American Military Forces Abroad

Their Impact on the Western State System

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G. S.

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I. Introduction

DURING the decade since the outbreak of the Korean war and the adoption, by the North Atlantic alliance, of plans for an integrated military structure designed to implement a "forward strategy," [1]

[1] "Forward strategy" is the plan, first proclaimed at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in New York, September, 1950, to defend the NATO area "as far east as possible, in order to assure the defense of all European countries of the Alliance" (*The NATO Handbook* [Paris: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1959], p. 22). Military integration began with the appointment of General Eisenhower as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), who activated his headquarters (SHAPE) early in 1951 near Paris. Subsequent NATO decisions, in particular those at the Lisbon Council session in February, 1952, have transformed the original alliance (with emphasis on a promise of assistance in case of aggression) into a military organization relying on forces in being.

the United States has stationed nearly one-half of its active military forces in foreign territory.[2] Indeed, the over-all size of the American military establishment has been determined—aside from financial considerations—largely by the requirements of fulfilling commitments which involve the stationing of American forces abroad.[3] These commitments include collective-defense agreements with forty-three countries,[4] implemented by the stationing of American forces in thirty-five;[5] and further, the training and equipping of local military forces in those countries and elsewhere, which requires the presence of American military personnel in a total of more than seventy countries and territories.[6] The total number of personnel stationed on foreign soil since the reduction following the Korean armistice has been approximately one and one-quarter million,[7] accommodated on "at least 150 air

[2] Secretary Brucker in *Hearings on Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval and Military Establishments: [No. 56], Full Committee Hearings on H. R. 8704,* House Committee on Armed Services, 85th Cong., 1st Sess., July 24-August 1, 1957, pp. 3427-3603 (hereafter: *H. R. 8704 Hearings*), p. 3496.

[3] Military spokesmen have testified that in order to maintain an efficient rotation system, "you have to have at least the same number of units at home as you have overseas, or preferably a surplus" (*Study of Airpower: Hearings before the Subcommittee on the Air Force of the Committee on Armed Services,* United States Senate, 84th Cong., 2nd Sess., April 16-July 19, 1956 [hereafter: *Airpower Hearings*], Vol. I, Pt. XVII, p. 1283).

[4] That is, fourteen NATO, twenty Rio Treaty, two ANZUS, three Manila Treaty, and two CENTO countries (duplications excluded) and bilateral agreements with the Philippines, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Cf. map, *New York Times,* August 3, 1958, p. E5, and *infra,* Appendix I.

[5] Townsend Hoopes (consultant to the White House on overseas bases, former assistant to the Secretary of Defense), "Overseas Bases in American Strategy," *Foreign Affairs,* XXXVII, No. 1 (October, 1958), 69.

[6] "We are training 200 foreign divisions . . . in 72 countries" (Brucker, *loc. cit.*).

[7] Based on Census Bureau estimates. More specific breakdown of figures at any given time is usually available only for ground forces. Thus, during the fiscal year 1959, the Army stationed "in overseas areas" (out of its total of fourteen divisions and some additional specialized units) eight divisions, seven "battle groups and regiments," and "several" missile commands, including a five-division force in Central Europe, a medium missile command in Italy, two divisions in Korea, "overseas support forces" in Okinawa and Japan, and a "battle group" in the Caribbean (General Taylor in *Department of Defense Appropriations for 1959: Overall Policy Statements,* Hearings, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 85th Cong., 2nd Sess. [1958], p. 252). Out of the total of three Marine divisions, one (and a Marine aircraft wing) was assigned to the Seventh Fleet in the Far East, and a "landing team" of an air-ground Marine force was

and naval bases" in addition to "hundreds of ground installations." [8] The cost of operating overseas bases, including military pay spent by American personnel abroad, adds some three billion dollars to the annual dollar outflow of the United States.[9] Another index of widespread deployment is the existence, in Europe alone, of 2,918 branches of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service —now one of the six largest retail chains in the world.[10] Hundreds of thousands of dependents and civilian personnel [11] accompany the armed forces, sometimes building their own cities, complete with schools and industries, giving to the system an unprecedented air of permanence.

