

Telegram from Dean Acheson to the US Embassy in Paris (Washington, 19 October 1949)

Caption: On 19 October 1949, in anticipation of the meeting of US Ambassadors in Paris, the US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, writes a note in which he sets out the essential elements required to promote European economic integration and emphasises France's leadership role in this matter.

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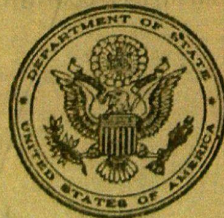
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/telegram_from_dean_acheson_to_the_us_embassy_in_paris_washington_19_october_1949-en-ef456d4c-b0cc-4a98-a496-586b8ccb19b5.html

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MEETING OF UNITED STATES AMBASSADORS AT PARIS,
OCTOBER 21-22, TO DISCUSS MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS
RELATING TO EUROPE

840.00/10-1949 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France

SECRET US URGENT WASHINGTON, October 19, 1949—8 p. m.

4013. For Perkins.¹ I have reviewed the problem of closer international association in the Western world, and suggest the following considerations for your discussion of this topic with the chiefs of mission in your Paris meeting and request prompt report of your discussions on this subject. I will also discuss this subject, if possible, with Hoffman² before his departure.

It is not yet clear what is the most desirable ultimate pattern of deeper international association of the US, British Commonwealth, and Europe, and I do not believe that anyone should blueprint a course far ahead with any great rigidity. Ties among all these countries have been becoming closer in many ways, and I believe that we and the other nations concerned should continue to develop and strengthen these overall ties, using for this purpose the Atlantic Pact organization, the OEEC, and other institutions, such as GATT, ITO, IMF, and other UN instrumentalities. However, it also appears important and, in my opinion, urgent to parallel this line of action with progress toward more intimate integration within this wide framework of as many countries as possible. By this, I have in mind developments going beyond the existing cooperative and collaborative forms of the Atlantic Pact and OEEC. This progress toward integration should be consistent with and, in fact, contributory to a further strengthening of ties among all Western countries. It should also not commit us to patterns of organization which irrevocably exclude or include the US and other countries not initially participating.

A dominant consideration underlying the belief that integration is needed is the problem of Western Germany. The character of Western Germany and of its relations to its neighbors is rapidly being molded.

¹ George W. Perkins, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.

² Paul G. Hoffman, Administrator for Economic Cooperation.

There are signs that it is already taking a familiar and dangerous nationalist turn. This trend must be expected to continue unless German resources and energies can be harnessed to the security and welfare of Western Europe as a whole. The danger is that the time to arrest and reverse this trend is already very short. This consideration weighs heavily in our thinking. ECA also believes that integration is necessary if Europe is to achieve viability. Without challenging this view and while recognizing that economic integration should greatly assist necessary economic adjustments, I believe that this argument should not be misinterpreted to mean that the solution of the dollar payments problem lies solely or necessarily primarily in integration.

The key to progress towards integration is in French hands. In my opinion France needs, in the interests of her own future, to take the initiative promptly and decisively if the character of Western Germany is to be one permitting healthy development in Western Europe. Even with the closest possible relationship of the US and the UK to the continent, France and France alone can take the decisive leadership in integrating Western Germany into Western Europe.

If France can make this effort, it can be sure of our support and encouragement and every safeguard we can reasonably be asked to provide. We envisage a development and strengthening of US ties with Europe, but for the period immediately ahead ties short of those needed among the European countries. We will encourage the UK to move as far and as fast as it can in strengthening its ties with the continent, though we recognize that there are good reasons why the UK feels that it would have to stop short of steps involving merger of sovereignty at this time. The Dept for example is prepared to consider some form of membership in the OEEC. It is also prepared to see a strengthening of the OEEC along lines permitting action by less than unanimous decision and perhaps to bring OEEC into some kind of institutional arrangement with the Council of Europe, if these moves prove desirable. It is also anxious to see much greater progress toward liberalization of trade and payments among all OEEC countries and other action to carry out the mutual aid pledges of the OEEC convention. We will certainly not acquiesce in any British attempts to obstruct integration; to the contrary, we will use our influence with the UK to secure its cooperation and collaboration along all these lines.

