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## ALLIANCES AS A MEANS OF DEFENSE

A lecture delivered  
at the Naval War College  
on 3 November 1954 by  
*Professor Arnold O. Wolfers*

Admiral McCormick, Members of the War College,

I am very happy to be at the Naval War College today, the one War College which I have not had the privilege of visiting before; particularly, to be here on the day after the elections when it is a pleasure to escape the partisan and political atmosphere of civilian life and to be among the professionally non-partisan members of this body.

My lecture today is what is called a "theoretical" lecture, indicated by the fact that there is no map on the wall. I am not speaking about *a* specific alliance, or even specifically about our alliances, but about the problem of alliances in general. What role do alliances play in the foreign policy of countries? What problems do they raise for their members? These are the kinds of questions to which I shall be addressing myself.

For this country, it is of particular importance to talk about alliances. It is a country that has not been used to alliances. The fact that we have had to enter into a very widespread alliance policy, recently, means that we have had to put an end to the "go-it-alone" policy this country was fortunate enough to be able to pursue for a long time. I say 'fortunate enough' because an alliance policy is never a pleasant thing to contemplate; it is not something one enters into because of the peculiar charm of alliances. They are an evil, though very often a necessary evil or the least of the evils among which one is free to choose.

There are some people who have swung from the extreme of what, in a five-syllable word, one could call "pactophobia"

(a real fear of alliance "entangling", or of being, as President Wilson assumed, a main cause of war) to the other extreme of "pactomania" of thinking "the more alliances the better"). Whether an alliance is good or bad depends on the particular circumstances and the purpose to which it is put. Our alliances are instruments of defense and must be judged in terms of defense. Alliances may also serve to bring countries closer together and may serve a good many other worthy objectives. But we have got to be clear in our minds that alliances have a primary military purpose and that their primary purpose, not their possible secondary kinds of usefulness, must guide alliance policy.

The primary purpose of an alliance follows from the definition which is generally accepted: an alliance is "a pact of mutual military assistance against a common foe". If it is not that, we had better not call it an "alliance". Alliances, in contrast to other inter-state agreements, are meant to supplement one's own armed forces where they need supplementation or they may serve to substitute for one's own armed forces. Substitution is a risky use of an alliance, however, because one has full control over one's own armed forces but only a precarious hold on allied forces. So, if some countries (because they want to save money) prefer to substitute other people's forces for their own, they should be aware of the risk they are running and should measure it against the value of what they save by doing so.

On the whole, the idea of an alliance is to supplement one's own forces and the "alliance need" is the need for such supplementation. Any country that has reason to believe that it can go-it-alone will not enter into alliances if it conducts a rational and wise policy. We are today in a position (I think there is general agreement on this) where to go-it-alone effectively would be, if not impossible, then at least so costly and risky that an alliance policy represents the far lesser evil.

That explains why this country has made a revolutionary shift from a clearly anti-alliance attitude to a quest for allies unequalled in the world. Even during the First World War we associated ourselves but did not ally ourselves with the European countries in order not to get entangled in their quarrels. Today, it would be hard to find a country more eager, sometimes over-eager, to build up alliances, to supplement its own strength by the assumed or actual strength of other countries.

If we ask ourselves: What, then, is the range of opportunity for such supplementation? What do we have to look for in order to be sure that we are attaining our objective of increasing our defensive strength by entering into alliances? One answer comes to mind immediately: We have got to look for countries that have defensive strength — at least some defensive strength — that can be added to our own. It does not necessarily have to consist in armed forces, in the narrower sense of the word. Any strategic advantage we can get from being able to rely on the cooperation of an ally in case of war may be enough to make an alliance worthwhile. It may consist for instance — and very often does — in having access to the strategic location of another country. We may want to deny that country to the enemy. We may want to be sure that we can move in without hindrance. We may even be able to move in our forces in peacetime. This is supplementation.

