

# A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION AND EUROPEAN POLITICAL COOPERATION

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## Abstract

With a historical approach, this paper examines the Nixon administration's policy and stance towards European Political Cooperation (EPC). In December 1969, at The Hague Summit the leaders of the European Community expressed their determination for deepening European integration. The final communiqué of The Hague Summit stressed that the European Community's desire to achieve EPC and to parallel the European Community's economic increasing strength with a role to play in the world affairs. With this in mind, the paper will examine the impacts that Nixon administration's attempts to rebalance U.S. foreign relations reflected in the opening to China and the détente with the Soviet Union had on European political integration. Then, it will be argued that the Nixon administration's shifting foreign policy priorities can be seen as one of the driving forces of EPC. The paper puts forth that a European Community, whose weight was increased by first its economic integration and then its political cooperation, was seen by the Nixon administration as a challenge to the United States. It is concluded that after a long time of consistently supporting European integration as a means to secure peace and prosperity in Europe, the United States under the Nixon administration had to re-consider its foreign relations and rebalance its focus on the global chessboard. This rebalancing certainly impacted EPC in particular and the European integration process in general.

**KEY WORDS:** The Nixon administration, European Political Cooperation, EPC, the European Community, European integration.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to offer a historical analysis of the Nixon administration's policy and stance towards European Political Cooperation (EPC). In December 1969, four months after the Nixon Doctrine was declared, the heads of the European Community member states convened at The Hague Summit to show their determination for deepening European integration. In the final communiqué of The Hague Summit, it was underlined that the European Community sought to achieve EPC and endeavored to parallel the European Community's economic increasing strength with a role to play in the world's great political issues. Henceforth, the paper will examine how the Nixon administration's attempts to rebalance U.S. foreign relations reflected in the opening to China and the détente

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with Soviet Union impacted European political integration. Then, it goes on to argue that the Nixon administration's shifting foreign policy priorities can be seen as one of the driving forces of European political integration. The European Community's leaders, in the wake of the Nixon administration's rebalancing its foreign relations, had to develop their own policies to respond effectively.

The Davignon Report produced and implemented by the European Community to establish a common European political policy would allow the European Community member states to speak in one voice in world affairs. Also, the paper points out that a European Community, whose weight was increased by first its economic integration and then its political cooperation, was seen by the Nixon administration as a challenge to the United States. It will be concluded that after a long time of consistently supporting European integration as a means to secure peace and prosperity in Europe, the United States under the Nixon administration had to re-value its foreign relations and realized that Washington needed to rebalance its focus on the global chessboard. This rebalancing certainly affected Western Europe and its integration process.

## **THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION AND ITS REBALANCING OF FOREIGN RELATIONS**

In his article entitled "Asia after Vietnam" published in *Foreign Affairs* in October 1967, Richard Nixon once expressed his idea of focusing U.S. foreign policy on Asia to build a Pacific community in that part of the world. This implied a change in the priorities of U.S. foreign policy, moving the focus from the West to the East: "*Out of the wreckage of two world wars we forged a concept of an Atlantic community, within which a ravaged Europe was rebuilt and the westward advance of the Soviets contained. If tensions now strain that community, these are themselves a byproduct of success. But history has its rhythms, and now the focus of both crisis and change is shifting. Without turning our backs on Europe, we have now to reach out westward to the East, and to fashion the sinews of a Pacific community.*" (Nixon 1967, pp. 113-125).

