

THE MARSHALL PLAN

A Reappraisal of Its Practical Effects

by

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1

Needing a prestigious place from which to issue or broach a policy statement, Secretary of State, George C. Marshall (1880-1959), accepted an invitation from Harvard University to receive an honorary degree. His decision came so late that Harvard officials were forced to take almost unprecedented steps of changing their arrangements to accommodate the Secretary. On June 7, 1947, dressed in carmine robes, he walked through the ceremonies and then, rarely looking up from his text, delivered his commencement address. "The United States," he declared, "should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world." Until that task was completed, there would be "no political stability and no assured peace." The Secretary's words reflected the prevailing wisdom that Europe was the key to world-wide prosperity. They also mirrored the frustration of American leaders regarding the results from over \$5 billion in U.S. aid disbursed since V-E Day. Any future aid, he proclaimed, should

“provide a cure rather than a mere palliative.” But it would be “neither fitting nor efficacious” for the U. S. to dictate the terms of any program. “The initiative... must come from Europe.” Should the Europeans devise a plan, he would urge the support of the U. S. so far as it might be practical. As to which countries might be beneficiaries, he said that the program “should be a joint one.”¹

These possibilities, offered so quietly, unleashed developments of gigantic consequence for America and the world. From the ceremonies in the Harvard Yard can be traced official recognition of the Cold War’s chilling effects, the organization of Europe into two opposite blocs. Why was this done? Marshall’s explanation that large scale assistance to Europe was “directed not against any country or doctrine, but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos” today appears incredibly naive.² A series of issues about the European Recovery Program (ERP) remain unresolved. What purposes underlay its announcement? And what domestic and external forces influenced the course of this “new departure” in American foreign policy?

The first of these questions, though complex, is now easy to answer because of the increasing store of primary sources. The Truman Administration’s decision to halt Europe’s slide toward economic and political chaos had several and diverse causes—among which

¹ The text of Marshall’s speech is in *Foreign Relations of the U.S.* (FRUS), 1947, III, pp. 237-239.

² FRUS, 1947, III, p. 238.

were the will of anti-Communism, the desire for foreign markets and the fear of depression.³

The Marshall Plan can be termed “Truman Doctrine—Phase II,” for it expressed in economic terms the principles of containment. It is perhaps equally correct to name it “Economic Internationalism—Phase II,” because it was an effort to realize on a smaller stage the goal of an economic open world. At war’s end the Department of State and most agencies with overseas responsibilities were led by economic internationalists. This “open door” would stimulate the integration of national economies, which would yield more efficient production and result in higher living standards—and also assure lasting peace. It gradually became clear that Europe was not recovering as quickly as had been predicted.⁴

By 1947, the nations of Western Europe were still in desperate trouble and were spending their resources on relief instead of trade-generating reconstruction. At the current rate, their gold and dollar reserves would be washed out within a year. At the same time, economic forecasters were saying that the reconstruction of the U.S. economy was complete. Something had to be done if the U.S. wanted to have rich European friends.

³ The relevant volumes of *FRUS* finally were published in 1972, and Department of State records for 1946 have been opened. Hopefully, the recordskeeping bureaucracy will soon release its records for 1947. Records of certain other agencies, which are available, contain useful information. Pertinent documents can be found in the Arthur H. Vandenberg Papers, University of Michigan.

⁴ Several studies have dealt with internationalism at war’s end. Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (N.Y., 1972); John L. Gaddis, *The U.S. and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (N.Y., 1972).

The Truman Administration gradually achieved temporary consensus regarding America's proper response to Cold War realities. The Soviet Union's expanded adventure had to be countered.⁵ It became an article of faith that Soviet gains achieved through communist subversion could be reversed by eliminating the hunger, hopelessness, and economic chaos.

While the Marshall Plan was a device to provide Europe with the construction assistance which should have been given immediately after the war, the immediate result was "geopolitical," not economic. Pressures for the expansion of U. S. foreign trade and for the continued access to vital raw materials were temporarily put aside. The newly urgent need was to halt the Soviet threat to Western Europe. Also urgent was the pressure on the Truman Administration to satisfy congressional and popular dissatisfaction with events the U. S. might control.⁶ When under Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, went to the Capitol Hill in late February, 1947, to prepare the way for emergency appropriation for Greece and Turkey, congressional leaders warned him that the instability of those countries "was only part of a much larger problem."⁷

⁵ Clark M. Clifford, "Report on Soviet-American Relations," September, 1946. Printed as "Appendix A" in Arthur Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line* (N. Y., 1968).

