

U.S. policy toward European integration, 1969 - 1974: a continuation

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It's time we began paying Europe more attention.

President Nixon, December 1968 - January 1969

This President believes that our relations with Western Europe are of overriding importance - because they are our oldest and closest allies and also because a stable world is inconceivable without a European contribution. The post-war alliance relationship, which the U.S. helped build and sustain for 25 years, is our greatest achievement in foreign affairs.

Henry Kissinger, May 13, 1971

Abstract

This paper aims to argue that the Nixon administration's policy to Western Europe from 1969 to 1974 was a continuation of the U.S. traditional support and promotion of European integration. It argues that despite its concentration on the détente with the Soviet Union and opening to China, the Nixon administration still attached importance to its relations with Western Europe and actively supported the European attempts to enlarge the European Economic Community (the EEC). Henceforth, the paper will begin with an examination of the Nixon administration's continued commitment to physically defend Western European and to strengthen the Atlantic alliance before looking at how active the United States was in supporting the United Kingdom (the UK) to become a member of the European Community (the EC). Then, it will highlight the necessity of the U.S. – EC alliance in the international system. It will be concluded that, though there were conflicts between the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the Nixon administration remained committed to promoting the integrative process in Western Europe.

Keywords: the European Economic Community, the Nixon administration, European integration

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1. Introduction

Although the Nixon administration did shift its diplomatic focus to China and the Soviet Union, it did not mean that President Nixon downplayed its relations with Western Europe and opposed further Europeans' attempts to strengthen and expand the EEC. His aim was a foreign policy that advocated for a greater self-reliance of allies. The United States continued its commitment to the security roof in Western Europe and still played an important part in the first enlargement of the EEC in 1973. Hence, this paper will look at the Nixon administration's efforts to oppose the Congress's proposal to reduce U.S. military expenditure and troop levels in Europe and to cement the Atlantic partnership before examining U.S. support for British entry into the EEC. Then, it will argue that the U.S. – EC alliance was necessary for both Washington and Western European capitals. It was also necessary for the world stability. The main questions for the United States and the European Community were how to balance their mutual economic and strategic interests and how the U.S. and Western European policy-makers could coordinate and concert their actions. As it was apparent that economic and strategic interests were closely intertwined and substantially affected each other, the Nixon administration could not treat them separately. It will be concluded that the Nixon administration did not discontinue traditional supports for European integration and the partnership between the United States and the European Community remained intimate, yet troubled.

2. Committed to keeping U.S. commitments

The Nixon presidential years from 1969 to 1974 witnessed Washington's concentration on détente with the Soviet Union, rapprochement with China and the end of the Vietnam War; therefore, the Nixon administration spent less time on the European Community. Yet, this did not mean that the United States was progressively disengaging from Western Europe. President Nixon held that the success of the U.S. hegemony required U.S. leaders to guarantee peace and prosperity in Europe. The stability of Western Europe and the ongoing economic and political integration process in this part of the world remained a key aspect in the U.S. foreign policy agenda. Furthermore, given the reality of the Cold War, the Nixon administration had no choice but to continue its commitment to defend Europe. The Nixon administration's efforts and strategies to maintain solidarity within the Atlantic alliance as well as oppose the Congressional pressures on cutting budget for defense and U.S. troop levels in Europe were strong evidence of U.S. support for the European Community.

President Nixon acknowledged that there was nothing more important in the second half of the 20th century than allies. Henceforth, despite economic conflicts and the high costs of maintaining the alliance with the European

Community, the Nixon administration had been seeking to support economic and political integration in Western Europe, a process which, in U.S. views, could help to tie Western European countries closely and transform them into a strong partner of the United States. Undeniably, the Nixon administration was dissatisfied with its Western European allies when they adopted inappropriate trading policies and were actively or passively unhelpful in the oil crisis. The Nixon administration was clearly unhappy with Western European assertiveness - both political and economic. This dissatisfaction was exposed and even enhanced during Nixon's term. Accordingly, the ambivalence about a strong and reliable partner on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean was increasing. However, Western Europe could not expand its economy and develop its political role in international affairs while it was almost powerless in front of the Soviet Union strength and threat. U.S. uneasiness with the impression of communist expansion towards Western Europe led to the Nixon administration's acceptance of certain costs implied by sustaining the alliance with Western Europe and by promoting the integration process in the region. This meant that the Nixon administration did not discontinue the U.S. substantial military presence in Western Europe. Put it simply, the Nixon administration understood that it needed to reconfirm the traditional U.S. commitment to support European integration (Knudsen and Rasmussen, 2009, p. 74). Providing a military shield for the European Community was prioritised in Nixon's policy towards European integration.