After the 1968 presidential election resulted in Richard Nixon's ascendancy to the White House, the new president again showed the same foreign policy priorities to pursue in his foreign policy agenda. The rhythm of history, in the newly-elected President's view, had to be played in the East. In his inaugural address on January 20, 1969, President Richard Nixon sent an important message: the United States was prepared to embark on "an era of negotiation" with the communist world. This declaration signaled the change of emphasis in U.S. foreign policy: The Nixon administration desired to focus on the relaxation

in its relations with the Soviet Union and China. In order to fulfill their promise to shift the Cold War landscape from an “era of confrontation” to an “era of negotiations,” President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger set up a back channel for direct communication with the Soviet Union and later with China as the President believed that this rapprochement “should be done privately and should under no circumstances get into the public prints from this direction” (Memorandum From President Nixon to Kissinger, FRUS, 1969-1976). This new channel also ignored the traditional diplomacy which was regularly carried out through the foreign services and overseas embassies.

That the United States was dancing with both the Soviet Union and China reflected the multi-polar reality and U.S. adjustment to its relative decline. Even though everyone had no doubt that the United States still retained considerable power even at its nadir in the early 1970s, the trend of relaxing in the United States’ foreign policies towards the two communist nation-states was the result of its relative decline. Nixon and Kissinger had no desire to place much emphasis on the friendship with Western Europe as the previous administrations had done. These U.S. leaders looked to the East and supposed that China and the Soviet Union would have a significant role in helping the United States to cope with economic slowdown because they all had large developing markets. More importantly, the United States was seeking to escape the Vietnam War which was too costly to the United States. The relationship with China and the Soviet Union, which had important influence on the Northern Vietnam would somewhat help the United States to solve the problem of Vietnam War. Building relations with the Communist became a milestone in the Nixon administration’s foreign policy. This rebalancing of foreign relations led to the fact that U.S. support for European integration was not in high profile in the Nixon administration as it had been previously. In other words, the opening to China and the *détente* with the Soviet Union contributed to the reshaping of U.S. policy to the European unity.

Though there was an evident rivalry between the Soviet Union and China after 1960, both President Kennedy and President Johnson held the previous policy stance and attitudes toward China. They still believed that the Sino-Soviet relationship was built and developed on essentials and thus hostile to the United States and the capitalist world. Washington’s anti-China policy was mainly expressed in their non-recognition and trade restrictions. However, the Nixon administration considered it was essential to bring China into the diplomatic constellation as Richard Nixon had noted: “We simply cannot afford to leave China outside the family of nations” (Nixon 1967, 113). He saw the need to engage with China as this nation was playing an important role in Asia chess board: “any American policy toward Asia must come urgently to grips with the

reality of China” (Ibid). In his memoirs, Nixon wrote: “*I was fully aware of the profound ideological and political differences between our countries [...] But I believed also that in this era we could not afford to be cut off from a quarter of the world’s population. We had an obligation to try to establish contact [...] and perhaps move on to greater understanding.*” (Nixon 1978, 343).

After coming into office in 1969, President Nixon directed that a study had to be prepared on U.S. policy towards China (National Security Study Memorandum 14, *FRUS*, 1969-1976). The Nixon administration soon sent China signals about improving Sino-U.S. relations (Paterson et al. 1991, 569). The Nixon administration began its plan to approach China by allowing U.S. citizens to buy Chinese commodities without special permission, validating passports after 1970 for traveling in China, and approving, after April 1970, the export of certain nonstrategic U.S. goods to China (Paterson et al. 1991, 545-548). One important signal from President Nixon to improve the relationship with China was his usage of Beijing’s official title, the People’s Republic of China during his stop in Romania in October 1970. The Nixon administration’s new attitudes and perceptions were positively responded by Beijing. China welcomed Washington’s move towards the normalization of U.S.-Sino relationship and expressed its interest in face-to-face discussions. It was noted that China had employed what was known as ping-pong diplomacy in a graceful manner. In April 1971, the Chinese ping-pong team invited the U.S. team competing for the world’s championship in Nagoya, Japan to visit China. In his address to the U.S ping-pong team, Chinese Prime Minister, Zhou Enlai said: “*...with your acceptance of our invitation, you have opened a new page in the relations of the Chinese and American people. I am confident that this beginning again of our friendship will certainly meet with the majority support of our two peoples.*” (Roderick 1971). After a pause he then asked the Americans: “*Don’t you agree with me?*” and the American showed their agreement with a big applause (Roderick 1971).