⁶ "How Can the ERP Achieve the Objectives of U. S. Policy in Western Europe," April 26, 1950, *ECA Policy Series*, Record Group 286. Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Md.

⁷ "Report of the Special 'Ad Hoc' Committee of the State-War Navy Coordinating Committee," April 21, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, III, p. 210.

Responding with remarkable speed, the foreign affairs bureaucracy generated a new position. The State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) undertook a study of "situations elsewhere in the world which may require financial, technical and military aid on our part." On April 21, the SWNCC warned that six European countries would require aid similar to that given Greece and Turkey in the next few months, and seven other nations at a late date. Helping these nations, the SWNCC argued, would serve a number of U. S. interests. Stopping "Communism" was clearly most important. The SWNCC, however, did not suggest how much aid would be needed, nor the manner of its allocation.⁸

Such effort as was made to sort out the reasons for massive U. S. aid before Marshall's speech came from the State Department's Policy Planning Staff (PPS).⁹ Within ten days after receiving this assignment, this group, headed by George Kennan, devised the basic principles for the giving of aid to Europe. The approach to Europe's political crisis should be economic. Notably the Kennan group made a strong demand for European unity. Kennan asserted that both immediate and basic European

⁸ Dean G. Acheson to Robert P. Patterson, March 5, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, III, p. 197. See Gabriel and Joyce Kolkos, *The Limits of Power*, Chapters, 12 & 13, for a contrary view of congressional and popular attitudes.

⁹ The Policy Planning Staff (PPS) had come into existence on May 5, 1947. Kennan and his colleagues identified critical issues and made recommendations in the early days of drafting a program. However, the ultimate influence of the PPS's memorandum is debatable. Too many obstacles stood between creative ideas and their implementation.

problems could be solved by using U. S. aid.¹⁰ The PPS's support for European integration was tactical. The sensible way of putting into operation an aid program was to have Europeans request aid.¹¹ The U. S. would, of course, offer friendly aid in drafting and implementation.

Further emphasis on the necessity for mutual cooperation among the nations to be helped was provided by Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, William L. Clayton. "All the Europeans came to me," he wrote later, and told him that should conditions deteriorate further, "there will be revolution." Clayton urged that aid be given but any U. S. aid must be contingent upon a commitment to integration.¹²

What was meant by this term, what U. S. assistance should accomplish and what was to be the role of the U. S. were left unresolved. On May 28, Marshall chaired a discussion of the Policy Planning Staff and Clayton recommendation. The group ranged widely but established no ranking of national interests, no order of priorities

¹⁰ The Policy Planning Staff argued: "The present crisis results in large part from the disruptive effect of the war on the economic, political, and social structure of Europe and from a profound exhaustion of physical plant and of spiritual vigor. This situation has been aggravated for more difficult of remedy by the division of the continent into east and west. The PPS recognizes that the communists are exploiting the European crisis and that further communist successes would create serious danger to American security."

¹¹ *Ernest Gross Oral Memoir*, Columbia Oral History Collection (N.Y.: Columbia University), II, p. 395. Domestic political imperatives reinforced the strategy of having Europe request help from the U. S.

¹² Will Clayton, "A Statement on the Marshall Plan" (1956), ed. by Dobney, *Papers of Will Clayton*, pp. 206-207. Clayton was anxious that a European economic federation be created.

among the various justifications for giving aid.¹³ To those present, this situation was probably of little consequence. After all, they believed that the essence of good diplomacy was flexible response and that rigid structuring of goals inhibited flexibility. "How silly it is," Dean Acheson once said, "to psychoanalyze yourself and tell why you are doing everything, instead of just doing it."¹⁴ In any case, neither Kennan nor Clayton was consulted again. Marshall simply adjourned the meeting.

