

Comments by Samuel F. Wells, Jr.

Session on "Integration and Security: EC, NATO, CSCE"

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Having just returned from two weeks in Japan and South Korea, I find that I have a somewhat different perspective on issues relating to European integration and security than I would have had before my trip. Like most of the members of this panel and many in the audience, I have spent almost all of my professional life studying the relations between the United States and Europe, including the Soviet Union. In-depth discussions with Asian political and intellectual leaders underline how parochial many of our Eurocentric discussions have become. It is clear that very fundamental changes are underway in Europe and that these will have a substantial effect on U.S.-European relations generally, but it is almost certainly the case that the change in the nature of our relationship with Europe is likely to be less significant over the next 10-15 years than will be the changes in our relationships with key partners in East Asia, notably Japan and Korea.

The papers of this panel are solid and, taken together, make the point that the environment for U.S.-European relations will be in the coming two decades much less threatening in general terms, and they go on to point out that these new institutions of CSCE, WEU, and EC will take some time to evolve. During this period of evolution, there will surely be a cacophony of rival interpretations and proposals originating on both sides of the Atlantic.

Reinhardt Rummel establishes very clearly that West European Political Union is advancing steadily and will result in significant new duties being based within the European Community. Rummel is quite correct in setting out principles for thinking about the evolution of these new duties and the new institutions that will assume them, and he is right also in emphasizing that decisions on functions and the development of capabilities should occur before institutions are built. Rummel's general attitude is slightly un-German in that it is one of prudent optimism, and he advances persuasive arguments to support his case.

I would like to focus much of the remainder of my comment on two problems that flow from Rummel's analysis and to a large extent from that of Stephen Szabo and Jim Steinberg, but are not directly addressed. First, Rummel employs the distinction between defense and security that is widely used in Europe and leads, I believe, to significant misunderstandings in discussions with Americans. This distinction between defense and security originated with French attempts to rationalize national autonomy in defense with membership in a multilateral alliance. Many Americans do not understand this distinction and use the terms "defense" and "security" interchangeably. With regard to the plans of the European Community for a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the European Community would be the body dealing with security issues, while defense or purely military questions would be left to national governments, the Western European Union, and NATO.

Unfortunately, the reality is not as clear as much of the rhetoric. Security issues such as arms control, confidence-building measures, and technology

transfer policies must rest upon shared assumptions and commitments about fundamental military strategy and force structure that are at the heart of defense policy. It is precisely in these defense areas—the role of nuclear weapons, the integration of national units into a multinational force, out-of-area operations, and the basing and access rights for military forces—that disputes have most often developed within NATO. With the disappearance of a unifying common threat, it is likely that such disputes will increase in future months and years. I would only point out as an example the problems that developed in proposing and designing a WEU rapid-deployment force as an indication of the type of problems that will be posed by national sensitivities in this defense area.

There is, secondly, a real set of problems that the United States will have in relating to a Europe organized in the multiple institutions that Rummel describes and that our session focuses upon. In a sense, our containment strategy has succeeded too well, and we now find ourselves without a clear and acceptable role in European security affairs. Many American officials have attitudes and incentives that do not position them to seek cooperation and compromise. The Bush administration does not welcome, and there are some indications that it might even discourage, a debate on the future U.S. role in Europe. Episodes such as the Dobbins demarche and the speech of Robert Zoellick at the Atlantik-Brücke meeting in Berlin show these attitudes very clearly. I would contend that this is part of our problem in coming to terms with the new institutions of Europe.

In this same line, the bureaucratic structure in the United States is inadequate for dealing with the type of security issues that will likely dominate our future agenda with Europe. We are especially inadequately structured to deal with security issues that have significant economic dimensions. We have no basic capability for dealing with security issues that have environmental aspects to them. And for those of you involved in university teaching, I would go on to add that university curricula are, if anything, even more inappropriate than our bureaucratic structure and official attitudes toward dealing with the new ways in which business will be done in Europe and between the United States and Europe. We need curricula that focus more on applying practical political and economic knowledge to the kinds of problems that will develop and to setting priorities and processes that will resolve problems on a basis other than that of national advantage.

In general, U.S. policy will have to adopt new approaches, fresh attitudes, and develop an ability to consult, cajole, and ultimately to compromise in a series of situations where we will not be able to design new policies and have them adopted after only minor debate by our partners in Europe.

Finally, with regard to Jim Steinberg's discussion of an all-European order, I would point out that the attitude of the U.S. government has oscillated quite significantly with regard to the role it wishes the CSCE to play. For a time our government was quite discouraging toward the CSCE, but we became more positive in order to make a set of adjustments that allowed a meaningful Charter of Paris to be endorsed in November 1990. It remains the case that the CSCE is inadequate to put constraints on the willful action of small

states or to deal yet with threats such as refugees and large-scale unwanted immigration. It is hard to see, even with the most promising assumptions about future development, that the CSCE will in the future be able to deal with military conflicts within a state, in a case such as that of Serbian repression of the Albanian minority in the province of Kosovo.

In conclusion, I would say that there will be a great deal for us to discuss and analyze in the coming months with regard to the integration and security of Europe. The situation will be fluid and there will be a number of challenges presented to the way the United States likes to do business, but we should keep in mind that however important these changes and new approaches will be, the situation is, on balance, much more harmonious and safe than it has been for the preceding forty years.

THE WILSON CENTER

SAMUEL F. WELLS, JR. DEPUTY DIRECTOR



24 May 1991

Dr. Desmond Dinan
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Dear Desmond:

As requested, here is a copy of my comment at our session on Wednesday.

The conference was very well attended and seemed full to the brim with good sessions. I regret that I could not attend more of them.

With thanks for your fine work in organizing the conference,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Samuel F. Wells, Jr.