On their telephone conversation on Wednesday, May 12, 1971, both Secretary of State, William Rogers and President Richard Nixon were very much concerned about Senator Mike Mansfield's proposal to withdraw half of the U.S. forces from Europe. With the view that the world situation was fundamentally changing, President Nixon asserted that Mansfield's insistence on reducing troops in Western Europe would be detrimental to the U.S. national interests and destabilizing to the world. Thus, President Nixon and Secretary of State, Rogers agreed that there would be no compromise regarding the U.S. military presence in Western Europe and that they would not let the Senator win.

President Nixon: He's the most decent guy up there. And therefore I think the real thrust that you ought to take is that we -- "I think I'd sort of say this: Look, as he knows, the President feels very appreciative of the fact that despite differences, we've kept it on the right basis. That in this case, I've got to --" that you want him know we've just got to fight for this, because you're going to NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation]. We've got our whole foreign policy at stake. We've got to. It will not be personal. We feel that we have to do it, because it's a matter of the highest foreign policy deal. Sort of along those lines. And then let him come to any conclusion he wants.

Rogers: Right. Right.

President Nixon: But I think he's got to know that he's in for a real fight on this. And because we--"and it will not be personal on our part. But we have to go all out.

Rogers: I'm surprised he did it on a political basis too. He had a Democratic caucus on it.

President Nixon: Yeah.

Rogers: It's quite contrary to everything we've ever done.

President Nixon: Democratic caucus. Yeah, yeah. After all, when you think of how very nice we were on the Marshall Plan and NATO and all that. Hell, when we controlled the play.

Rogers: Right.

President Nixon: Well, all right. It's all right, he's been all right. I personally think this: I think he's going to go on this in any event. I think it's a matter of principle with him. He believes it. See, the Mansfield Amendment came up, I remember, even in '66, when I was out of office, he put up that damned amendment. He only got about--"he always got 25 to 30 votes in the Senate.

Rogers: Yeah.

President Nixon: And now he'll get about 38 to 40.

Rogers: Yeah.

President Nixon: Maybe 44. But he'll lose.

Rogers: Right. Well, I may--"I'm going to try to see [Senator John C.] Stennis, [D-Mississippi] too, and some of the others. I'm--"

President Nixon: Well, and with Stennis, I just think the main thing with him . . . Stennis is of course for it, but he's a compromiser. And I'd simply say there just really isn't any way we can. And that this is a matter basically, which you know--"

Rogers: I know.

President Nixon: --"very well, is, it has to be negotiated with our allies and with our enemies. We can't do it on the Senate floor.

Rogers: That's right.

President Nixon: And it's--"if there was, I mean, we say that about ABM [antiballistic missiles]. God, it's ten times as true here.

Rogers: Well, not only that, Mr. President, but we're making progress with the Soviet Union. They've agreed now to talk about Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions.

President Nixon: Well, not only are we making progress with them, but I think we should also say that in NATO we're making progress. They're upgrading their forces.

Rogers: Right.

President Nixon: You know, we're talking about our numbers. But it's going to take some time. But it's a matter--"here is one matter where our goal is the same but we simply have to negotiate with our allies and with our opponents, and we can't have our negotiating card taken away from us by the Senate. (Presidential Recording Program, White House Telephone, May 12, 1971 - 3:35pm - 3:38pm).

In a March 16, 1973 National Security Study Memorandum to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence on the U.S. military mission's involving naval forces, President Nixon gave a clear instruction of assessing the U.S. capability to support the existing strategy in Europe against the challenge posed by the Soviet Union's navy. The aims of the study included: (i) considering the present military and diplomatic importance of the Soviet naval threat and projecting future developments; (ii) evaluating the future capacity of currently planned U.S. forces to conduct missions involving naval forces; and (iii) considering the diplomatic value of the presence of U.S. naval force and ways of employing naval forces to enhance U.S. negotiating positions (National Security Study Memorandum 177, 1973).

This directive of President Nixon was in accordance with what he had emphasised in the Meeting with Senator Milton Young (Republican – North Dakota), and Senator John McClellan (Democratic – Arkansas) of the Senate Appropriations Committee on March 8, 1973: "if we cut our defense budget, Brezhnev is likely to roll over me. We have got to have that threat in our hands." The prospect of the Soviet Union's expansion into the Western European region, the U.S. sphere of influence, was unacceptable to President Nixon. He insisted on sustaining U.S. troop levels in Western Europe and this meant that there could not be a cut down on military expenditure as constantly required by the Congress. If the Congress decided to cut defense budget unilaterally, President Nixon asserted, the United States would be certainly in deep trouble. (Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs (Korologos) for the President, 1973)

On March 20, 1973, in a conversation with Republican Congressional Leaders, President Nixon made his argument clear:

The argument that you're going to hear is to take it out of Defense. At this point, you'll have the argument that, first, we can cut it out of Defense and particularly since we are going to have - which we are - very significant arms talks with the Russians sometime this year. But I can assure you that in the event that the Congress, before those talks, cuts the Defense budget, or refuses to approve those items we have asked for, I will not be able to negotiate an arms settlement. In other words, ironically, those who are for disarmament and who think they are voting for it by unilaterally cutting

armaments will be torpedoing the best chance this country's ever had to have a real arms limitation. That's what it is. And those who vote for, and what we have asked for in arms, will give us the chips that we need to negotiate with the Russians to stop their build up. Look, what is the danger in the world today and tomorrow? Does the United States threaten anybody? Not at all. But you look at what the Russians are doing, their big SS-9s. Most of those things are MIRV'd. We are going to have a threat such as - It may not frighten us, but it will certainly, completely demoralise our allies in Europe (Conversation among President Nixon and Republican Congressional Leaders, 1973).

For President Nixon, cutting budget on Defense or cutting NATO would torpedo the great chances the United States had. Among those was the chance for limitation of arms on a permanent basis which implicitly increased security and stability in Europe.

Now, you take the - you take the European troop thing. I noticed Herman Talmadge [Senator Herman Talmadge (Democratic - Georgia)], a very strong man, a good national defense man, coming out and saying we should take maybe a 100,000 of our 300,000 out of Europe. Sure we should. We should take them all back. Why shouldn't these Europeans defend themselves? They're rich enough. It's their Europe, et cetera, et cetera. Why are we there? You can make those arguments. I could do it. All of us on Defense, you fellows have done about as good as the other side anymore, but more responsible.

But why won't you do it now? The reason is that in the fall we are going to have some very important negotiations with the Warsaw Pact countries, including the Russians, about the mutual reductions of forces in Europe (Conversation among President Nixon and Republican Congressional Leaders, 1973).

He added:

Now, if the Congress before that says, "Oh, we're going to reduce our forces by 200,000," what does that mean? All incentive they have to reduce theirs is lost and you increase the threat of war. But more important, you increase the threat of blackmail on their part of their weaker Europeans. You destroy the balance (Conversation among President Nixon and Republican Congressional Leaders, 1973).

President Nixon held that Washington should take the responsibility to defend weaker Europeans as this was in the U.S. interests. Negotiating a mutual arms reduction with the Soviets would help to reduce U.S. expenditure on arm race and thus, tensions between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. This eventually resulted in a more secured Europe where Europeans could be

somehow free from military threats and could focus on their resources on economic development. A common market in Europe, stable and thriving, was certainly what the Nixon administration desired to see. This was threatened to be affected adversely by the Congressional request to bring U.S. troops in Europe home and to reduce budget on military expenditure. As a President with a strong belief in the balance of power, the crucial component of realism, Richard Nixon would not allow balance to be destroyed (Conversation among President Nixon and Republican Congressional Leaders, Washington, 1973).

At the same time, the Nixon administration had sought to solidify the cohesion in NATO. At the 51st Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, held in Copenhagen June 14-15, 1973, the United States reiterated its pledge to maintain and improve U.S. forces in Europe, and not to reduce U.S. troop Secretary of State William Rogers affirmed that it was more important than ever before that the North Atlantic alliance maintained its strength and solidarity and that the alliance was not misled by any euphoria about détente with the Soviet Union. From the Nixon administration's viewpoint, this could be seen as the most successful NATO Ministerial in years (Department of State, Current Foreign Affairs, 1973).

President Nixon's efforts to build up the cohesion and strength of the Atlantic Alliance was based on the main argument that a close and vigorous relationship between Washington and other capitals in Western Europe remained vital to the security and prosperity of all of NATO member states during a period of profound changes in not only in the Atlantic Community but also in the world: "it is vital that we strengthen, not weaken, the alliance. Europe is still the geopolitical target of the Kremlin" (Nixon, 1988, p. 207).

Collective defense had a crucial role to play in the Atlantic alliance. It was a special glue to bind all the NATO member states closely. Thus, like previous administrations, the Nixon administration committed to maintaining U.S. commitments to the Alliance and to contributing substantially to this collective defense system. Noticeably, the Nixon administration still expected its allies in the Atlantic Community to assume their share of the common defense burden, taking part in equitable arrangements to strengthen the solidarity of the Atlantic Community. That U.S. economy was confronting what the Nixon administration called "European economic regionalism", the Nixon administration expressed its idea of an Atlantic Community tying together not only in defense, but also in the economic sphere. By stressing on the opportunity as equal partners to chart the common future course, to define common goals and to strengthen the principles of mutual understanding, in the Nixon presidential years, the United States wanted to show Western Europe that it would do its part and join its partners in realizing the dream of a Family of Europe within the Atlantic Community.

