

Behind the News

# Acheson at West Point— Why All The Furor?



—By Herblock

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## 'You're About All Played Out-eh'

By KAY MILLS

News and World Affairs Editor

Twisting the lion's tail, or poking Great Britain's pride, has long been popular among American leaders and writers. The sport had seemed out of vogue in recent years as the United States helped the British recover economically from World War II and watched as she trimmed away a long-standing empire.

Deliberately or not, however, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson did some tail twisting in a speech analyzing "The Political and Economic Strands in Our Atlantic Alliance" before the 14th Student Conference on United States Affairs at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., on Dec. 5.

The former top man in the State Department undiplomatically assessed the independent role of Great Britain as "about played out." We student conferees were hardly aware the one keynote speaker would draw international comment even with that remark.

Not being educated as we think, we had casually forgotten that this man is still a prominent policy adviser speaking from a public platform, not a professor lecturing in the comparative freedom of his classroom.

In what context did Acheson's remarks occur? What other parts of his speech raised eyebrows in Washington and in other North Atlantic Treaty Organization capitals?

### Quality of Alliance

Acheson began by discussing the reaction of our allies to President Kennedy's announcement of the quarantine of Cuba: "Our alliances appeared to be not only good but of a different texture and quality from the good will of peoples and governments who were committed to nothing." This point has been refuted, however, by columnist Joseph Alsop, who claims that "the

Western Alliance is in a shocking mess."

Alsop cites as examples the Skybolt affair and the "unhealthy symptoms" of a breakdown of inter-allied confidence at the recent NATO meetings. The columnist's opinions have been supported by other noted newsmen both here and in Europe.

Looking at the political scene, optimistic and pessimistic Acheson examined both the views in each power camp. Thus he approached The Paragraph which aroused such ire in Europe:

"Great Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a role. The attempt to play a separate power role — that is, a role apart from Europe, a role based on a 'special relationship' with the United States, a role based on being the head of a 'commonwealth' which has no political structure, or unity, or strength... — this role is about played out. Great Britain, attempting to work alone and to be a broker between the United States and Russia, has seemed to conduct a policy as weak as its military power. Her Majesty's Government is now attempting... to re-enter Europe, from which it was banished at the time of the Plantagenets, and the battle seems about as hard-fought as were those of an earlier day."

As I look at my notes, this section is set aside but little did I know at that point what would follow:

● British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan as quoted in Time magazine, said Acheson had "fallen into an error which has been made by quite a lot of people in the course of the last 400 years, including Philip of Spain, Louis XIV, Napoleon, the Kaiser and Hitler."

● U.S. newspaper and letter writers found both praise and

blame for the speech. One Washingtonian wrote that "those who love England and admire its people have an obligation to speak the truth as they see it; Mr. Acheson's present criticism is directed primarily against a reactionary state of mind which will make future merit and achievement difficult, if not totally impossible."

Another said that the United States should start helping its true friends instead of bolstering West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, "who has been on the opposite side in two world wars."

### 'English' Acheson

● The Manchester Guardian commented that "a former Secretary of State who looks like an Englishman, but who happens to be a foreigner, voiced opinions which Englishmen only admit in the privacy of their clubs."

● And in the weeks to follow, Britons and Americans engaged in much soul searching and diplomatic maneuvering over the fate of the Skybolt missile project and Britain's position of prominence in the Atlantic Community.

This speech also hit the creature (NATO) Acheson helped to build when he said that "the weakness in the allied position lies not in doubt that the United States will act, if necessary, but in that lacking agreement on political purposes and courses of action, the alliance may be an actual impediment to action."

Acheson's analysis of current Atlantic political power may reflect a growing feeling in the United States that because the main business today is securing freedom in the "free" world and keeping that sphere from shrinking, our allies can go their way or play by our rules. Acknowledgement that the United States will compete in only one game at a time comes hard to the fields of Eton.

## TODAY ON CAMPUS

### Applications

Military Ball Queen applications are available at the Hetzel Union desk and Wagner until Feb. 1.

### Interlandia

Interlandia Folk Dancers will hold a free folk dance tonight from 7:30 to 11 in White Hall. Dances from various countries will be taught. Beginners are welcome.

### Other Events

Bridge Club, 6:30-10:30 p.m., HUB cardroom.  
Graduate Student Association square dance, 8:30 p.m.-12 a.m., Lutheran Student Center.  
HUB Social Committee, 7-8 p.m.,

HUB assembly hall.  
Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 7:30 p.m., 111 Boucke.  
Study Abroad Participants, 7:30 p.m., 209 Home Economics.

### Kingston Trio--

(Continued from page one)  
students couldn't afford to attend both.

Fred Good, Greek Week Committee chairman, said his committee hadn't approved the proposal, but had recommended that it be approved by IFC-Panhel.

Nothing has been substituted for the Work Sessions, which were originally scheduled for Saturday, or for the Kingston Trio, Good said.

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