Indeed, while the original deployment of forces and the

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afloat with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean (General Pate, *ibid.*, p. 453). Air Force tactical forces were divided into units stationed permanently abroad, others "rotating to NATO countries," and still others "earmarked for immediate deployment to NATO if required" (and, presumably, others not committed in either of the three ways), but no breakdown of figures was made public (General White, *ibid.*, p. 122). Earlier, an Air Force spokesman had testified that "as it stands today [1956], there are more units and more aircraft overseas than at home"—a condition expected to be reversed by the introduction of faster deployment methods and longer-range planes (General Weyland, *Airpower Hearings*, I, Pt. VII, p. 511). In the cases of the strategic air forces (on a rotation system between the "Zone of Interior" and overseas) and the Navy ("afloat" rather than "abroad," even when operating in overseas waters), it is becoming increasingly meaningless to distinguish between "at home" and "abroad," and reliable figures are not available.

[8] Hanson W. Baldwin, "Overseas Bases Keys to All U.S. Strategy," *New York Times*, February 17, 1957, p. E5. The distinction between *base* and *installation* is obscure. Earlier figures released by the Department of Defense indicated the existence of 950 "overseas military installations" (*Facts on File*, 1955, 61F-63). Later, Baldwin found 70 SAC bases "in the United States and abroad," plus 160 NATO airfields and 250 national airfields available for use in Europe alone (*New York Times*, February 4, 1958, part of a series of articles reprinted in *Congressional Record*, CIV [1958], 3160-70). The Air Force construction program, as of 1956, envisaged the building of 3100 Air Force "installations," of which "360 are classed as active principal bases, 204 of those in the continental United States and 156 overseas" (*Airpower Hearings*, I, Pt. V, 371). But in 1960, *Time* finds only that "U.S. planes and ships operate out of 80 U.S. bases in 25 lands and territories"; these bases are supplemented, however, with the "stand-by use of 170 other air and sea bases" under the terms of NATO and other alliances (July 4, 1960, p. 10).

[9] *New York Times*, October 25, 1959, p. 1.

[10] *Time*, August 15, 1960, pp. 65-66.

[11] During the fiscal year 1959, the Army employed 132,000 "direct-hire civilians" overseas, the Air Force 63,000, and the Navy 20,000—in addition to large numbers of "contract-hire indigenous civilians" (Hearings, *supra*, n. 7, pp. 273, 164, 512, 115).

build-up of overseas bases in the early 1950's appeared essentially to be a stop-gap measure, dictated by the military vacuum facing Soviet and Chinese divisions on the perimeter of the Communist bloc, the continued stationing of large American forces overseas increasingly assumes a significance beyond a temporary and strictly military necessity. For, in terms of strictly military consequences, technological development and shifts in the basic American defense posture occurring during the last decade should have affected the overseas component of the American defense establishment much more than they have. Thus, neither the "New Look" policy of 1954[12] nor the reductions in over-all American military strength, necessitated by increased emphasis on budgetary ceilings during the second term of the Eisenhower administration, have led to significant changes in overseas deployment. Though there was some thinning out of American divisions assigned to Europe, this was presumably offset by increased mobility and new armaments; and the Berlin crisis of 1961-62, aside from effecting an increase in total U.S. military strength by two divisions, resulted in dispatch of an additional 40,000 men. In short, in spite of occasional variations in personnel strength, the number of units deployed overseas has remained essentially at the level determined at the beginning of the last decade.[13] As to the Air Force overseas installations, if some of them recently appeared to be overbuilt, it was only because new airplanes have made faster deployment from the United States possible, and because a new rotation system, of

[12] Proclaimed by Secretary of State Dulles in his famous "Bigger Bang for a Buck" address, when he said: "But before military planning could be changed, the President and his advisers, as represented by the National Security Council, had to take some basic policy decisions. This has been done. The basic decision was to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and places of our choosing. . . . As a result, it is now possible to get, and share, more basic security at less cost" (Department of State, *Bulletin,* Vol. XXX, No. 761 [January 25, 1954]).

