upon to do.

It is not our suggestion that we become part of a hopelessly inadequate force but of a force which over a period of time (which we think is the proper time) will be adequate for its task.

That means, as I say, not some vague statement that everybody's troops are part of this force - as merely a form of words - but that units are identified and this division and that corps and this army become a part of this force and that further forces are committed to it, both as a matter of accretion and as a matter of addition in case of hostilities.

Our thoughts go still further and it seems clear to us that this force which we can identify and we can see must have a central military organization. Without confusing anybody by using terms that I don't understand, generally speaking, there must be something in the nature of a staff (or whatever the central organization of an army is properly called by soldiers) which will administer and train and control this army, and of course that goes to the inevitable conclusion that there must be someone at the top who commands. Whether he is called Commander in Chief or Supreme Commander is not my function, but there must be the organization presided over by a head man.

Let us not get distracted in the details of this. It is enough to say that in our view it is essential that he be appointed at an early date, but I do not want to get into the absurd position of appointing a Supreme Commander and a staff when he has no soldiers. That makes the whole situation ridiculous but at an early date when this force can be brought into being - and brought into being with the utmost speed - then the central organization, and a central command seems an inescapable requirement.

If what I have said so far does not make it clear, may I make it unmistakably clear. I am talking about one

integrated staff, not a series of staffs which have liaison between them but one staff, commanding one force and subject to one man. This whole force will be integrated, controlled and commanded by one central military organization.

Now, such a force will require a great deal of equipment in the shortest possible time - modern, efficient, effective equipment. We have already taken steps in the US to expand our own production of that sort of equipment to the utmost limits. We are willing to go further than that and participate with you, if you wish, in a complete reorganization of the Military Production and Supply Board so that instead of having merely a planning organization for production, we can get an action body which will be of the greatest assistance and help to the various Governments represented here in utilizing every possible element of European production to produce to the full everything that it can produce and see that raw materials are available and that the production goes immediately to a useful destination.

Mr. Bevin has spoken of another matter which is inevitably connected with this total effort and that is the matter of finance. We have already taken steps to make funds available for this whole production effort at the outset, and as Mr. Spofford said this morning we agree pretty strongly with the Deputies that this High Priority Production Program should be put into effect immediately, and we would be willing to work out the financial problems of that within the next few days.

Thereafter there will be larger financial problems. Those will require additional effort and additional organization, but we should like to see organization reduced to the minimum on this so that we can take practical steps and immediate steps to get wheels turning, to get production going forward, to have programs put into effect, so that the goods may be turned out at the earliest moment. We are willing to consider with you any method that seems simple for doing that. Our basic thought in approaching it would be that if any of our partners in this effort find and convince us that, having made all the effort and all the sacrifices that a people might reasonably be expected to make toward defending their own existence and freedom, and their continuance as a nation. They find that they cannot do things which they otherwise could do if financing were forthcoming. We will cooperate in solving those problems.

It is in the light of that conception of a program that I should like to talk about the question of Germany. I approach it from the point of view of what I said at the

outset - that everyone seems to be agreed that the defense must be to the East, in Germany, and everyone seems to agree that the loss of Germany would create problems of the greatest difficulty for all of us. In that situation and in view of the fact that the Chancellor of the Western German Republic has offered to participate in this effort, both in the field of production and in the field of manpower, we are faced with the decision as to what we do about that. Do we repulse this offer? Do we encourage it? What is our basic decision?

Now I am not going to spend too much time this afternoon talking about methods. I understand that this question bristles with difficulties, but I want to get right at the heart of the question which Count Sforza spoke of. We are at the threshold in this decision. We must go through or we must turn aside. We cannot stand shivering on the doorstep, unable to make up our minds what we are going to do. After we make up our minds, it may take us some time to do it. It will take adroitness to do it. A great many items will enter into our conduct, both things that have to do with time, things that have to do with method, many things which have to do with the form of announcement, and all of that; but the basic point is, what is our will? Do we believe that this program contemplates, indeed almost necessitates the participation of Germany, or do we think that we should repulse Germany and insist that all of us go to even greater sacrifices to defend German territory and the German people without requiring them to make some of the sacrifices which we are going to make - particularly when they have offered to do it.

Approaching it in that way and trying not to get lost in a myriad of details, to get our wills plain, what is our purpose? Are we desirous of bringing in German help and the assistance of Germany or do we want to turn it away? I am going to argue with you in favor of coming to that basic decision in principle: that we are in favor of the proper way, under proper announcements and without being suppliant or insistent. All those questions I have put to one side. But we are in favor of encouraging and of bringing about at the earliest possible date German participation.