If countries provide facilities for air bases, it may be worthwhile to enter into a mutual assistance pact with them. They supplement our strength by offering us their territory. But, on the whole, throughout history the basic idea of an alliance has been to permit a nation to add to its own armed strength by permitting it to count on the additional military forces of its allies.

The French have been great alliance-makers. Before the last war, it was they who were accused of "pactomania". But the

French were very careful to make it clear what they understood by an "alliance". A vague commitment which did not indicate to them that certain calculable armed forces would be at their disposal in case of war did not mean much to them. When, in the League of Nations Covenant, all members promised to come to the help of any victim of aggression, the French put very little trust in that commitment. They wanted to know how many divisions would be on their side of the Channel at a given time to fill the gap in their defense line against Germany. That was the most technically precise military alliance. But it is good to keep this in mind as a kind of standard by which to measure the value of alliances.

The further one gets away from precise commitments, the less reliable the supplement obviously becomes. If it is merely a set of words, with no convincing indication that in case of need it will lead to military movements of a predictable kind, it is very hard to base one's strategy on it, or to rely on it for one's own security.

In N. A. T. O. we have now advanced even beyond the traditional French type of alliance. While the French would have been satisfied to obtain from Britain a promise of a specified number of divisions to be sent to France as soon as war broke out, we now have placed forces on allied territory in peacetime. This is the most advanced type of supplementation; it takes place in advance of the outbreak of hostilities. It is quite clear why this has happened. There is just not enough time any more once war has started. Therefore, more and more the preparation for a coalition strategy has come to take place in peacetime.

But that merely makes N. A. T. O. more clearly an alliance. There was a good deal of confusion about the character of N. A. T. O. in the beginning. We did not like to call it a military alliance; so we talked about it as a kind of "regional arrangement", or as "collective security" or as a mere underpinning of

the collective defense provisions of the United Nations. I think that the Europeans understood very soon that to enter N. A. T. O. meant entering a multi-national alliance, military in character, even one of a particularly stringent nature because it meant deploying military forces in peacetime for a coalition strategy against a specific opponent.

There was one feature to the N. A. T. O. agreement that might have seemed to put it into a different category: the enemy was not named. But nobody was, or could be, fooled by that. It was obvious who the enemy was. This is good old diplomatic tradition — one does not tell the enemy in so many words that one intends a build-up of defenses against him, but as a rule, the intention is obvious as it was in this case.

One of the difficulties about the United Nations or the League of Nations as a substitute for alliances is that assistance to others in case they are attacked is promised against any aggressor anywhere. Here the enemy is not known. The assumption is that the pact will operate against any member of the organization who resorts to aggression. That takes the teeth out of it; it makes these organizations unsuitable for the purposes for which nations conduct an alliance policy. How can one develop a strategy, how can one rely on the assistance of others, if one does not know in which direction their forces are supposed to operate?

So, while N. A. T. O. was worded so as to be available against any enemy, the French were right not to assume that it gave them security against Germany. They might want some day to have a set of additional alliances directed against a possible German attack. It is interesting to note in this connection that when in recent discussions the French were clamoring for protection against Germany, nobody dared say: "You have N. A. T. O., after all". It is so obvious that the N. A. T. O. deployment of forces in Germany cannot suddenly be reversed and



be made to operate against Germany. If Germany becomes a member of N. A. T. O., how could one claim that in case of need, the coalition could simply turn around and, instead of moving in the direction of the east, turn on one of its members. The Brussels Pact, by the way, was changed to exclude any mention of future German aggression. This was necessary if Germany was to join the Pact.

It would seem, then, that it is militarily impossible to have what is called "collective security" if this means a promise of effective military assistance against any aggressor anywhere. If you will put your mind to it, you will surely find that it is impossible to conceive of military plans that could operate equally well against enemy A with the help of allies Q to Z than against one of these allies with the help of A. Surely, it would not be a reliable defense instrument.