[13] See the statement of Secretary of Defense Marshall in *Assignment of Ground Forces of the United States to Duty in the European Area,* Hearings, Senate Committees on Foreign Relations and Armed Services, 82nd Cong., 1st Sess., February 1-28, 1951, pp. 40-41, and S. Res. 99 in S. Rept. 175, 82nd Cong., March 14, 1951, pp. 2-3.

smaller units that remain for shorter periods, has reduced the number of personnel and dependents expected to remain overseas under the original plan of rotating entire wings.[14] Partial abandonment of Moroccan bases came only after the completion of the Spanish bases and the expansion of NATO "infrastructure." [15] The Navy can now supply its Sixth Fleet directly from the United States,[16] but the ships, while in the Mediterranean, can rely on allied bases there; moreover, the shift from "soft" missile bases ashore to submarine and surface-craft-based mobile deterrent forces results in additional navy units' operating in overseas areas. Hence, the development of new weapons, significant because of both the newly acquired Soviet capability to destroy the bases and the growing American capability to operate from bases in the United States, has affected only the reasons forwarded in favor of overseas deployment: the reason given at first was the limited combat radius of American bombers; then, the need for dispersal; then, the necessity to offset the Soviet long-range-missile advantage by effective placement of shorter-range American missiles; furthermore, it was necessary to cement alliances both by guaranteeing automatic United States fulfillment of its obligation in case of limited aggression overseas and by strengthening, in the host countries, local determination to resist subversion. Various combinations of these and similar reasons have been constructed by amateur and professional strategists, and it is unnecessary to pursue them here. It is interesting to note, however, that whenever the system of overseas bases is persuasively challenged on technological grounds, its supporters can effectively employ a political argument in its favor; and that although the theories change, the overseas bases and forces remain.

More exactly, what seems to have become a permanent institu-

[14] *New York Times,* January 5, 1959, pp. 1, 5.

[15] *Idem,* March 7, 1960, pp. 1, 4. "Infrastructure" is the NATO term for fixed installations, including airfields, telecommunication networks, and fuel pipelines, financed in common according to cost-sharing formulas negotiated in the North Atlantic Council.

[16] *Time,* July 4, 1960, p. 10.

tion—and an unprecedented one—is the stationing of *forces* in the territory of other states in peacetime. Overseas *bases* have been acquired before, by all colonial powers and by the United States, but on terms now outdated. Strictly American bases, even the newly acquired ones, are even now declining in number; only bases belonging to the local states but available for joint use have been increasing. Under the old system, a world power acquired a piece of territory in a strategic area essentially by use of force, though this was often done in the form of a symbolic lease or a similar legal formula other than outright cession. It then built its Gibraltar or Singapore (or Guantanamo or Panama Canal) while occupying the territory and administering it as its own; and it was not concerned with the security of the state from which the base was acquired. Under the new system, the leases, if that form is still retained, are real: there is a *quid pro quo,* and there is no cession of sovereignty. More often, however, forces are not restricted to any particular garrison area. They are in the country at large and they use its military and other facilities as a consequence of their collective-defense function. In such cases, the forces do not own the bases (not even as a real-estate owner, much less in the sense of sovereign rights), though they may build them and use them in the common defense effort. In essence, their status is the same anywhere in the territory of the host state; often it is similar to the status of domestic military forces. Conversely, the host state's sovereignty remains formally in effect inside and outside the military installations. Unless entire countries are considered as American bases, there are no *American* areas; there are, however, *military* areas, some used by domestic, others by American, forces, and still others collectively, perhaps by forces of other foreign nations as well.

Similar situations have occurred before, but only temporarily, in the course of wars fought by alliances, when forces of several nations have operated in the same territory, sometimes under joint supreme command. As a permanent, peacetime arrangement, this

system is truly unprecedented. One need not search far in the history of international relations to find the point where permission for permanent stationing of huge foreign forces in the territory of any of a score of countries now under this type of arrangement would have been as inconceivable as would the willingness of the United States to maintain its forces there. Indeed, as late as 1951, opposition leaders in the Senate were horrified at the prospect of sending more troops to Europe as part of an "international army" under NATO command;[17] and there were members of Congress who even refused to admit any knowledge of the fact that American forces, other than occupation troops, already had been stationed abroad.[18] In 1960, at least two presidential aspirants were prepared to propose the inclusion in their party's platform of a plank that would urge not only expanding the process of military integration but working toward a transformation of the Atlantic alliance into a confederation.[19] Though the proposal was not adopted, the fact that it was made seems to indicate that Americans have, however late, learned to live with their peacetime military involvement overseas and are, however reluctantly, getting ready for further steps in recognition of current realities.