Now, in talking about it let us put to one side one confusing element, and that is this question of German police. There is a need, a great need for German internal security police, whether it is a gendarmerie or a garde mobile, or whether it is federally controlled or part federal and part state, or how ever it is, there is need for that. But that does not solve the problem that we are talking about this afternoon. That sort of a force is not going to be the kind

of a force which can oppose or help us oppose the Bereitschaften from Eastern Germany, nor can it oppose any Soviet invasion if that occurred. The whole police matter is an internal security question. If it is not, then we are merely deceiving ourselves with a word and talking about the very thing that I am talking about, so let us assume that in talking about police we are talking about internal security and lay that aside for the moment with the thorough understanding on my part that I believe some internal security police are necessary.

May I go for a moment into some matters of a more detailed nature (although not of an infinite detail) both as to what I do not mean and as to what I do mean. In doing this I am not bringing these matters up with the thought that they should be decided at this time but in order to get perfectly clear what I am proposing and what I hope can be looked at in principle.

In the first place, what is it that I do not mean? I do not mean a German national army. I do not mean an army which is commanded by Germans, supplied by Germany, directed by a German general staff, and which might be in a position to join with the Eastern German army to take action against us. I agree with everything which has been said about the evils of German militarism and the importance of not allowing it to be recreated. None of these things do I mean at all.

Trying to be a little more specific as to what I do mean, I mean that ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> a proper time - and I will go back to the timing of ~~this~~ <sup>the</sup> whole suggestion in a moment - at a proper time German units, beginning with a few and then perhaps getting ~~more~~ <sup>more</sup> German units, would be raised by the German Government, paid by the German Government and uniformed by the German Government. Those units would be incorporated in and would be under the command of the force for the defense of Europe. I should hope that the unit of the German force might be kept quite low, so that units would be brought in with other units, American or Canadian or British or French or Dutch or whatever they might be, into larger units, but they would be incorporated into European force, would be commanded by that European command structure. Also, the ordnance for this force should be produced outside of Germany, so that it would not have the capacity for independent action. Furthermore, its equipment should be of such a nature that it would be of little use unless it remained as part of this force for the defense of Europe. That is the nature of the general suggestion which I am laying before you.

One further word on this aspect of the matter. What I wish to picture here is a situation under which these German units would come into the larger force on wholly honorable

terms. They would not be people who were mere mercenaries in some foreign army. They would come in in a dignified and honorable way and would serve with others who were being treated in the same manner. If there were German officers of higher than the rank necessary to command these units, who had shown their loyalty and ability, there would be no objection to their use in the general command structure. There should not be - and I wish to emphasize this - there should not be a separate German army in any sense of the word at all.

Now, may I come to this time factor? There have been suggestions during the course of our discussions that perhaps it was not necessary for us to face this question right now; that we could pass it over and at some later date, in some months, take it up and think about it. I am not now saying that this is a question which I think you have to decide tonight, but the suggestion has been made that in the future, after we have gained some strength we can consider this question. That I think is wrong and I think can be demonstrated to be wrong. The question is, how long do you think it should be before these units from Germany are effective units in addition to the European army? In my opinion it should not be very long because I think as we gain strength, visible, demonstrable strength in Europe, it greatly minimizes the chances of aggression and greatly maximizes the chance of over-turning the aggression.

Now, how long would it take in any ordinary way even to collect such a force? We must have it in mind that at the present time there is no branch of the German Government which would deal with this sort of question. There is no legal right in the German Government to do this. There must be constitutional changes. There must be a great deal of discussion in Germany to make up their minds whether they really would be enthusiastically in favor of such a proposal. I think they would, but that takes some time. There is not in Germany even a list of the young men of military age. All those lists have been destroyed. Therefore, the very beginning of finding the people that you want has to start from the foundation and work up.

After you get a group of young men and want to train them, experience has shown that it takes pretty nearly two years to get a man from civilian life until he is ready for combat. It might be shortened. But it takes about two years. So you see that you already have a considerable period stretching ahead, and therefore if anyone wishes to act in this matter so as to be effective at an important time in the development of Western European strength, one must begin to act pretty soon.

