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The Atlantic Pact—

An Open Letter to the People of the United States

"Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation?—Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground?—Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European Ambition, Rivalship, Interest, Humour or Caprice?" (Washington's Farewell Address.)

To the People of the United States:

We have arrived at a decisive moment in American history. The question involved in ratification of the "North Atlantic Pact" is this: *Shall we, by interweaving our destiny with that of Western Europe, surrender American sovereignty? Or, shall the Pact be rejected and our independence be maintained?*

Let our choice be clear. We can have the Pact and surrender American independence. We can keep our independence and reject the Pact. We cannot have both.

No matter how skillfully it may be denied, adoption of the Pact means we surrender our own right to decide, ourselves, the destiny of the United States. Like most questions raised by the internationalists, this question is purposely beclouded. They do not frankly say now that ratification of the Pact will mean the die is cast. But at some future time, they will contend that America is already committed.

Are You Told the Truth?

Few news writers will tell the American people the stark nature of this decision. Already you, the people, are in process of being utterly misinformed, as when you are told by men who ought to know better that the Pact exists, not to wage war, but "to wage peace," which is meaningless.

The Pact is a show of force, wherein the gage of battle is flung upon the doorstep of the Kremlin. That "Peace" may be the object of those who fling it down does not alter the nature of the act. In throwing down that gage, we liquidate the experiment in independence begun July 4, 1776. Ratification of the Alliance will be the Act of Repeal of the Declaration of Independence. Our destiny will then depend upon others.

That is the real issue. Let the battle be fought out upon it, not with phony slogans, and phony, misleading issues. Let the maintenance or surrender of American independence be decided on the merits of the case. But let us not *surrender* our American independence upon the supposition that the Alliance will *preserve* it. If we must walk to the block, let us not go blindfolded.

Now, if ever, the future of the American Republic depends upon achievement of utter realism. And our nation is today as never before "the ark of freedom's foundation" in the all-but-universal deluge of our century. If America falls, freedom falls.

If this Alliance would help preserve America, we should be for it even if it involved a break with tradition. But it will not help preserve America. Its effect will be the very opposite: it will mean the destruction of America. The Pact is a measure neither of intelligence nor necessity, but another crowning evidence of the incompetence and culpable ignorance of those in charge of American policy at the very top level.

Where Is the Intelligence?

First, let's clear away some underbrush. The good intentions of some supporters of the Pact are immaterial. The road to Hell is paved with good intentions. Sincerity is no substitute for intelligence. The noblest of men can be killed if he steers his car over a cliff in the naïve belief he is on the highway. Mere good intent is no evidence the good intender is a realist.

The Atlantic Pact is a final repudiation of the basic concepts of the United Nations. With this step, America abandons the philosophy of "collective security" and embraces the philosophy of balance-of-power-alliances. No words of UN employees, delegates or anybody else can obscure this fact. All the pious talk about the Pact being "within the framework of the Charter" is eyewash, and every informed person knows it.

The National Economic Council has never had faith in the two attempts of our times to guarantee peace through "collective security." It was never really collective, and it brought more danger than security. The League of Nations was always more of a net irritant in world affairs than an emollient. The fiction that its failure was due to the absence of the United States from its membership is palpably absurd. Its failure was due simply to the fact that the vital interests of its members were not identical but divergent, and each nation acted to serve what it believed to be its own vital

interest—as anybody but an imbecile should have been able to predict.

The same situation developed in the UN, only much more quickly. “Collective security” is a dangerous illusion so long as divergent interests persist. So-called “statesmen” who ignore this primary fact are barely competent to be village selectmen.

Today, “statesmen” of this or smaller caliber who happen to have charge of the fate of millions of people, find these facts pressing in upon them. But they refuse to admit their miscalculation, even while abandoning the whole stupid mess. They have talked about “collective security” so loud and so long that in the very act of burying it, they tell us that the new Pact is “within the framework of the Charter.”

Nor has the National Economic Council any faith in the new “balance of power.” It is a bankrupt solution offered by bankrupts to conceal their failures.

Alliances to create power balances are about the oldest device known to history. Millennia ago, Egypt and the various great powers that succeeded each other in the East, habitually built up balance of power combinations against each other. They were all designed to “preserve peace,” and they invariably resulted in war. The balance-of-power philosophy has dogged rulers of nations from the beginning of time, and of all the devices of statecraft it is perhaps the most discredited. The nearest it ever came to success was when in the latter half of the nineteenth and the first fourteen years of the twentieth century, Britain kept the continent of Europe in uneasy balance. But even that apparent success turned into the greatest disaster of recorded history. It gave us the two World Wars. So now we are going to try it again!