Thus, we start from a situation involving huge American forces overseas, not stationed in American or American-occupied territory or taking part in a war or postwar clean-up expedition, but stationed in foreign countries at large, where they perform the normal peacetime functions of a domestic military force. And we find increasing public acceptance of the arrangement as a normal factor in life, presumably to remain indefinitely. There is no need to rehash here the elementary lessons of bipolarity in the world balance of power, which can be inferred from this situation as from any number of others; nor need we expound the belated

[17] Hearings, *supra*, n. 13, pp. 603-18.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 297.

[19] See report from the Chicago convention by James Reston, New York Times News Service, July 24, 1960.

realization by the United States of its now inescapable role as a "superpower." Instead, this book, on its most general plane, is an attempt to explore the relation of the current pattern of peacetime stationing of military forces in foreign territory to the traditional Western state system and its foundation, the institution known as the sovereign territorial state.

The institution of the sovereign territorial state has for some three hundred years claimed ultimate authority in controlling the activities and aspirations of people within, and in excluding such control from without, its borders. On the whole, the claim has been effective and, indeed, has been accepted as the operating basis of both international politics and international law (and, for that matter, as the orienting concept in the study of international relations) simply because it corresponded to the realities of the era. "There has been no period since Westphalia," we are instructed, "when any other grouping—church, ideological party, international organization, or business firm—could have effectively competed in power with the greatest states." [20] Though individual states have grown and declined in competition among themselves, the institution has remained unchallengeable, expanding from its European place of origin and being duplicated until it has covered the entire inhabitable world. In return, the sovereign territorial state has promised order and prosperity within its territory, and peace and security from without—though it has also acted in ways that "transformed the doctrine of sovereignty from a principle of internal order . . . into one of international anarchy." [21] But there was method in the anarchy—that is, there was as much order as could be had under any *possible* system.

In particular, no single state was ever permitted to conquer all others, for all have at least shared an interest in the survival of the institution as such, and hence, also, of various subsidiary systems

[20] Quincy Wright, *The Study of International Relations* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), p. 137.

[21] J. L. Brierly, *The Law of Nations: An Introduction to the International Law of Peace* (5th ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), p. 46.

supporting it. As long as the system of international law, for example, was in its positive content composed mainly of norms which defined the jurisdiction of states, elaborating the general principle of territorial sovereignty, it is not difficult to discover why, contrary to some popular misconceptions, "during the four hundred years of its existence, international law has in most circumstances been scrupulously observed." [22] The Western state system was, of course, not legislated into the world by international law in general or by any particular treaty. The Peace of Westphalia added formal recognition to a gradual development, in the course of which the medieval centers of power—the feudal lord, the emperor, the pope, and the free bourg—had lost out to the monarch of the emerging territorial state. This came about because the units these centers represented had lost viability in several ways but, in the final round, in the field of security. As John Herz has recently pointed out,[23] city walls and feudal manors could offer no protection against new war technology, that is, professional armies equipped with artillery and capable of holding the surrounding territory. But the king had a domain large enough to secure it by placing soldiers and fortifications on its periphery and thus, in contrast to the chaos of the latter Middle Ages, to guarantee relative security from invasions and relative order and prosperity within his territory. Before the king could prove his point and obtain monopoly of the legitimate use of force throughout the new basic unit, it took a protracted period and a variety of steps—the significance of which was not at once obvious. But being able to deliver, he eventually effected a general adjustment in his legal status: he gained the right to reject interference from above, becoming independent from "world government" (the emperor and the pope), and the right to repel penetration of his territory by other states—unconditionally, without the restric-

[22] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (2d ed.; New York: Knopf, 1954), p. 251.

[23] See his *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), chaps. ii-iv.