The inaugural plenary session of the Atlantic Treaty Association meeting held in Brussels on September 10, 1973, under the chairmanship of former U.S.

undersecretary of state, Eugene V. Rostow was themed as “The Atlantic Alliance, indispensable basis for security and détente”. This seemed to be a reassertion from the Nixon administration that the United States considered guaranteeing security for Western Europe as a cornerstone in its policy on Europe. In his address, Rostow tried to explain the Western European leaders the U.S. intention and plan for a closer Atlantic Community which had been outlined in Kissinger’s April 23, 1973 speech, entitled “New Atlantic Charter”:

Mr. Kissinger’s speech has been misunderstood, both in Europe and in the United States. It did not propose a modification of the North Atlantic Treaty, or a dilution of the American security guaranty to its European allies. Nor did it propose a confusion of security problems and economic problems. What Mr. Kissinger did propose was something quite different—an idea which I believe an overwhelming majority of the American people understand and support, and one which, so far as I can see, should be equally appealing to European opinion. The idea is simple, but not easy. It is that of shared responsibility. (The Atlantic Treaty Association meeting, 1973)

Building a partnership with the European Community still attracted the Nixon administration’s attention, though its leaders were preoccupied with handling with domestic issues, China and the Soviet Union. Rostow indicated that the Nixon administration’s concern for the maintenance of strong and healthy relations with Western Europe was undiminished. It was still at the core of President Nixon’s foreign policy. Promoting European integration remained a basic goal of President Nixon’s foreign policy.

3. Continued economic cooperation with the EC

In his Second Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy on February 25, 1971, President Nixon stated:

Clearly, if we are to found a structure of peace on the collaboration of many nations, our ties with Western Europe must be its cornerstone. This is not simply because wars on the continent have engulfed the rest of the world twice in this century. It is not simply because Europe’s concentration of industrial might is crucial to the balance of power. Western Europe is central because its nations are rich in tradition and experience, strong economically, and vigorous in diplomacy and culture; they are in a position to take a major part in building a world of peace (Nixon, 1971).

Like the previous administrations, the Nixon one saw the economic link with Western Europe as a cornerstone in its foreign policy. Put it simply, economic cooperation was seen as an indispensable ingredient for strengthening

the Atlantic alliance. For many centuries, diplomacy has been a political game with the economic element hidden there. In the Nixon administration time, the relationship between the European Community and the United States derived considerably from their economic contacts and concerns and particularly from the strategies used to manage this relationship.

Despite trade disagreements with the European Community, the Nixon administration could not deny the fact that the United States had some basic economic interest in Western Europe. When the European Community was moving towards its post-industrial stage, its demand for U.S. advanced technological products was strong and it had to depend on the United States to maintain its competitiveness. Despite the intensity of protectionism issues in agricultural products, the Nixon administration would expect the European Community to continue to develop into the richest and most important commercial market for U.S. farm products (Schaezel, 1975, p. 112). Statistics can illustrate the point. U.S. exports to the European Community had increased faster than those to the rest of the world. From 1958 to 1971, U.S. exports to the European Community rose by 192%, compared with 146% to the world as a whole. In 1971, the United States was in its first serious trade deficit in the 21st century; however, in trade with the European Community, the United States continued to have a surplus of about 900 million U.S. dollars (Leddy, 1972).

The paper entitled "Agriculture in Multilateral Trade Negotiations", prepared in the Department of Agriculture pointed out U.S. views in dealing with economic matters in the relations with the European Community. The Department of Agriculture supported free trade with Western Europe. The Department held that trade in farm products as well as in non-agricultural commodities needed to be conducted under conditions in which competition, market orientation, and comparative advantage prevailed. The United States expected to see that all trade between the United States and the European Community could move freely. This meant that the allocation of agricultural resources would become more effective. Eventually, both the farmers in the United States and Western Europe would benefit from the increased utilisation of the unique natural, technological innovations, and organisational assets which their countries possessed. Thus, the Nixon administration kept calling for further liberalisation of agricultural trade. President Nixon and his team believed that real liberalisation of agricultural trade would help to lessen underemployment in rural areas, reduce living costs for domestic and foreign consumers, and produce the sorely needed U.S. balance of trade benefits (Department of Agriculture, nd). With such perspective, the Nixon administration set particular objectives in its trade negotiations with its partners, especially with the European Community.

A. A traditional tariff-cutting exercise limited only by the extent and degree of the authority granted in the trade legislation.

B. Elimination of all preferences, whatever their nature.

- C. Conversion of variable levies and all other pricing devices usable for protection at the border to fixed duties.
- D. Phased increase and eventual elimination of all quotas.
- E. Phased elimination of export subsidies.
- F. Elimination of mixing regulation, monopolies, and restrictive licensing and prior deposit practices.
- G. Negotiation of codes on technical barriers such as valuation and standards.
- H. Negotiation of multilateral safeguards (Department of Agriculture, nd).

