

UNILATERAL REDUCTION OF U.S. FORCES IN EUROPE:
THE PROPOSALS OF SENATOR MANSFIELD

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INTRODUCTION

For nearly a quarter of a century the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has symbolized Western resolve to deter aggression in Europe. Throughout this period the United States, in addition to providing a massive strategic nuclear deterrent, has contributed sizable conventional and tactical nuclear forces to the Alliance. The American commitment has been costly in terms of personnel as well as in terms of dollars. Inflation and the weakened position of the dollar abroad are making the U.S. force commitment more expensive each year.

Since the late 1950's Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Montana), the Senate majority leader, has been at the forefront of attempts to cause a reduction of U.S. force levels in Europe and a corresponding increase in defense outlays by the European members of NATO. Although Senator Mansfield's proposals have been put forward, in one form or another, for about fifteen years, it has been during the last five years that these proposals have gained substantial support in the Congress. During this same time period there has been a marshalling of support by those opposed to unilateral U.S. reductions in Europe. Although opposition to Senator Mansfield's ideas has been widespread, the principal organized opposition has come from the Nixon Administration.

This report will be limited to an examination of the arguments of Senator Mansfield and the counter arguments of

the Nixon Administration. Although there will be some reference to Senator Mansfield's early opposition to U.S. force levels in Europe the bulk of the report will be devoted to the period 1969-1973. It was during this time that the majority leader switched tactics in his efforts to gain force reductions in Europe. That is, he abandoned the idea that a "Senate resolution" would affect the Administration's policies in Europe and attempted, via legislation, to force the unilateral reduction of U.S. forces in Europe.

Budgetary constraints, balance of payments deficits, the idea that the United States provides too many military resources and that the European NATO members provide too little, are all factors which contribute to the current efforts to force a unilateral reduction of U.S. forces in Europe. While the reduction idea claims supporters from many corners of the country it is probably most visible in the United States Senate.

Senator Mansfield's arguments have been rearranged by priority from time to time but they continue to be the same arguments he has espoused since the late 1950's. He is opposed to the high cost of maintaining large forces in Europe, he objects to what he considers a shirking of duty on the part of the European allies and he is opposed in principle to the idea of large American military forces stationed on foreign soil.

In addition to opposition from the Nixon Administration, Senator Mansfield is continually confronted with a myriad of lesser politicians, and political and military analysts