2

From the summer of 1947 until June, 1950, the European Recovery Program was the most important vehicle of American diplomacy. The program was formally inaugurated in April, 1948 and ended in 1951. However, the Korean War, along with efforts already made before the Korea War to create a European security system, modified American goals, so that the ERP properly existed for less than three years. Analysis suggests that the ERP's achievements were, by most standards, extremely impressive. Industrial production in Western Europe rose nearly 40 percent above prewar level, and

¹³ "Summary of Discussion on Problems of Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Europe," May 29, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, III, pp. 234-237. Those in attendance did agree that the situation must be faced immediately.

¹⁴ *Dean Acheson Oral Memoir*, "Princeton Transcripts," July 22, 23, 1953, Acheson Papers, "Kennan heard nothing further from it until the newspapers shortly thereafter, and realized that the basic elements had been presented at Harvard," wrote Ben T. Moore to Clair Wilcox on July 28, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, III, p. 238. The speech was drafted mainly by Charles Bohlen, who relied on the Kennan and Clayton memos.

agriculture attained a 15 percent increase. And though the "dollar gap" still existed, it was reduced by some 80 percent.¹⁵ "In human terms," Paul Hoffman, the top American administrator, once observed, "Europeans were eating, they had jobs, they were working and working hard."¹⁶

The psychological impact of the ERP appears to have been little less than revolutionary. On May 14, 1947, Winston Churchill had termed the continent "a rubble heap." Marshall's "simple words" brought renewed hopes. For British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, "It was like a lifetime to sinking. It seemed to bring hope when there was one."¹⁷ And, of course, the ERP apparently stemmed the Red tide. The return of economic vitality stabilized the political climate in Western Europe and, indeed, brought once weak regimes solidly into the anti-Communist camp.

The Marshall Plan was "one of the great success stories of all time," Harry Price wrote in 1955. "It gave the U. S. a new stature as a leader to be trusted. And it set in train a succession of promising developments."¹⁸ For many years, historians refrained from asking anything more from the ERP. Recently, though, scholars have been asking more and different questions about U. S. engagements such as the ERP, and most have

¹⁵ The point here is that the Korean War confirmed that the basic goal of aid to Europe had changed.

¹⁶ Hoffman's statement is quoted in Harry B. Price, *The Marshall Plan and Its Meaning* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1955), p. 399.

¹⁷ Bevin's remarks are in *The Washington Post*, April 2, 1947.

¹⁸ Price, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

written unfavorably about its purpose and its achievements. For example, in their massive study of postwar American diplomacy, Gabriel and Joyce Kolko entitle one chapter, "The Failure of the Marshall Plan" and argue that the ERP was monumentally unsuccessful. Thus, it intensified political instability and social alienation. "There was no longer any doubt in early 1950," the Kolkos wrote, "about the direction of both the American and European economies, nor about the failure of the ERP to achieve the original goals that Washington desired."¹⁹

I believe that both the defenders and critics of the ERP have misconstrued what happened during the years. Most historians have treated the ERP as a static phenomenon, implying that it was conceived in precise terms and goals. They have defined the ERP by analyzing one or more of its causes. They have not seen clearly that the ERP evolved as conditions and that the aims of those who directed it changed. There has been a failure to understand that not all of the ERP's results were pre-dicated.²⁰

The relationship between those concerns which produced Marshall's initiative and the course of U. S. policy during the next three years was often beset by numerous internal contradictions. It appears that there are three main reasons: the absence of consensus regarding what

¹⁹ Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

²⁰ There is a mass of evidence in support of this argument, although much of it is open to several interpretations. Expressions of confusion about the Marshall Plan were wide-spread during the first months and this confusion continued.

was needed to accomplish European recovery, the domestic political scene, and the influence of bureaucratic politics.

Marshall's address was a quickly-conceived attempt to test Europe's reflexes. To be sure, the speech showed Washington's readiness to take action, but it said almost nothing about American interests or intentions. A State Department official admitted in late July, 1947 that "the Marshall Plan has been compared to a flying saucer—no body knows what it looks like, how big it is, in what direction it is moving or whether it really exists."²¹ In some ways the ERP always remained as an "unidentified flying object."

