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MOST SECRET

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THE FUTURE OF GERMANY

The hope of lasting peace depends, more than on any other single factor, on the solution of the German problem. It is not a new problem. It existed for the last thirty years of the nineteenth century (though the significance was only slowly realized); it was blatantly obvious in 1914; and in 1939 a world which had sought either to ignore or to exorcise it by phrases was blasted out of uncertain complacency to a knowledge that the German problem existed. The marriage of National Socialist ideology to Prussian militarism brought a combination as dangerous to peace as was found in the Spain of Philip II or the France of Napoleon. The destruction of the Armada broke the power of a country whose internal weakness made impossible a second attempt at world domination. France lost, after Waterloo, the combination of military power and revolutionary idealism. Germany was defeated in the field, but neither shorn of her great potential strength nor cured of an aggressive spirit that was never far below the surface.

The threat of Spain, of France, and of Germany was dual: to advance their own power at the expense of other States, and to force on foreign peoples a way of life that was contrary to cherished values. The answer to force was greater force, and the answer to world domination was balance of power. The balance of power, even if sometimes wrongly elevated into a dogma, was on the whole a comparatively successful means to an end. Like any other balance, it was delicately poised, but it did on the whole stand for the freedom of one people as against another. No such device was employed to solve the German problem. Woodrow Wilson's aim to make the world safe for democracy was to be achieved by the collective will and force of all States. Adopted fully by neither great nor small powers, the collective security idea stood in the way of the balance of power without providing a workable substitute.

Thus the problem of Germany remained, and remains.

The basic assumption of the present memorandum is that Germany will remain chauvinistic to a degree which, while it cannot be accurately assessed now, will be dangerous or potentially dangerous. The object of policy is, therefore, to design a plan calculated to be a protection against that danger. The assumption which has been stated rules out the possibility of solving the problem solely by the expectation of a change of attitude in the people of Germany. It does not, however, exclude such a factor as contributory to the solution. There are, therefore, two possible approaches: (1) Control of Germany by force from without or weakness within, or a combination of the two; (2) Measures of restraint accompanied by a lessening of chauvinism on the part of the effective majority in Germany. It must, however, be noted that the one may well destroy the prospect of the other.

The policy to be adopted toward Germany must be drawn up and accepted before the Armistice. In particular, decisions on frontiers will not await a period of study after the end of hostilities. What is not provided by treaty or simple order