This, then, is the first standard by which to evaluate alliances: whether the allies can offer something worthwhile in terms of military assistance. This means, among other things, that there are some countries that are not desirable as allies because they would be a drain on one's military strength rather than an addition to it. One has to be discriminatory and distinguish between countries that are potentially valuable as allies and those that are not. I will come back to this point later.

The second point, which needs to be emphasized, is that a pact by which a country promises assistance is not the same as this assistance itself. One has to be able to rely on the fulfillment of the pledge! Even if troops are already stationed where they are best able to meet the requirements of the alliance, they may still not be available when the day comes. To rely upon the assistance of allies is a very touchy problem. Much that will have to be said about reliance hinges on this problem: How can one be sure that the supplementation of one's forces will come to be a fact and operate effectively when the time arrives at which

one depends on it? That is one of the great drawbacks of alliances — that one builds up one's strategy and defense relying on a promise, but that for reasons honorable or dishonorable any promise of this particular kind may fail to materialize.

One cannot guarantee reliability. There are certain means, however, by which one can hope to strengthen it. One is the legal form of the commitment itself, and I do not think we should take that too lightly. If a nation signs a treaty of alliance with definite promises on the dotted line, this usually has a tremendous hold on government and people. We used to say to the French: "Why do you want all these alliances? Those who have the same interests as you will come to your assistance anyway and those who don't have the same interests will find ways of getting out from under their commitments. Why worry so much about having these pledges?" But I think the French were right, and we are acting today as if they were. They knew that a country which violates that type of pledge loses credit in the world and is in danger of not finding allies when it needs them. Therefore, the violation of an alliance is always taken to be a very serious act.

When the French did not come to the assistance of Czechoslovakia (when they told their Czech ally it could not count on them in 1938), this was a very serious act; it has hurt the French reputation for reliability in the eyes of many nations. It may have accounted for Czechoslovakia turning to Russia after the Second World War. The Czechs were saying: "How can we trust the French? How can we rely on the West if we cannot even place faith in a formal treaty of alliance?"

Italy, as you know, has wiggled out of alliances more than once; it has made it difficult for her to be taken seriously as an ally. This may mean that countries will not prepare to defend Italy in the same fashion than they would if they felt sure that Italy would actually fight on their side when and if the time comes.

The legal commitment is the first thing. But, more important is the popular support of the commitment. This is something about which one cannot be sure. When there are strong convictions in a country that the alliance is the right thing — that we have a vital interest in going hand-in-hand with our ally, that what the ally is doing is the right thing, and that it is right to be in with him — that means a great deal.

Strictly speaking, Canada had no alliance with Britain prior to World War II. But as soon as the war came, the Canadians immediately fell in with the British, which was, after all, pretty courageous. We did not fall in with the British at that time. We let them fight alone. For all practical purposes Canada was a sovereign country, but the public would not have stood for letting Britain down.

If there is an alliance — and you can sense that in this country today, I think — there may develop a feeling of solidarity that tends to make the alliance reliable. The Russians have alliances too: they have one with England and one with France. But these alliances count for nothing today. It is too well known that despite the legal document, there is no public support, no sense of solidarity behind them; the necessary public conviction is lacking. Therefore, when the French talk about security against Germany, they are not saying: "We already have the alliance with Russia to fall back on". It would take a complete change of sentiment and policy to restore the Franco-Soviet alliance to what it was intended to be and make it more than an empty document.

There are bound to be a number of difficult problems, then, to make an alliance reliable, to making sure that one is not basing one's expectations on something that will not materialize. The more an alliance gets out into the territory of unreliability and lack of precision, the more it threatens to become a trap and a handicap to sound policy. It means building up one's defense

forces on an unreliable element in the total defense picture. As you well know, that can be fatal.