Then Prime Minister, Zhou Enlai, informed Washington that “*the Chinese Government reaffirms its willingness to receive publicly in Beijing a special envoy of the President of the US (for instance, Mr. Kissinger) or the U.S. Secretary of State or even the President of the United States himself for a direct meeting and discussions.*” (Isaacson 1992, 339). On July 15 1971, President Nixon announced to the U.S. public about Kissinger and Zhou Enlai private talks in Beijing before U.S. ping-pong team came to China. Also, Prime Minister Enlai had invited President Nixon to visit China and his invitation had been accepted. Both U.S. and Chinese leaders expressed the desire to clear away mutual misperceptions and to define the real nature of some of the more outstanding

issues and problems impeding improved Sino-American relations. Actually, the United States made significant progress in the rapprochement with China during the Nixon administration.

On February 21, 1972, President Nixon arrived in Beijing and paid a 7-day historic visit to China. This was seen as the most obvious manifestation of the Nixon administration's opening to China. President Nixon publicly shook hands with Mao Zedong and was toasted by Zhou Enlai in the Great Hall of the People. Nixon's trip to China ended with a Joint Communiqué in Shanghai (also referred to as the Shanghai Communiqué) on February 28 1972 in which the leaders of the United States and China agreed to temporarily put aside the major question hindering the normalization of relations, the political status of Taiwan, and opened trade and other contacts. Opening to China would, Washington hoped, be a prerequisite to ease the strained relations with the Soviet Union. The prospect of improved relations between the United States and China caused concern in Moscow, thus motivated the Kremlin to be *"more conciliatory on such prominent and substantial issues as arms control of offensive and defensive strategic missiles."* (Spanier 1980, 178). For the United States, the opening to China was a strategy to exploit the rivalry between Beijing and the Moscow. The implied message to the latter was that Soviet obstinacy would compel the United States to align itself more closely with China. To the Soviet Union, such alignment would be a nightmare. After the historic visit to China in February 1972, President Nixon arrived in Moscow on May 22, 1972 and met with the leading Soviet officials.

The United States' willingness to follow a policy of easing of Cold War tensions was met with approval by Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. This was officially shown in the note from the Soviet leadership to President Nixon: *"On our part, we believe, as before, that both sides should have to work for better Soviet-American relations and to prepare ourselves for the summit meeting accordingly. With all the existing differences which are viewed by both sides with open eyes, we duly appraise the significance that the meeting may have, proceeding from the responsibility of our countries for the preservation of peace and from the assumption that it is desirable to use their possibilities for influencing the general international situation. Relaxation of international tensions and improvement of relations between the USSR and the U.S. would be, we are confident, in the interests of our peoples and other peoples of the world. Such is our firm line and we are consistently following it."* (Note From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon, FRUS, 1969-1976).

At the Moscow summit in March 1972, Nixon and Brezhnev reached agreement on *"mutually acceptable"* limits in their countries' nuclear capabilities

which had been negotiated since November 17, 1969. This ultimately resulted in the signing of the SALT I agreement (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) in May 1972 (Spanier 1980, 183). Noticeably, negotiations on SALT II also began in 1972. More important, that Leonid Brezhnev paid a visit to the United States for the Washington summit in June 1973 marked the highest point in the era of détente between the United States and the Soviet Union. During two days of the Washington summit they inked four pacts for cooperation in oceanography, transportation, cultural exchange, and agriculture (Graebner, Burns & Siracusa 2010, 353).

After that they had discussion on nuclear disarmament and troop reductions in Central Europe and they considered their subsequent pact to avoid nuclear war as the major success of the Washington summit. The issue of a 20-page communique calling for further relaxation in the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union was welcomed by the peoples of both countries. According to Phil Williams, the Nixon considered détente as a “*means of disciplining Soviet power*” to contain the wild Soviets in the international arena. As for the Soviet Union, Kremlin considered the main benefit and their aim of détente as “*offering new opportunities for exercising power*” to avoid an all-out war or nuclear war (Williams 1987, 577).