How Balance Unbalances

The reasons why the balance-of-power theory always fails are simple. It *exacerbates* irritations between nations by investing every dispute with a graver possible consequence. Each side of the “balance” grows more suspicious of the other. General wars are made easier to start because, if a nation on one side gets into a dispute with a nation on the other, all nations of both combinations are automatically drawn in. Conflicts, instead of being localized, become universalized. Gasoline, not water, is thrown on the fire. Small nations belonging to one combination, emboldened by their alliance with more powerful nations, become truculent. Human nature being what it is, combined with the fact that disputes always arise, makes the final result mathematically predictable. The perfect example of this is how the nations were drawn one by one into World War I over a local dispute between Austria and Serbia. Had Serbia not been under the protection of Russia, and had Austria not been allied with Germany, there would have been no World War in 1914.

Knowledge of such facts by Washington and the other founding fathers prompted them to urge their own generation, and their posterity (ourselves) *not* to enter entangling alliances. Their views were not parochial. They were the result of profound insight into the lessons of history. Nor were they in any essential sense based upon the existence of the “Atlantic Barrier,” as has so often been falsely represented. Washington knew that the Atlantic was no barrier, but a naval highway. Had he not just led a victorious war against an enemy from the other shore? The reason why Washington’s advice is different from that of our

current “statesmen” is that those who control our destiny *now*, are ignoring history. Those who ignore the past are doomed to repeat the errors of the past.

But it may be asked, “If you are against ‘collective security’ and also against a balance-of-power alliance, what are you for?”

Theodore Roosevelt once said, “Speak softly and carry a big stick.” Give no provocation you can avoid, but be prepared to fight if you must.

The so-called North Atlantic Alliance exactly reverses this sound counsel. We are not walking softly. We are marching to rolling drums. Nor do we have a big stick, though we are talking about getting one.

The atomic bomb, contrary to popular superstition, is not the kind of big stick which military planners need for the Alliance. The atomic bomb is a terrifying weapon, and a major factor in all military calculations. But it is a commonplace of present-day military thinking that if the nations of Western Europe are to resist the Soviet Union in case of war, and thus be profitable members of the Alliance, they must be “re-armed.” That is, entirely apart from the Bomb, the armies of our European partners might as well not exist unless they are adequately equipped to offer real resistance to the Russians in the field. For the Atom Bomb could not be decisive against armies deployed for action.

What degree of re-armament would prevent Russia from rolling to the Atlantic in a fortnight? Military experts say that it would take at least fifteen armored divisions and fifty divisions of other types to hold off the Red Army for any considerable time. That is about the minimum, and more would be better.

Equipment for a lesser force would be 100 per cent wasted—would be like trying to span a hundred-foot chasm with a forty-foot bridge.

Now, Look at the Budget

What would such adequate re-armament cost? That is a vital question, because there are limits to what the American economy can stand. Even if the idea were sound, we would still have to inquire first whether we have the means to carry it out. Unless we are ready to surrender our liberties to a slave state of our own.

The present cost of equipping one armored division is about \$250,000,000. So fifteen would cost us \$3,750,000,000. That does not include the cost of training personnel, pay and maintenance of men and machines, or ammunition and gasoline. There is a pious hope in Washington that our Allies might supply these items—but we had better forget that. Only our Marshall Plan money now keeps the budgets of the Socialist countries of Western Europe in anything resembling balance. How could they shoulder the cost of re-armament?

Yet the armored divisions are only the beginning. Fifty other divisions must be equipped, too. We must provide them with vast quantities of *materiel* whose cost to us in dollars would be perhaps fifteen billions, but whose cost in exhaustion of our own material resources could be disastrous. Most of the equipment would have to come from the United States because Western Europe cannot manufacture such items in quantity. Marshall Plan and re-armament requirements for Europe could easily cost 30 to 50 billions during the next four years.

This does not take account of the military budget of the U.S.A. itself, now running above 16 billions a year. If the Atlantic Pact is ratified, with re-armament

following on its heels, and if any important part of Mr. Truman's "social welfare" program is adopted, the Federal peacetime budget could average 60 billions a year for the next four years.