In connection with this problem, the thought has been raised, would this interfere with the equipping of the members of the North Atlantic Treaty? In my judgment it would not. One knows from experience in the last war that in producing equipment in great volume, there is a period of from 18 months to two years in which very little equipment comes off the production line, and then there is a period where it pours out in a great flood. During the period of scarcity, it seems hardly possible even to imagine how the Germans could use any large amount of equipment. These units when raised do not have to be fully equipped at the outset. A small amount of training equipment is sufficient for that purpose, and one would hope that by the time even some of these units were ready to receive equipment there would be a very large amount of it coming off the line. Furthermore, at the present time, the North Atlantic Powers have troops which are now raised and are now in barracks and awaiting equipment. They have the whole machinery for calling up troops. They have the whole machinery for building other units. They will be ready far ahead of any German units, and if, as and when these German units are raised, are trained, and are equipped, there will be - we hope and believe - and we must believe - a very substantial force for the defense of Europe into which they can be fitted.

What I have said about the priority of equipment question was to point out that in my judgment not even the opportunity would exist to divert equipment from the arming of member nations of this Council to that of the proposed German units, even if one were foolish enough to do that, and of course that idea would not occur to anybody who has been thinking about this proposal. The flow of equipment would be entirely in the control of powers other than Germany. That can be of course handled and will be handled to the complete assurance of everybody involved in this great North Atlantic effort.

May I mention just briefly one or two other factors. I agree, as I said earlier, that however this is done it should not be done in such a manner as to give the Germans the idea that they can bargain about it. They have made an offer. In discussing it with them it should be discussed on that basis, not as asking anything from them but as considering how and in what manner they can do what they have asked to be allowed to do.

I similarly agree that the presentation of this, both to the Germans and to the public, is of the greatest importance, and I am not prejudicing that in any way, I hope, by what I have said.

There is one other matter that I would like to touch on. It has been suggested that doing something along this line might provoke the Russians to military action which they might not otherwise take. It does not seem to me that that fear stands up very well under analysis. I do not believe that the mere fact that one is talking of raising some German units would bring about a provocation, would provoke an attack. If there should be an attack, I presume it would come from Russian fear that we were gaining strength. I don't suppose they care whether we are gaining our own strength or how we are gaining it. That would be the thing which they might take as the occasion for action. Certainly that is not going to deter us. We are not going to stay weak because if we get strong enough to resist attack we may bring it on. That is a chance we have to run. We have to run it with our eyes open, and that is one reason why I think speed is so important. Here it seems to me that every element of strength added at the outset reduces our chances of our being attacked before we get enough power to really deter or resist attack.

Let me add one other sentence or two and I am through. What I have tried to do is to present to you our whole thinking on this subject, present it as one unit as it really is. All of these matters fit into one another and interrelate. I hope later in the evening that we can produce a short memorandum which will put some of the things that I have tried to say today in a way that would let you refresh your minds about them and perhaps tomorrow we can go to work and present for your consideration some ways - or maybe you can think of some ways - of presenting this or considering it further which would be agreeable to you. But the last thought I want to leave with you is that we are not now proposing that all these complicated details have to be decided but merely that we should have a will as to whether in talking with the Germans on a proposal which they have made we wish to have that proposal result fruitfully or whether we do not. It seems to me that we are really at the crossroads with Germany at this present time, and Germany seems to me to be in a state where it will either come along and be a good member of the Western community and be allowed to come into it and take a full part and help, or it will begin to hedge and begin to have defeatism, and other forms of internal dryrot in morale will take place. There isn't much time to hesitate about it, and with that thought I am through.

May I say something which is a little embarrassing but nevertheless highly desirable at this point, and that is that our discussions today have been subjects of the utmost

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delicacy. I think everybody who has been in the room today should be very clear that we say nothing about this at all in any way to the press or to anyone outside of our official Delegations, and then we must tell them to be very careful also because all the dangers that Mr. Bevin and M. Schuman have pointed out will occur through a report of our conversations even though we made no decision. I would therefore suggest that the general line that we take should be merely that we have met today and that we have reviewed and reassessed our accomplishments and our plans in the light of events which have occurred since our last meeting and we will continue along that line tomorrow. I think the press officers could add that the Council also received the report of the Deputies and they listened to an exposition of that report by the Chairman of the Deputies.

M. SCHUMAN (France): (Translated) Shall the discussion on this subject continue tomorrow?

MR. ACHESON (United States): Tomorrow at 10:30, if that is agreeable to you. Until then we will recess.

(The meeting was closed at 7:55 p.m.)

- END -