The lack of consensus lies clearly revealed in the continuing debate over European integration. The ERP offered a great opportunity, as George Bidault proclaimed, "to construct a Europe."²² It might have impelled a reordering of the European society and a rationalization of Western Europe's economic life. A start might even have been made toward realization of that age old dream, political union. Many Europeans are convinced that the U. S. permitted a golden chance to slip away in the dark days of 1947-1949.²³

Why the U.S. has missed the chance is open to various explanations. There was a belief that such interference in the internal affairs of other nations was both politically risky and immoral. The U. S. also tried

²¹ Policy Planning Staff's May 23 Memorandum, *FRUS*, 1947, III, p. 227.

²² *The New York Times*, July 13, 1947.

²³ II, 4, December, 1972, pp. 400-413.

to avoid any British opposition, for the Britishers many American officials possessed a peculiar regard known as the "special relationship."²⁴ However, fear of European dissatisfaction was probably uppermost. As Lewis Douglas told visiting Congressmen in the summer of 1947, "political consideration should override all economic considerations."²⁵ With some few exceptions, U. S. officials followed the doctrine of "hands off" with notable dedication.

But also decisive was lack of agreement about the necessity for taking such risks. One U. S. planner later said: "the reality, however, was that Europe was not on its feet before the war. The recovery conceptive was therefore mistaken, and the feeling of many was that after four years we would go back to semi-isolationism."²⁶ The impasse over whether to press Western Europe into cooperative action apparently was dealt with belatedly. Within weeks after Marshall's speech, numerous inter-departmental and special presidential committees were created. At the beginning, these committees were less concerned with what the "Plan" should accomplish than with how and how much money would be needed.²⁷

The emphasis and the answers to these questions

²⁴ Max Beloff, *The U. S. and the Unity of Europe* (Washington, 1963), p. 36.

²⁵ Christian A. Herter, "Notes on the Boat Trip Coming Over," September 3, 1947, Box 888a, *Christian Herter Papers*, Harvard Univ.

²⁶ Interview with Harlan Cleveland, September 27, 1952, in "Notes Compiled by Harry B. Price," Harry S. Truman Library (HSTL), Missouri.

²⁷ The Advising Steering Committee on the European Recovery Program was established "to assure that the interests of all appropriate agencies of the Government concerned with particular domestic or foreign aspects of the program were taken into account."

were derived from calculations as to what Congress and the American public would accept. The Truman Administration exploited congressional prejudices in order to push through the ERP. As a result, the administration found itself being forced to overlay the hard facts about Europe's difficulties with arguments. These arguments were then transformed into a doctrine.²⁸ The original estimates of aid required to make Europe "self-sufficient" is a case in point. The Report of the Committee for European Economic Cooperation stipulated an absolute minimum of \$22 billion in aid. U.S. officials then arbitrarily slashed this figure to \$17 billion in order to improve the program's chances in Congress. The decision to assign the program a four-year life span and to extort a promise from the Europeans that the dollar gap would be ended by 1952 was similarly motivated.²⁹

Putting over the ERP has to be judged as one of the most impressive public relations campaigns of recent history. The Truman Administration carefully orchestrated release of the findings of the Krug Committee, and the Nourse Committee was headed by Secretary of Commerce, W. Averell Harriman.³⁰ The Administration then

²⁸ Dean Acheson once complained that emphasis on superficial matters "is what happens to plans...when they get into the congressional mill. Something happens all along the line. ...Everything has to be stepped up a little bit to get the attention of people who are more interested in rivers and harbors...than in foreign affairs, so that things are put in a much more critical situation than we would want to do. ..."
Acheson Memoir, "Princeton Transcripts," Acheson Papers.

²⁹ See *Interim Report of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation* (Paris, 1947).