— I remember once in the First World War, when I was on the frontier between Switzerland and Austria, just across from the Italian border where the Austrians and Italians were fighting each other. There I talked to a Czech soldier who was on the uttermost right-wing of the Austrian Army deployed between the Swiss border and the Adriatic. When I asked him how many Italians he had shot, he said: "Italians? We never shoot Italians." I asked him: "Whom do you shoot, then? You have a rifle." He replied: "When we shoot, we shoot Austrians." Here was an unreliable element for you, right in the front line. He also told me that in one of the big battles against the Russians, some Czech regiments in the Austrian Army had simply opened their ranks to let the Russians through thereby enabling them to surround the Austrians. In their hearts the Czechs were on the other side. They were enemies of the Austrians while "fighting" in their ranks. That is an extreme case of unreliability.—

This brings me to the third point, which is of a more objective nature though it has its subjective side too. I am speaking of the existence of a common interest. There are many "realists" who say one should not worry about the legal document or about public opinion. Nations, they say, are going to fight together when it is in their common interest to do so.

But, it is a curious thing about this "interest". Interest is not something one can pick up and say: "Here it is!" It depends on what people interpret to be their interests. The conviction of common interests is essential, but it is very hard to say in advance what people are going to consider to be their national interests. You may have read Hans Morgenthau's book in which he says: "Let us be guided by the national interest". But when you ask, "What is our interest?", you get into the most heated controversy of our political life. Some say that it is

in our national interest to fight for Chiang Kai-Shek, and others with the same strong conviction say "No." Some say that our vital national interest requires us to defend Western Europe; there are so-called isolationists who object.

It all depends, then, who at a given time has the authority to interpret the national interest. It is not so easy to say in advance whether the French national interest as they may see it will always coincide with our own. We believe that it does. We believe that the French would be blind if they ever failed to see that their national interest requires them to be partners to our alliance against the Soviet Union. But if the French were convinced that they have an even more vital interest to be protected against Germany, then we would be up against a subjective but very real fact.

Therefore, part of every alliance policy consists in convincing other people that they should see their national interest in the way we see it, in convincing them that they are menaced and by the same foe, in convincing them that the alliance is the proper instrument to protect them against this foe. If they refuse to see it this way, little is gained for the alliance policy by accusing the other that he does not see his own national interest correctly. What keeps alliances together is a common conviction that the interests of all are best served by entering into and living up to the alliance.

It deserves to be emphasized that this conviction does not grow out of nothing and that it cannot be left to accident. If a country wants its allies to base their policies on the alliance and its preservation, it must make a continuous effort to associate them with any policies that affect the chances of having to call upon mutual assistance. This means seeking agreement — usually synonymous with compromise — on everything that is done or not done in respect to the common foe; it means struggling incessantly for the formulation of policies that transcend the limited

outlook and purposes of any one country. Especially, the leading nation in a peacetime defensive coalition cannot be relieved from the constant worry and burden of having to make the common purpose and common interest plain at home and abroad. The defense of the country depends on the success of this effort.

If there are pros and cons, then, to any alliance—potential military strength versus risks of unreliability e. g.—it would seem useful to draw up what I suggest be called the balance sheet of any specific alliance. This would serve as a kind of check list for planners or policy-makers, preventing them from seeing only the debit or only the credit side, the pluses or the minuses.

To start with the credit side—an alliance with country A is desirable primarily for the armed strength or strategic advantages country A has to offer for a war with enemy country X. That is the main asset one can expect to gain, so great an asset if reliably pledged that people are inclined to forget the other items on the balance sheet.

There are some other assets which deserve to be taken into account. Sometimes an alliance serves at least to keep another country from allying itself with the foe. The particular country may not be of much use to us, but it might be of great use to the other side. Mr. Churchill in his political and strategic thinking always insisted that Britain try to wean allies away from her enemies. According to him, his reason for favoring a Balkan campaign in 1944 was not to get to Vienna before the Russians, but to induce weaker allies of Germany to break away from her. He advised concentrating on weak allies because they could be most easily pulled out of the enemy coalition and drawn over to the other side. Both in the First and in the Second World War it was his hope that the Allies might be able to get Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to switch sides and that in doing so they might induce Turkey to join them. So one thing one can accomplish with an alliance sometimes is to make sure at least that a country will

remain neutral rather than to go over to the other side. If the alliance does not accomplish anything else, it has served a useful purpose.