Along with new objectives set for negotiations with the European Community to solve the trade matters, the Nixon administration also demonstrated its willingness to explore opportunities to improve the commercial relations with the Western Europeans. The Nixon administration held that agricultural policy had long been a source of conflict in the U.S. relationship with Western Europe. The United States had argued and negotiated for penetration into the Community's market. The Europeans had designed and developed a common agricultural policy (CAP) in order to support their domestic producers. The CAP represented one of the concrete achievements of the European integration process and it had a domestic political significance for most of the nine member states. The European Community clearly put forth that its CAP was non-negotiable in the next GATT round (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). Confronting the Community's resistance to changes in the CAP through the traditional negotiations for liberalisation of imports and the impossibility of a structural change in world agricultural supply, the Nixon administration indicated a willingness to consider the European approach and found out what the practical possibilities were. The Nixon administration supposed that the United States could pursue discussions with its European negotiating partners formally and informally, multilaterally and bilaterally. This was because of the reality that even though the European Community had a common agricultural policy and the European Commission was responsible for conducting that policy, it was of such domestic political sensitivity that informal, bilateral talks with key member states and the Commission would be crucial. From his observation, J. Robert Schaetzel, Representative to the European Communities from 1966 to 1972 pointed out that:

Without a clear American policy for conducting relations with the Community in a framework of intimate cooperation, supported by officials who have the capacity to win the confidence of the Europeans, the trans-Atlantic alternative will be continual conflict, argument, and misunderstanding. The approach can go either way – cooperation or confrontation – but whichever it is, the process will be habit-forming. When senior agricultural officials struck the sour note, their subordinates

quickly picked up the tune. The converse is also true. Where a spirit of cooperation prevailed between the environmental experts from Washington and people with similar responsibilities in the Commission, for instance, this set a pattern for a more constructive approach by other officials whose normal life-style was trans-Atlantic badgering (Schaetzel, 1975, p. 125).

These bilateral contacts could proceed in parallel with more formal multilateral discussions in GATT and OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). Multilateral meetings were useful in showing publicly that the United States was trying to deal with the world trade problem through international cooperation. Yet, the Nixon administration believed that such meetings could not replace serious substantive bilateral contacts looking towards agreement among the major producers and consumers (NSSM on International Cooperation in Agriculture).

It was noted that prior the GATT negotiations in Tokyo in 1973, the United States decided to have “a better idea of (a) the long-term supply/demand picture for major agricultural products (b) the impact of the U.S. agricultural legislation on our trade and stock position (c) the kind of commodity arrangements which could serve U.S. interests and (d) the negotiability of various types of commodity arrangements.” Such idea was expected to help U.S. negotiators to deal satisfactorily with the Europeans. They were looking for reliable suppliers and the United States were seeking to continue access to the Western European market. The United States understood that multilateral GATT negotiations in Tokyo were an effective way to signal the Western Europeans U.S. flexibility in trade relations with the European Community. If the United States tried directly to force changes in the CAP and refused to consider alternative solutions to agricultural problems, the likely outcome was a continuation of the present unsatisfactory situation. Continuing conflict in agricultural policy would inevitably exert adverse impacts on other aspects of the U.S.-European relations (NSSM on International Cooperation in Agriculture). From the U.S. realistic approach to deal with disagreement in trade with the European Community, it pointed out that the Nixon administration wished better relations with the European Community by improving cooperation in the economic field in general and in agricultural trading, in particular.

4. Continued support for EC enlargement

It has been argued that the Nixon administration was ambivalent regarding the European integration process and enlargement. President Nixon’s skepticism rooted in the European policy of inward-looking and protectionist tendencies which were against U.S. interests. The Department of Commerce and the Treasury repeatedly made proposals for a revision of the U.S. European policy

to take into consideration the problems in the trade field with the European Economic Community. In November 1972, President Nixon directed the National Security Council to review the U.S. policy on Western Europe. President Nixon wanted to have a detailed study of the eco-political, military, security interrelations, and scientific and technological issues between the United States and Western Europe in order to establish the guidance for future relationships (National Security Study Memorandum, 1972).

This study, regarded by President Nixon as “of prime importance”, was carried out by the National Security Council Interdepartmental Group for Europe. In December 1972, the outcomes of the study were sent to President Nixon. It concluded that “US-Western European relations are today unbalanced”. Through the European integration process, Western Europe had become more independent from the United States politically, financially and industrially, yet they still depended on the United States through NATO and nuclear shield: “military and security elements bind us; but economic and political issues tend to divide us.” (Response to National Security Study Memorandum, 1972)

With that conclusion, the National Security Council Interdepartmental Group for Europe suggested that the United States separated security from political-economic issues in the relationships with the European Community; promoted European Community enlargement and improved bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. These policy recommendations were framed by U.S. interests. Though allowing certain deterioration with the EC when seeking a closer cooperation with the Soviets and the Chinese, the United States was still in pursuit of a European policy supporting further integration. The overall significance of political and defense relations with Western Europe in the U.S. grand design in Europe overrode the economic competition between the U.S. and the European Community traders.