³⁰ See Department of Interior, *Natural Resources and Foreign Aid* (Washington, 1947)

insisted that France, Italy, and Austria required extraordinary assistance before the winter to relieve their desperate plight. Debate on the issue of aid to Europe thus took place over the Interim Aid Bill, a \$522 million appropriation, rather than on the \$17 billion European Recovery Program. By the time the ERP itself was introduced, most potential opposition had been vanished.³¹

A program demanding a large sum of money and broad commitments, sponsored by a Democratic administration, was passed by a Republican Congress. A principal reason is that Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg and other congressional leaders were placed in a position of accepting the Administration's assertions. Many years later, Dean Acheson explained: "Bipartisan foreign policy is the ideal for the executive, because you can't run this damn country under the Constitution any other way except by fixing the whole organization so it doesn't work the way it is supposed to work."³²

Bipartisanship, he concluded, "was a magnificent fraud, but one which ought to be perpetuated."³³ Implicit in this view was the conviction that the opposition would stay in line only if a desired policy was presented in simple terms. It produced expectations which were impossible for any program to satisfy. The Truman

³¹ The administration argued that interim aid was necessary to insure the success of the ERP and then asserted, once interim aid had been approved, that the ERP must be funded in order that interim aid would not throw money away. See "Harry Truman to Styles Bridges," September 30, 1947, Harry S. Truman Papers, HSTL.

³² The idea of Bipartisanship is open to various usages. Robert Dahl, *Congress and Foreign Policy* (N. Y., 1950), p. 228.

³³ *Ibid.*

Administration chose to emphasize form over substance. The result was that it lost a unique opportunity to educate Congress and the public in the hard realities of giving aid to other nations. Perhaps it also lost an opportunity to educate itself in these realities. The effects were serious, for, as circumstances changed, the hostility of legislators to "foreign aid giveaways" revived.³⁴

The third factor in the ERP's development is complex bureaucratic politics. At one level the influence of the bureaucracy is apparent. At another level, the concept of decision-making offers penetrating insights—especially when dealing with the ERP's activities. It can provide a complete and accurate description of this type of decision.³⁵ Graham T. Allison has observed:

Government decisions are made, and government actions are taken, neither as the simple choice of a unified group, nor as the formal summary of leaders' preferences. Rather, the context of shared power but separate judgments about important choices means that politics is the mechanism of choice. Each player pulls and hauls with the power at his discretion for outcomes that will advance his conception of national, organizational, group, and personal interests.³⁶

There were ideas and assumptions about the nature and purpose of American diplomacy. Containment of the

³⁴ The days of bipartisan cooperation regarding foreign aid perhaps ended in spring, 1948. When the assumptions about the Communist threat changed from containment to fear of Soviet military operations against Western Europe, Congress was unprepared to continue support of a program whose principal justification had disappeared. This explanation, of course, ignores the China aid.

³⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (N. Y., 1970), pp. 5-6.

³⁶ Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, 1971), pp. 171-172.

Societ Union is one such idea. The necessity for continued expansion of U. S. foreign trade and investments is another. The desirability of European economic integration is still another. The evidence available to us suggests that decisions often result from particular rather than general issues, that the process by which decisions are carried out was as important as, or more important than, the original decision itself. Ideas were influential, and so were organizational loyalties and procedures.³⁷

It is necessary to recall that when Secretary of State Marshall delivered his Harvard address, he was speaking for only one segment of the foreign affairs bureaucracy. By 1947, the Department of State shared responsibility with at least a dozen departments and agencies. In certain areas (foreign economic policy, treatment of the occupied areas, atomic diplomacy), State Department was even giving precedence to Defense, Agriculture, the Treasury, and other various bureaus and boards. Although these agencies agreed to the containment policy, each held special interests and aims in their daily operations. These often were given greater weight than the high purposes proclaimed by Secretary of State and presidents. Since these organizations possessed what George Kennan once termed, "the bureaucratic veto on statesmanship, their cooperation must be obtained or their influence negated. The results of such negotiations inevitably were compromises, usually differing in substance and tone from

³⁷ Allison put it this way: "Men share power, Men differ concerning what should be done. The differences matter. . . ." see "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *American Political Science Review*, LXIII (September 1969), 708.

the original views of the contending parties.³⁸

It would seem that creation of the Economic Cooperation Administration cut at one stroke through these bureaucratic hurdles. As a new agency, the ECA was burdened by "standard operating procedure" inhibiting generation of fresh ideas. Its administrator, Paul Hoffman, recruited an aggressive staff, mostly from business and academic circles. These men, having the option of returning at any time to successful careers outside government, were responsive to the challenges of this temporary program. To a large degree, authority was decentralized in the ECA, with equivalent reduction in administration confusion. For a time the ECA's operations reflected the idealism and enthusiasm present at its creation. Unfortunately, "careerism" established itself with amazing rapidity and relations between the ECA-Washington and the ECA-Paris were drifting away from each other.³⁹

More serious were the ECA's problems with other government agencies. The ECA was only nominally independent. It was not that the established departments deliberately set out to impede its progress. Rather, they

³⁸ Joseph M. Jones to Clark M. Clifford, December 8, 1948, ECA File, Clark M. Clifford Papers, HSTL.