Two urgent questions arise.

First, can our economy support such expenditures?

In our considered judgment, it cannot. Such sums will place a fatal strain on the American economy—which is precisely what Soviet Russia would like to see.

It is true that we spent more during the late war. *But the strain of that effort is still being carried by the economy.* The new expenditures will merely be added to the strain and depletion of resources resulting from the old effort.

"We'll Tax and Tax"

To get such sums, we must either increase taxes above the point of diminishing returns, or else we must resort to vast deficit financing—confiscation by inflation. Either course would destroy the American Republic. The only way in which the economic machine could function would be by harsh bureaucratic control and operation of industry. That would bring us Socialism overnight. We would become, like Soviet Russia or Hitler's Germany, a one-party country. For with one to two million carefully placed Federal employees added to the more than two million already in office, who is so foolish as to imagine the Republican Party or any other party could wrest control from the gang in power in the Administration today? Then, by aid of the pending "Economic Stability" act, the American people would have become veritably enslaved.

The "controls" would simply be the use of force to hide the fact that the whole economy is running at a ruinous deficit—a deficit which at some day of reckoning must be paid either in diluted money or in the ruin of Americans who have savings upon which they depend. Control of a deficit-operated economy means only expropriation (that is, stealing) of goods that others have accumulated. The politicians may control, but *they* will not pay. The people will pay with impoverishment.

Ratification of the North Atlantic Pact, then, followed by the minimum appropriations necessary to give it any chance of being militarily successful, will be beyond the means of our economy. It will also lead straight to State Socialism in America. And State Socialism will mean an end to liberty for everybody except the bureaucrats.

But let us ask a further question: *Will Congress appropriate the money?*

Almost certainly it will not appropriate the huge sums mentioned above. It will probably compromise. And if Congress compromises, what will be the result?

Compromise will be disaster compounded. If we give Western Europe less than the minimum necessary to hold off the Red Army, we guarantee that at some future date, to be decided by the Politburo alone, Western Europe can be occupied. Then, if we have anything left, we shall face the task of again organizing vast armies to retake the Continent for our Allies.

But this is precisely what the Alliance is supposed and intended to prevent. The peoples of Western Europe are not interested in that kind of war, even if victorious. They do not want to be occupied, then liberated. They want *not* to be occupied. The only reason this Alliance interests them at all is that in it they see a hope of avoiding Soviet occupation.

Yet, if we give them less than the minimum that they now request—or demand—they cannot resist occupation.

The leaders of the Western European governments may be foggy social theorists, but as to occupation they can be counted upon to be stark realists. The great majority of their people wish to avoid occupation. What will happen if they see that, after all the fanfare and oratory, America does not give them enough to defend themselves? They are almost certain to try to get the best terms they can from the Soviet Union.

To ratify the Alliance, then, but not to implement it with vast armament, will infallibly result in throwing Western Europe into the embrace of the Soviets. All Marshall Plan funds will have been wasted. Whatever armament we have sent will be under the control of those who have entered the Soviet orbit.

We'd Better Face it Now

The alternatives we have set forth are real, and we had better learn to live with them. We can bankrupt our economy to provide Western Europe with the minimum necessary, and thereby plunge ourselves irremediably into State Socialism. Or, we can give Western Europe less than the minimum, and ensure that those nations will presently make terms with Soviet Russia.

But the first alternative is not so simple as it sounds. Even if we should make the sacrifices necessary to arm Western Europe, we could not be sure of stopping the Soviet Union.

Communist infiltration in Western Europe has gone too far for us to count upon an undivided effort from our Allies in case war should begin even after they have been adequately armed. There is no guarantee that both Italy and France would not be rent by civil war of such a nature as to paralyze their armies and render them impotent to protect their frontiers. Indeed, such civil war is highly probable.

Even what would happen in Britain is clouded with doubt. The Labor government there is still supplying both Russia and Poland with implements and machinery essential for war. Infiltration of Communists and Communist-sympathizers within the Labor government is much greater than commonly understood. There is grave reason to believe that in Great Britain, Communist agents could seize or destroy vital communications and power centers and take other action to prevent any effective war effort being launched from Britain.

Who, then, would march against the Soviet Union on the Continent? Would the Red tide be stemmed by the armies of Luxembourg, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium and Portugal?