Although the Nixon administration did shift its diplomatic focus to China and the Soviet Union, it did not mean that Nixon downplayed its relations with Western Europe and opposed further attempts to strengthen and expand the EEC by the Europeans. His aim was a foreign policy that promoted the greater self-reliance of allies. The United States still played an important part in the first enlargement of the EEC in 1973. In other words, the first enlargement of the EEC was encouraged and pushed by the United States. The Nixon administration was of the opinion that the United Kingdom played a significant role for European continued integration. Also, Nixon and Kissinger was concerned about France’s attempt to eclipse U.S. leadership in Western Europe, thus the United States encouraged the United Kingdom’s participation into the Community to counterbalance French influence.

The path for the United Kingdom to become a member of the EEC was uneasy though it was supported by the United States. The United Kingdom,

which had refused the invitation to be one of the founding members, changed its policy stance when witnessing the rapid economic development of the Community and started to apply to be a member of the EEC in the 1960s. In 1961, the Conservative Government, headed by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, decided that being a member of the EEC would be in Britain's interests. Unfortunately, the French President Charles De Gaulle vetoed the British application to join the EEC. His argument was that the British strong tie to the United States and the British Commonwealth could hinder the British in bringing a contribution to the EEC. In a press conference at the Elysée Palace, Paris on January 14th 1963, President Charles De Gaulle explained why he rejected the United Kingdom's entry into the EEC:

She did it [posed her candidature] after having earlier refused to participate in the communities we are now building, as well as after creating a free trade area with six other states... after having put some pressure on the Six to prevent a real beginning being made in the application of the Common Market.

[the United Kingdom] is maritime, she is linked to through her exchanges, her markets, her supply lines to the most diverse and often the most distance countries; she pursues essentially industrial and commercial activities, and only slight agricultural ones

The means by which the people of Great Britain are fed and which are in fact the importation of foodstuffs bought cheaply in the two Americas and in the former dominions, at the same time giving, granting considerable subsidies to English farmers? These means are obviously incompatible with the system, which the Six have established quite naturally for themselves. (de Gaulle, 1963)

In 1967, the Labour Government, headed by Prime Minister Harold Wilson applied for EEC membership again but the French President Charles de Gaulle still said no to the United Kingdom. President Charles de Gaulle's rationale for vetoing British entry into the EEC in 1967 was not different from what he stated in 1963. President Charles de Gaulle thought that the United Kingdom was too subservient to the United States and insufficiently "European". Therefore, by joining the EEC, the UK would increase the U.S. influence in the EEC and prevent it from acting as a potential counter-weight to the United States. Two years later, after the death of the French President Charles de Gaulle, Georges Pompidou became the new French President and he removed the veto and finally, in 1973, the United Kingdom joined the EEC. The third time the United Kingdom filed its application for EEC membership was in 1969 when the United States was under the Nixon administration. With its calculations of U.S. national interests, the Nixon administration confirmed to support the "creation of a strong political and economic entity in Europe."

President Nixon was enthusiastically in favor of the first EC enlargement to include the United Kingdom. He even proclaimed that British failure to become a member of the EC would be a “political damage to Europe” (Record of a Meeting between the Prime Minister and President Nixon at the White House, 1970). President Nixon and his administration expected that this first enlargement to include Ireland, Denmark and especially the United Kingdom, a big country in Western Europe, would help to prevent the EEC from looking inward, and would improve political cohesion in the Atlantic community. President Nixon stressed that the UK’s entering Europe was a “great historic development” and expected that the UK, led by Prime Minister Edward Heath, would bring significant contributions to this expanded European Community:

I think we could say that he [British Prime minister Heath] is one of the prime architects of the new Europe and that the new Europe is an indispensable foundation for what we hope will be a new world, because it will contribute to that new world in which peace and, we trust, progress with freedom will be the watchword in the years ahead. (Nixon, 1973)

Implicitly, President Nixon expected that the cornerstone of U.S. policy would be a cornerstone of British policy that placed an emphasis on promoting the cause of peace and freedom and progress in the world and on making the military alliance and economic cooperation stronger in the Atlantic Community in which the United States and the UK were now a part.

British Prime Minister Edward Heath acknowledged the support from Washington and pledged with President Nixon his country’s dedication to the future of the enlarged Community and the United States relationship. The UK would continue to share with the United States the responsibility for securing peace in the world in general and for making the expanded European Community a capable partner of the United States”

[...] today Britain is now a member of the European Community. And the future relations between that enlarged Community and the United States, good relations which are vital for the whole future of the Western World, will figure prominently in our discussions. Now that we are a member of the European Community, you will not find our interest in the wider affairs of the world any less than it has ever been before (Nixon, 1973).