There is a third asset which I think one ought not to underestimate. One might call it the propaganda value of alliances. In this age of ours, if one country or coalition can gather a great number of nations and count them on its side, then it appears to represent and can claim to represent the majority of mankind, the "peace-loving world community". It is good to be able to speak for the whole free World, e. g.: This makes for public support; this makes for greater willingness on the part of millions of people to fight with those who represent the cause of mankind against the cause of an evil aggressor.

But, here I think one has to be cautious. If for the sake of propaganda (not using this word in any evil sense), or if to gain strength for one's cause, one were to go out and sign alliances with any country that came along, one might very seriously distort one's strategy; the propaganda value might not compensate for the dangers of such distortion. If we started committing ourselves right and left today, there might not remain much strength for the main purposes of our strategy. Moreover, in most cases one can attain this desired psychological effect without going all the way to actual alliances, as we have defined them.

One does not always have to tie nations to one's cause by mutual assistance pacts. Very often a consultative pact, or a pact of friendship, or merely an arrangement to vote together in the U. N., may achieve the purpose. For the same reason, if some countries remain neutral, militarily speaking, this need not be objectionable from our point of view. They may still be on our side, morally; they may still support our cause. The only thing they are saying is that, for various reasons, they are going to try not to get into the fight. This is not necessarily detrimental to us, particularly if they are weak and vulnerable. After all, we

did fight the Korean War with the moral support of the majority of the nations in the U. N., but we did not get military assistance from many of them. This was not, as some people think, a sign of our weakness. We achieved a great deal by the fact of getting the votes of countries that insisted on remaining neutral. As a matter of fact, I believe one of our significant successes in the Korean War was to have had India willing to vote North Korea an aggressor (in the case of Red China she abstained). That did not mean she was going to fight with us, nor did we have any need of her fighting forces; but it did mean that public sentiment was being mobilized on our side at a time when the Soviet bloc was accusing us of being the aggressor. To have been able to speak for the World Community constituted a very valuable asset for our side. Naturally, more military assistance would have been better. If we could have obtained ten additional divisions from other nations, that would have been better. But if one cannot get that, if they do not possess or are unwilling to commit military forces, one may still be able to gain much from a support that falls far short of what is promised in an actual alliance.

There is a last asset of alliances which is worth mentioning, one that Bismarck emphasized, and he had experience with alliances. That is the ability of an ally to exert some control over his allies, to have some restraining or some activating influence upon his allies. We do not like it when others use alliances to put restraints on us; at the moment, that is one of our difficulties. Most of our allies are scared of what might happen, or of what we might do, so they are always trying to put the brakes on. At times, this may be dangerous; a country might be forced into a policy that looked weak merely because its allies were excessively apprehensive.

But let us not think in terms of one side only. We, too, due to our alliances, can hope to exercise a considerable amount of influence over countries which are allied with us. The main reason for this is that allies offer each other protection — which



may be the only real protection they enjoy — and that this protection can be withdrawn. They know they have got to pay a price for each other's reliability, and for the continuation of protection. This means that without having to blackmail or to use the "big stick", nations may be able to influence their allies into doing much of what they want them to do.

In the last few years, all this country has wanted its allies to do was to make greater sacrifices for preparedness and to coordinate their policies. We have been able to use the alliances to advance preparedness, not sufficiently perhaps, but to a considerable extent. But we may also be in need of putting more restraints on some of our allies. I think in the case of Syngman Rhee we did that rather effectively. The fear that he might run away with the show and start an aggressive war forced us to put restraints on him. That was one case in which we were operating in reverse, so to speak.