In spite of such achievements, the Washington summit in 1973 still showed that both Nixon and Brezhnev knew the risks and costs of their long-lasting rivalry and the advantages of stabilization of Washington-Moscow relationship. However, the Soviet leaders remained stuck in their ideological differences with the West and President Nixon was unable to convince some in his administration of the necessity to be friendly with the Soviet Union as these people held that Moscow presented an immediate threat to the United States.

The relaxation of tensions with the Soviet Union was one of the focuses in President Nixon’s foreign policy’s goal. His administration had reasons for wanting to improve its relations with China and the Soviet Union. First, the Nixon administration desired to extricate the United States from the Vietnam conflict without suffering a humiliating defeat. This, President Nixon believed, could be obtained by isolating North Vietnam from its two main sources of supply and support, the Soviet Union and China. Another reason lay in Nixon’s assumption that détente with the Soviet Union would help to conclude a SALT agreement that would limit the size of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, thus restrain the Soviet strategic buildup. Also, the new approach to Moscow and Beijing brought the United States economic benefits. U.S. foreign trade was in need of a boost to eliminate a billion-dollar deficit in the balance of payments, détente could help the United States to access expanded markets. For instance, U.S. corporations

like Pepsi-Cola and Chase Manhattan Bank began operations in the Soviet Union and U.S. businesses rushed to Asia in a revival of the great China market dream.

To cope with its relative decline, the United States sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union and China. The lessening of tensions with the Soviet Union was what the leaders of the European Community wanted to see because this détente would help reduce socio-political tensions in Europe and prevented the likelihood of another war. Similarly, they also welcomed the improvement in the Sino-U.S. relations and hoped that it would pave the way for entering a large market. That the United States was focusing on détente with China and the Soviet Union partly explained why its support for European integration was not as high as it used to be in Washington's foreign policy agenda.

### **THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION AND EUROPEAN POLITICAL COOPERATION (EPC)**

By late 1969, the European integration project was strengthened by the European Community's leaders as their demand for speaking in one voice in the world affairs. The Six remained that relations with the United States, their ally, partner and sometimes their competitor, posed challenges for them. They realized the significance of the United States in the political, economic and security fields and especially the interdependence of United States and Western European economies. This realization became the European Community's leaders argument in their efforts to develop a plan for a EPC. The need for the Europeans to speak with one voice in its relations with the United States constituted the major reasons for deepening European integration on the area of political and foreign affairs. Like the Six's desire to build a European monetary union, their efforts to develop political and foreign policy cooperation aimed at building an equal and dependence – free relationship with the United States. The European Community's leaders believed that European political and foreign policy cooperation helped to complete the European integration. Their ideas of increasing European integration in the political and foreign policy reflected Western European endeavor to become a player in international affairs and illustrated its increasing assertiveness in the Atlantic alliance. In the context of reduced tensions in international relations, particularly between the United States and the Communist world, the European Community's leaders had to unite to face potential challenges that the Nixon administration's shift from the age of confrontation to the age of negotiation might pose to their Community

In contrast to the Truman Doctrine, offering protection to the free nations of the world from communism: *“The free peoples of the world look to us for support*

*in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our relationship, we may endanger the peace of the world. And we shall surely endanger the welfare of this nation.*" (Truman, 1947). The Nixon Doctrine set out by President Nixon on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July in 1969 pointed out that the United States would make new diplomatic efforts to open negotiations and to clear away obstacles to negotiations with the Communist states, even if it was at expense of U.S. close allies (Kolodziej 1976, 134-135). The changes in the Nixon administration's policy towards the Soviet Union and China became a stimulus for the European Community's leaders to think of deepening the European integration project. Western Europe recognized the importance of unification in the changing world order. In December 1969, four months after the declaration of the Nixon Doctrine, the heads of the Six convened at The Hague to show their determination for an ever closer union. In the final communiqué of The Hague Summit, it was highlighted that the European Community attempted to achieve EPC and endeavored to parallel the European Community's economic increasing strength with a role to play in the world's great political issues. The heads of the Six instructed "*the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to study the best way of achieving progress in the matter of political unification, within the context of enlargement.*" (The Hague Summit Declaration, 1969). They expected the Ministers' report would be completed before the end of July 1970.