This Nixon administration saw the British entry into the European Community as a step to a closer relationship between the United States and the European Community. The United States hoped that the British membership in the European Community would help Western European capitals to advance a positive, dynamic, and cooperative relationship with Washington. In its 4301 telegram sent to the Department of State from London on April 5, 1974, the U.S.

embassy showed its endorsement of a strong European Community to which the United Kingdom belonged.

[...], we should encourage Britain to view its ties with the US as complementary to, not a substitute for, its ties with the EC. If Britain remains in the Community, it would be a force for closer US–EC cooperation. Its withdrawal, though, could set in motion an unravelling of the entire structure of Atlantic cooperation. If the renegotiation on which the UK is now embarked shows signs of breaking down, the USG [US Government] may have to go beyond simply voicing continued support for EC survival. We believe we should speak out clearly to the British Government, [...], to underscore our basic commitment to a strong Europe of which Britain is a part (American Embassy in the United Kingdom, 1974a)

This communication from the Embassy also underlined that it was in the United States' interest to prevent British withdrawal from a renegotiation of British entry into the European Community. That the new British government headed by Prime Minister Harold Wilson was willing to enthusiastically support the close consultation and cooperation between the United States and the European Community was what the Nixon administration expected from its special relationship with the United Kingdom. Foreign Secretary Callaghan reassured the United States that "...we are not interested in an anti - American direction." (American Embassy in the United Kingdom, 1974b)

Explicitly, the success of British renegotiations to the European Community was important to the United States:

The new British Government has made clear its desire to promote close consultation and cooperation between the EC and the US. It could be a powerful force for shaping US–EC partnership, and we have an obvious interest in seeing it remain an active member of the EC. We also have an interest in preventing a withdrawal that could precipitate a general unravelling of West European relationships, involving the partial or total disintegration of the EC, the revival of rivalries between NATO members, the growth of Nordic neutralism, and various other developments inimical to the preservation of a strong Western Alliance. A special relationship with an introspective Britain, cast adrift from Europe and operating from a contracting economic and military base, would be of dubious value to the United States (American Embassy in the United Kingdom, 1974a).

Along with the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway and Ireland concluded their negotiations and became new members of the EEC in 1973 which allowed deepened integration to appear in Western Europe. That the Nixon administration actively supported the renegotiation of British membership

of the European Community was a strong indication that Washington did not actually take a 'hands-off' position on the EC enlargement. Despite criticizing European protectionism trends, the Nixon administration did not become opposed to European integration. Yet, it should be noted that Washington's support for European integration under Nixon's presidency was more diminished than in the past.

5. An alliance of necessity

Both the United States and Western Europe benefited from a closer alliance. Security and trade issues made cooperation become more important between the two sides of the Atlantic, even though confrontations still emerged. During the postwar era, the United States had been both the military patron and the economic supporter of Western Europe. As these European states recovered and started the integration process, they posed a challenge to both U.S. political hegemony and international economic predominance. These conflicts became more serious with the aggressiveness in the Nixon administration's trade policies between 1970 and 1971 which put an end to the Breton Wood System. The EC, in which the United States had sought to promote U.S. democracy and capitalism, had been for a long time the United States' natural strategic partners. Now, the EC was also open economic rivals.

By contrast, the Nixon administration's foreign policy placed a concentration on the friendly engagement with the USSR and China. While old strategic partners became economic rivals, ideological and strategic foes became friends. While nation-states with the same values and practices were put aside, nation-states with opposed systems and values were accepted. The longstanding postwar order had been changing. As partners became rivals, foes became friends. The Nixon administration was unsuccessful in integrating its economic and strategic priorities, and U.S. national interests were affected negatively. This was not necessarily the consequence of détente or the transformation of U.S. economic interests by the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Rather, it was the legacy of ineffective formulating, coordinating, and implementing U.S. foreign policy.

The increasing economic growth rate in the EC and the strategic balance with the USSR should not be overlooked. It was clearly in the United States' interest to be in détente with the USSR and China, just as it was manifestly in the United States' interest to heighten its economic position by penetrating into the market of the enlarged EC. The problem facing the United States was how to reconcile these interests with its valuable alliance with Western European countries. President Nixon and his team could have made much wiser and better choices in its relationship with Western European allies. Rather than employing unilateralism, the Nixon administration could have used multilateralism and outlined a detailed plan for a new international economic order. Rather than considering the EC as a dangerous economic rival, the United States could have

strengthened cooperation with this Community as a longtime ally. Regrettably, the Nixon administration chose pragmatic policies which sacrificed strategic and traditional alliance for short-term economic gains. As it happened, a tense relationship with Western Europe under the Nixon presidential years became a big obstacle to U.S. strategy in the following years. The U.S. - Western European alliance was so damaged that Washington hardly found any support from Western European capitals in helping Israel in the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

Nevertheless, the United States and the EC both acknowledged that the alliance was necessary for their peace and prosperity. Henceforth, the U.S. – EC cooperation grew more effective and the partnership grew stronger. The events during the Nixon administration indicated not only the differences that could arise but also the continued interdependence between the United States and the EC. In his 1972 foreign policy report, President Nixon demonstrated the consequences of what he considered as the striking change in political-economic relations across the Atlantic. He also pointed out where all U.S. and Western European interests lied:

The United States is realistic. This change means the end of American tutelage and the end of the era of automatic unity. But discord is not inevitable either. The challenge to our maturity and political skill is to establish a new practice in Atlantic unity-finding common ground in a consensus of independent policies instead of in deference to American prescriptions.