But once West Germany becomes our ally, a great deal may depend on our ability to keep Germany in line with a non-provocative, non-aggressive policy if such be the policy we want to pursue. If we do not want to start a war of liberation, it may depend on our ability to influence the Germans whether they can be prevented from making an attempt to free East Germany by force. An alliance is the best means by which one can hope to exercise such restraint, if this is what one wants. Our best argument with the French, today, is that we are not allying ourselves with Germany in order to give Germany the "go" sign so that she can drag us all into a war she might wish to start in the East. On the contrary, we hope to exercise a higher degree of control over her by offering her our assistance. As the leader of the N. A. T. O. coalition, we may be able to moderate the policies of its more impatient or impetuous members while activating the fighting spirit of the more complacent or fearful ones. This ability to influence allied conduct is an asset that must be weighed against the dangers of being too much influenced by one's allies.

This, then, is the "credit" side. Now let me turn to the "debit" side. Obviously, the main debit feature is the promise to help others, the commitment to come to their assistance. Usually, allies are held together by the conviction that the cause and security of one is the cause and security of all. The people who have objected to N. A. T. O. objected on the grounds that we were entangling ourselves in the fights of others. Obviously, if it were not our own security that were at stake in Europe, we would be making tremendous sacrifices in committing ourselves to defend Europe — to defend her possibly on the Elbe or on the Rhine.

It may seem astonishing that the weaker countries should be more upset about this debit item than we are. Why are so many in other countries hesitant about the value of an alliance with the United States? Why is there so much criticism of N. A. T. O. in Europe? Why is a strong group within the British Labor Party opposed to alignment with America? Why do the German Social Democrats campaign against the alliance? Why does India refuse even to consider allying herself with the West?

One would think that for all of them the asset of American protection would count for far more than the risk of having to fight a war in which their interests were not involved. After all, they are closer than we to the Iron Curtain. Many of our diplomats abroad have been thoroughly upset about this paradoxical psychological situation in which countries closer to the enemy seem to be wondering whether they are not risking too much in promising to help us defend ourselves. One man in the Swiss Army was overheard saying to another. "Say, fellow, I think we ought to send some of our divisions to the Elbe to help defend those poor Americans!"

Helping whom? When we defend ourselves on the Elbe, are we not defending the Europeans in the first place? The reason for this paradox lies in the fact that many nations are not

sure whether the best way of preventing a war on the Elbe, or in Asia, is to build up alliances and add to American strength. They are asking: "What if the United States were to start a preventive war? If we add to American strength, will we not encourage such a war as well as becoming involved in it?" That is the chief difficulty with many alliances: fear lest one ally might start a war and thereby entangle the others. In the case of our present alliances, it is this fear, primarily, that leads so many people within the weaker countries — and all of our allies are weaker than we are — exposed as we think they are to the Communist and Russian danger, to wonder whether they are entangling themselves in other people's wars by the fact of allying themselves with the United States. Gradually, though, I think we are convincing them: (a) that we are not going to start a war, and (b) that if war comes as a result of Soviet aggression, it is not going to be *our* war but at least as much *their* war.

The second item on the debit side has to do with reliability. In N. A. T. O. we and our allies are constantly aware of the risks of allied unreliability. I do not think that our allies are afraid that we are going to turn 'isolationist', and violate our pledge, but a new element has entered into the picture which has made for hesitation abroad. They are wondering whether even with the best intentions, we can really protect them. What does real protection mean today — that we can help them win? Most of them are convinced that in the end we can help them win, but they are not quite sure whether they want to be liberated after having been conquered, or pulverized with nuclear bombs. They are not quite sure whether they want to be protected if it means that their cities will go up in smoke in the process. The nuclear weapons are causing new hesitation about the value of an "air umbrella" if that is all the ally can provide. Russia's trump card is that she can always point to the cities of our allies, saying "What use are your alliances to you? If you are not going to be conquered in the next war, you are sure to be destroyed anyway".