Another fact that complicates the rearming of Western Europe lies in the power of the Soviet Union itself. Are we so naïve as to imagine that the masters of the Kremlin will sit by idle if they see us actually building up preponderant military power in the West?

And it deserves note that in the framing of the Atlantic Pact, Spain has been left out. Yet Spain is potentially the strongest anti-Communist country on the continent of Europe. *The leaving out of Spain is a clear indication that Marxist influences had a powerful say in the framing of the Atlantic Pact, just as they have had in our public affairs, foreign and domestic, for many years past.*

To Bomb—Or Not to Bomb

Doubtless Russian cities, in the event of war, would disappear under atomic attack—but what strategic effect would that have? It could not destroy the Red Army in the field. It could not prevent or even slow the occupation. And, after the occupation, would we bomb Paris, Rome, the Hague, Brussels, Copenhagen or Oslo with atomic weapons? Or London?

There is reason to believe that the Soviet Union has deliberately counted the cost of atomic warfare and decided that its great cities are expendable. But even if we should bomb every important city both in the Soviet Union and in Western Europe, we would still have to land and occupy a Continent in which frustration, privation and hatred of us for atom-bombing our friends would be obstacles perhaps more formidable than the Red Army. Nor is there any guarantee that the great cities of the United States would escape atomic bombing—which in our case would be infinitely more serious for us than the destruction of Russian cities for the Soviets.

THE AMERICAN ALTERNATIVE

The alternative we propose is not perfect. It is not guaranteed to win in any struggle between us and the USSR. But in this world there can be no absolute guarantee of safety. We must intelligently do the best we can, keep alert, and place our cause in God's hand.

First, we should preserve America's own freedom of action. The Atlantic Pact should be rejected, no matter how much loss of "face" some of our bureaucrats in the State Department may suffer.

Second, we should at once and with drastic thoroughness proceed to root out every Communist and Communist fellow-traveller from Government service. They should be given a week to resign, and after that should be subject to the death penalty if they have not declared themselves. We should immediately outlaw the Communist Party, take its key personnel into custody and keep strict watch upon the others. Nothing else will so convince the Soviet leadership we mean business. The firmer we are with Communists and their sympathizers in America, the more respect will the USSR have for us.

Third, we should take steps to make real a Western Hemisphere defense zone. Its outposts should be as far-flung as geography and politics will allow. Bases should be secured, at least in Spain, which is probably (with Portugal) the only area in Western Europe capable of sustained defense. A sound military defense can be made for the Western Hemisphere without the North Atlantic Alliance, and it will be within our capacity and means. Nor need it result in the socialization of our own economy.

Fourth, we should drastically cut the bureaucracy in our own Government, thus releasing large numbers of persons for productive economic activities as well as reducing Federal expense. We should reject once and for all the whole Truman program for a socialized welfare state. This will be stripping our decks for action.

Fifth, while not being indifferent to the fate of free peoples anywhere, we should become reconciled to the reality that it does not lie within our means or power to see to the defense of everybody. If the USSR occupies Western Europe, it will be a tragedy. But the

tragedy will not be as great for them or for us as the alternatives that would follow adoption of the North Atlantic Alliance.

Nor would Soviet conquest of Europe be permanent. Students of the history of Empires know well that the conqueror is normally beaten, not by external force, but by the weaknesses and internal contradictions of the system he himself sets up. In our opinion the USSR, in taking over Europe and Asia, will be attempting far too much. Within a few years this will become apparent. And when freedom-loving peoples at last revolt against bondage, their case will be much more hopeful than if the Continent had first been blasted by bitter, atomic war.

The Over-Stuffed Giant

Indeed we think that if this strategy is followed, we may never have to fight the USSR at all. Doubtless they expect and want to rule the world. But with more than they can digest in Europe and Asia, their conquests will weaken rather than strengthen them. The very rigidity of the Soviet leaders in not permitting the smallest variation from their own blue-prints among satellites, can be their undoing. And the existence of a unified, homogeneous core of armed power in our own Hemisphere will dissuade them from attacking us if they have two fermenting continents to hold down.

American participation in two world wars has, on balance, multiplied the evil results of both wars. While we went into the first with the best of motives, and were slyly and deceptively maneuvered into the second, if we permit alien influence to shape our course now, then America is doomed.

She will have been reconquered by those tyrannies from which our ancestors fled the Old World to escape.

Merwin K. Hall

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