This essential harmony of our purposes is the enduring link between a uniting Europe and the United States. This is why we have always favored European unity and why we welcome its growth not only in geographical area but into new spheres of policy [...] Two strong powers in the West would add flexibility to Western diplomacy, and could increasingly share the responsibilities of decision [...] As this political will develops, it will facilitate cooperation in the wider Atlantic relationship (Third annual report to the Congress on U.S. foreign policy, February 9, 1972).

In his speech to the Rotary Club of New York on 7 June 1973, Professor Ralf Dahrendorf, Member of the Commission of the European Communities reaffirmed the necessity of the partnership between the United States and the EC:

Our common values of humanity and democracy, our common interest in the defence of our values and the maintenance of an open world economy, our literally innumerable ties across the Atlantic will all enable us to work out ways of living with the differences which may exist in this or that respect (Dahrendorf, 1973).

This historical reality indicated the significance of the alliance with Western Europe in U.S. diplomacy in contemporary time. Such alliance needed

to be maintained and expanded on the basis of common economic and strategic interests. This was what President Nixon reaffirmed in his address to the United Nation General Assembly in 1970: Better relationships would be grounded in a powerful mutual interest in avoiding nuclear confrontation, huge cost of arms, economic self-interests, in enhancing trade and contact (Melanson, 1996, p. 69).

The prosperity of both Western Europe and the United States was required for the common interest. This meant that the U.S. and Western European policy makers needed to coordinate and concert their actions to free and expand trade and restrain the protection of special interests. They had to negotiate a reduction in their trade restrictions. They had to work hard toward a more equitable trading system which was founded on their own defined interests and fundamental purposes. This was because of the fact that Western European and U.S. interests in security and foreign policy were complementary.

Scholars of diplomatic history and international politics may feel hesitant to discuss the technical complexity of economics, however, the examination of the Nixon administration's policy towards European integration points out that failing to incorporate economic and strategic thinking is likely to lead to serious consequences undermining national interests.

In an era of accelerating global economic interdependence, this point will become more and more salient. The interweaving of economic and strategic interests becomes ever more problematic, as contemporary relations with China clearly indicate. Can a nation-state be both a strategic foe and the United States' most important trading partner? Can the United States, with its pertinent issues on government debts and deficits, continue to finance its global hegemony? As the world has moved into the 21st century, great minds in foreign policy and diplomacy must take into account not only guns and governments but also markets and money. Trade and security are interplayed. Rather than use one to exert leverage over the other, they should both be enhanced for peace and prosperity worldwide.

6. Conclusion

From the outset, the United States has strongly supported the European integration project. The EEC rapidly became the world's second largest economic group after the United States and an important player in international politics. Though the high economic growth rate of the EEC and the enlargement of the Community to include the United Kingdom threatened to put the U.S. economy in an uneasy situation, Washington did not discontinue its traditional supports for the EEC. The case of the Nixon administration's policy on Europe reflected that the tensions might emerge, yet the ties that bound the nations on the two sides of the Atlantic remained tight. President Nixon still showed that the United States committed to defend Western Europe, promoted solidarity in the Atlantic partnership and encouraged the enlargement of the EC. He believed

that it served the United States' interests by spreading democracy and economic prosperity and thereby creating a strong economic and political partner in Europe. Put it simply, it should be noted that consistent supports still underpinned in the Nixon administration's attitudes towards European integration. A strong and cohesive Europe in U.S. perspectives would help to preserve and promote U.S. vital interests. This was shown in the fact that the United States made efforts in encouraging the very first enlargement of the EC to include the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland in 1973 and in maintaining U.S. troops stationed in Western Europe. Thus, U.S. policy towards European integration, 1969-1974, was basically a continuation of the previous one. This was once affirmed strongly by J. Robert Schaetzel in his essay entitled "The Necessary Partnership":

“Over the full range of contemporary foreign affairs, American policy toward Western Europe has been marked by durability and rare continuity. The change of neither Presidents, Secretaries of State nor political parties has altered the lines of basic policy. The Government marches with American public opinion, for that ubiquitous man in the street still feels deeply that Western Europe is vital to the United States” (Schaetzel, 1966).

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