On our side, the prospects of nuclear warfare are having similar effects. If people begin to think in terms of air strategy only and become hypnotized by the notion of an inter-continental air war, they tend to think that allies are becoming superfluous. If we are going to fight from over here and be fought here at home via the air, territory and forces over on the fringes of Eurasia, that lie between us and our enemy, might become irrelevant. In this sense, then, it can be said that many present-day alliances would become a liability if ever a monistic air strategy should recommend itself. But, when that time comes, a great many other things will have to be liquidated too, including, I presume, this Naval War College!

Another debit element should not be forgotten; we hear it constantly discussed abroad. Alliances may prove provocative. They may provoke the war which they are supposed to prevent. That was what Woodrow Wilson had in mind when he condemned alliances as a cause of war. Alliances may mean open enmity to another country; they line up nations on two opposing sides. Because the enemy sees the build-up of strength, he may decide to move in before it is too late. He might start a war for fear of losing it later.

However, there is this same danger of provocation in armaments. Here, too, armaments and alliances resemble each other, which merely emphasizes the fact that alliances and armaments are but two different instruments of defense, one supplementary to the other, sharing many of the same characteristics. Both mean building up strength against a potential enemy. If one says that alliances are provocative, one must say in the same breath that armaments are provocative. That risk is always involved. It may also sometimes be true that in the balance, nothing is gained by either armaments or alliances because in every race of armaments and alliances, while one side arms or allies itself, the opponent may respond by doing the same. But I do not see how one can escape this vicious circle. One cannot sit back and say:

“If we do nothing, the other side does nothing either”. One can only try to use these instruments of defense policy carefully with a view of not provoking counter-measures which the opponent would otherwise not have undertaken.

There was some danger — and there may still be some danger — in an alliance with Germany; it might create fear in the Russian mind that if they let it happen, they might never be able to catch up with us again. If that were the case, they would have a strong incentive to risk war as a means of preventing it. However, I think we can assume that we are strong enough to put a kind of umbrella of deterrence over the build-up of armed strength in Germany. Moreover, the balance of power in the world is not likely to depend on what happens in any single country, even if it be Germany.

There is one more debit item. It is not much use gaining one ally only to lose another as a consequence. And it is certainly no good getting one ally at the price of losing a stronger one. Sometimes an alliance antagonizes other countries to the point where they drop out as prospective allies. This has been our big problem with Germany and France, where it looked as if we might have to choose between one and the other — in this case gaining Germany and thereby losing France. So far, we have been spared this dilemma and a grave dilemma it would be because a French alliance for strategic reasons may be of little use without a German one, and a German one of doubtful value with a French one.

We have the same problem in Asia; there it plays an even greater role. The hostility between many of our potential allies there poses grave difficulties. Even in her worst hour, Korea did not want Japan to become her ally because she feared being “liberated” by the Japanese at the risk of having them remain in the country. Similarly, at the beginning of the Second World War, the Poles refused to become the allies of Russia because

they did not wish Russian armies to enter their country even as allies, only to take half of it with them when they went home! For similar reasons the Turks remained neutral during the war. They did not want their "friends", the Russians, to enter Constantinople to help drive out the Germans. Would they not stay in Constantinople for good? There is such a thing, then, as the fear of certain potential allies.

We are always making a choice when we ally ourselves with a particular country. We choose one at the risk of losing others. The alliance with Franco Spain looked dangerous for a while because it seriously antagonized some of our best friends. But we moved slowly enough so that in the end we did not lose any ally. Again, our recent alignment with Tito was objected to by certain circles in some countries; it looked as if it might endanger our alliances with Italy. Fortunately, that too, has not happened. If an alliance with the Arab countries were ever to materialize, it will be difficult not to antagonize Israel, who may be stronger, militarily, than her neighbors.

I believe I have listed the chief items that make up the balance sheet. There is no way of weighing them against each other in any precise or mathematical way. It is a matter of statesmanship by the help of rational estimates of the various items to judge whether in any specific case the balance comes out with a plus or a minus. The basis of any rational alliance policy must be a calculation that takes all items into consideration.