Inability of the US and possibly of the UK and of other countries to join at this time in actions involving some merger of sovereignty should not debar some countries from such progress. I wish particularly to emphasize that this does not and must not mean any weakening of US or UK ties with Europe and does not mean "leaving France alone on the continent." (In fact, what we are suggesting is movement along two lines: first, a strengthening and development of

MEETING OF U.S. AMBASSADORS AT PARIS, OCTOBER 21-22 471

cooperative action by the US, British Commonwealth, and Europe, and second, new institutional arrangements where these are needed and can be developed by some countries within the larger group. Progress along the two lines should, as far as possible, go forward hand in hand and each reinforce the other.) The needs of the continental countries are in some respects more urgent and more compelling and seem to me to require such action, even if the UK finds that its participation must be less than complete. In some fields and for some purposes, substantial progress toward the establishment of supra-national institutions, as well as arrangements for the freer movement of persons, are needed soon.

With specific reference to the memorandum Bissell has brought to Paris,² the Dept regards it as a useful analysis of the problems needing action on a supra-national basis and of possible forms of supra-national organizations to deal with these problems, but believes that the specific provisions and time-table suggested require careful further analysis and that further it is much too precise a blueprint to be put forward as a considered US Govt proposal for action. Rather we feel that the Europeans must themselves analyze the problems and develop the institutions to handle these problems, and that the US should confine itself, as in the case of ERP, to friendly advice and assistance. We should avoid committing ourselves to the public, the Congress, and the Europeans about such a definitive statement of the problem and its solution in order that failure by the Europeans to take this action will not appear to be a failure of US policy or a justification for discontinuing ERP aid. We therefore request you to inform Bissell that the Dept believes it would be unwise to submit the memorandum to representatives of OEEC or other govts, and trust that it will be used only as background for US officials in discussing the problems and possible forms of organization.

At the same time, however, only a definitive beginning in the near future along these lines appears to offer hope for such a radical change in the climate in which these countries are trying to work out their problems as to reverse incipient divisive nationalist trends on the continent, to create a structure strong enough to carry out the purposes of the Atlantic Pact and resist threats from the East, and to permit constructive German participation in continental affairs in the interest of Western Europe as a whole. I repeat that the UK should participate to the extent that it is willing and able to go—and the same principle should apply to the US and Canada.

To sum up, the urgent tasks facing the Dept. and the ECA, are to strengthen existing ties (including perhaps some form of US mem-

² This memorandum by Richard M. Bissell, Jr., Assistant Administrator for Program, ECA, has not been identified in Department of State files.

bership in the OEEC and a reorganization of OEEC to permit recommendations by less than unanimous decision), to support and encourage positive action under OEEC auspices to carry out the pledges of mutual aid, and simultaneously to support and encourage the French in taking the initiative in seeking Franco-German understanding as the precondition to progress toward integration.

I believe that this may be the last chance for France to take the lead in developing a pattern of organization which is vital to her needs and to the needs of Western Europe. The taking of this initiative is not a price for further US aid, and I do not believe that we should put pressure on France nor put ourselves in a position in which French failure will be a defeat for US policy. But this does represent our analysis of what is needed if Russian or German, or perhaps Russian-German domination, is to be avoided.

By progress toward integration, as mentioned above, I have in mind the earliest possible decision by the Europeans as to objectives and commitments among them on a timetable for the creation of supra-national institutions, operating on less than a unanimity basis, for dealing with specific economic, social, and perhaps other problems. We do not intend to propose the precise character and scope of these institutions. The nature of the problem and the means for dealing with it are obviously more clearly understood in Western Europe than here. Institutions, if they are to last, must be created by the countries who are to participate in them. But I do wish to emphasize that, in my opinion, they would fall short of the needs of the time if they did not involve some merger of sovereignty.

ACHESON