³⁹ The papers of W. Averell Harriman contain ample evidence of these difficulties; for example, the letter from Harriman to Hoffman cited earlier stated: "There is one area, however, which gives me deep concern. . . . Your staff must recognize that we are not branch offices, but that I and the country mission chiefs. . . . are part of the policy-forming group at the highest level. I know this is your conception. It is in my judgment a basically correct assumption but it is by way of being destroyed by competent but inexperienced subordinates in the Washington Office." November 7, 1948, SRE Files, Harriman Papers.

acted out of self-interest protection, and also sincere belief that their special projects were at least as important as the ECA's.⁴⁰

The list of personal, philosophical, and jurisdictional disputes about the ERP activities is endless. There were "minor" clashes over steel scrap, liaison with the AFL-CIO, petroleum licenses, tobacco quotas, surplus shipping, and innumerable other matters. Major differences occurred, for example, with the State Department over various issues such as reform of the French tax structure and land reform in Italy. The State Department also had a series of problems to deal with the Defence Department over German policy, with the Treasury Department over devaluations and currency convertibility. Bureaucratic politics exerted great influence on the evolution of U.S. views regarding the economic integration of Western Europe. Probably, no one of the above conflicts itself diverted the course of the ERP, but the fact was that the ERP failed to retain this direction.

3

The ERP did permit Western Europe to regain and in some sectors surpass prewar production levels. Given the pressure of attitudes then dominant in the U.S., the Marshall Plan was a calculated response to Russian

⁴⁰ The conflicts between ECA and OMGUS over the role Germany was to play in the European Recovery Program is one example of this problem. Lucius Clay to Harriman, August 21, 1948, Germany Folder; Harriman to Bissell, September 4, 1948, Germany Folder, SRE Files, Harriman Papers. Also see John Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-1949* (Stanford, 1968), pp. 181-185.

ambitions. It created a great psychological victory for the West in the Cold War. It committed the U.S. to policies more than just being an economic superpower. On the other hand, the ERP must be charged of failing to solve basic problems—economic and social inequities, overlapping and obsolete industrial establishments, deeply-rooted political malaise—which retarded full recovery. It proved itself incapable of implementing the knowledge that “recovery” necessitated something more than a return to prewar norms. The view of Altiero Spinelli, an Italian diplomat, that “the money which the American thought they were giving to help the Europeans to overcome economic nationalism served only to reconstitute old national economies, instead of creating one market and one European economy” may exaggerate U.S. influence.⁴¹

If we are correct in arguing that the assumptions underlying the ERP were never subjected to investigate, the ERP must be held partially responsible for the unnecessary intensification of the Cold War. Unfortunately, the ERP failed to provide either friends or enemies with regarding U.S. aims within the free world. Nor did it indicate how European recovery materially strengthened the U.S. vis-a-vis the U.S.S.R. As a result, the goals of the Marshall Plan proved an inadequate rationale when the West was confronted by evidence that Kremlin policy had shifted to reliance on Soviet military power. Already by mid-1948, Western Europe's defencelessness was apparent. The sponsors of the Atlantic

⁴¹ Grove Hines, ed., *European Integration* (Baltimore, 1957), p. 54.

Pact and NATO originally considered an Atlantic alliance as an additional dimension of the ERP.⁴²

The criticism on the failure of the ERP results from disappointment with wasted potential and misdirected beliefs. Possibly this judgment is unwarranted. After all, the men who guided American diplomacy in those years were not perfect sages, but just a group of ordinary men. They were, as this paper has attempted to demonstrate, caught in a complex web of circumstances, a web at least partly of their own devising.

⁴² In his book, *Present at the Creation*, p. 347, Acheson expressing surprising bitterness.