The first move in any alliance policy consists in discovering which countries are desirable allies. Having sorted out the countries, some as being a pure drain on one's strength, some as being of so little military value that their neutralization is sufficient (not to worry too much about them except to keep them from going over to the enemy), some as being essential as allies and therefore worth great sacrifices, one can proceed to work out an effective alliance policy. This indicates that it would make

little sense to say: "We have got an alliance in Europe. Therefore, we have got to have one in Southeast Asia, too". Every case is different. If there are no military forces there, or if the debit side were too great there for other reasons, the situation would have to be handled differently.

Having chosen and gained allies, the second big issue in alliance policy is making the alliances effective. That means, among other things, giving one's allies military strength without draining one's own strength by more than one adds to theirs. More may depend on whether one succeeds in making alliances reliable. This is a psychological problem. I think we should talk less about psychological warfare and more about the need for a psychological friendship policy — which usually will not take the form of propaganda but of cooperation, of patience, and mediation among allies, and of all the efforts one can make to prove to one's allies that the common interest is dictating one's course of action. Such friendship policy should be an essential part of our diplomacy today. When our allies become troublesome, we are apt to get angry and things are said that endanger our alliances. As a rule, one cannot coerce one's allies. One cannot even put very much pressure on them (at least, not openly) without creating the kind of bitterness and fear that endangers the reliability of the alliance.

However, if coercion or pressure does not go far with allies wooing them and running after them is not likely to be helpful either. It is dangerous to give the impression that one has become absolutely dependent on one's alliances. This opens the door to all kinds of blackmail. I would not like to see our European allies believe that we had become utterly dependent on them while they remained convinced that they had a triple choice between an alliance with us, neutrality, and a deal with the Soviets. It should always remain clear that while we place great stock in our alliances and have no intention to let our allies down, we could survive, if need be, without them though at a terrible price.

And when it comes to making deals with the Soviets, we, after all, are by all odds in the best bargaining position. Others are inclined to forget this because we tend to give the impression of being absolutely inflexible in our attitude toward the Soviets.

Generally, then, alliance policy places great demands on the policy-makers and the public. Even if a judicious choice of allies has been made and one's own strength has been adequately supplemented by promises of military assistance, the struggle to keep the alliance intact and reliable must necessarily continue. But it is worth the sacrifices, and many painful compromises, if the additional defensive strength promises to deter the enemy, or to defeat him if war comes. Even if a go-it-alone policy were within the capabilities of a mighty country, the chances are that the price it would have to pay for pursuing such a policy successfully and in the face of grave danger would far outweigh the costs, the annoyances, and the risks of alliances, provided they rest on common interest, strong conviction and all-round ability to sustain an adequate common defense effort.



## BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

*Professor Arnold O. Wolfers*

Professor Wolfers was born in St. Gall, Switzerland in 1892. He received a Doctor of Law (JUD) degree from Zurich in 1917 and a Ph. D. degree from Giessen in 1924. He practiced law in Switzerland from 1917 to 1919.

Prior to coming to the United States, he was Assistant Professor of Economics at University of Berlin from 1929 to 1933 as well as Director of the Hochschule fur Politik in Berlin from 1930 to 1933. He has been Professor of International Relations at Yale University since 1935 and he was Master of Pierson College, Yale, during the period of 1935-1949.

During World War II, he was a Special Advisor and Lecturer at the School of Military Government, Charlottesville, Virginia from 1942 to 1944. At the same time, he was Expert Consultant, Office of Provost Martial General in Washington, D. C. The following year he acted as Consultant in the Office of Strategic Services.

During 1946, Professor Wolfers was a member of the Resident Faculty at the National War College. Since 1953, he has been President of the World Peace Foundation.

He has written several books and articles on law, economics and international relations, including *Britain and France Between Two Wars*.