The Belgian Political Director, Vicomte Davignon was tasked by the six foreign ministers in early 1970 with preparing a report on which a new system of foreign policy cooperation might be formed. Davignon and his counterparts from the other five foreign ministries could not manage to produce the report by the end of July 1970. The report was completed and presented at the Luxembourg Conference of Foreign Ministers of the six European Community countries, in Luxembourg on 27 October 1970. It was endorsed by the foreign ministers and known as the "*Davignon Report.*" The spirit of the "*Davignon Report*" could be seen as one of the Six's responses to the age of negotiations opened by the Nixon administration. As for Western Europe, they wanted to see the slowdown in the arms race between the United States and Soviet Union, and the normalization of Sino-U.S relations. However, they concerned about their political and strategic interests which could be jeopardized when President Nixon "*attached major importance to the improvement of relations.*" (Dobrynin 1995, 198). To make sure that the European Community's interests at home and abroad were secure and safe, the European Community's leader recognized that they needed to gradually develop an appropriate method of, and instruments for, joint political action: "*The present development of the European Communities requires Member States to intensify their political co-operation and provide in an*



*initial phase the mechanism for harmonising their views regarding international affairs. Thus, the Ministers felt that efforts ought first to concentrate specifically on the co-ordination of foreign policies in order to show the whole world that Europe has a political mission.*” (The Davignon or Luxembourg Report, 1970).

EPC aimed to prepare the European Community to effectively act on the world stage: *“Europe must prepare itself to carry out the responsibilities which, because of its greater cohesion and its growing role, it has the duty and necessity to assume in the world.”* (The Davignon or Luxembourg Report, 1970). The leaders of the Six showed their wish to cooperate in developing a foreign policy for Europe that *“corresponds to its tradition and its mission”* (The Davignon or Luxembourg Report, 1970). This mission included preventing armed conflicts in the continent, promoting democracy, freedom and market economy. Broadly speaking, in Europe the European Community’s leaders wanted to see the relaxation in the relations between East Europe and West Europe, in Asia they desired to trade and do business with the Chinese.

The Davignon Committee established after the approval of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the European Community was in charge of crafting a European common political stance in global affairs. This Committee had been successful in raising Western European unified position on security discussions as reflected in May 1970 NATO’s Rome Communiqué: *“Allied Governments would continue and intensify their contacts, discussions or negotiations through all appropriate channels, bilateral or multilateral, and that they remained receptive to signs of willingness on the part of the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries to engage in such discussions. Progress, they said, in these discussions and negotiations would help to ensure the success of any eventual conference, in which of course, the North American members of the Alliance would participate, to discuss and negotiate substantial problems of cooperation and security in Europe.”* (Final Communiqué from the North Atlantic Council Meeting in Rome, 1970).

The Rome Communiqué was evidence that with the Davignon Committee, the Six managed to speak in one voice about their position on European security which was prerequisite for the success of the European integration project. In addition, the Six’s Davignon Committee was able to convince the NATO members to include the ultimate goal of the European integration process in the Rome Communiqué as it was highlighted that NATO was in favor of *“the development of international relations with a view to contributing to the freer movement of people, ideas, and information, and to developing cooperation in the cultural, economic, technical, and scientific fields as well as in the field of human environment.”* (Final

Communiqué' from the North Atlantic Council Meeting in Rome, 1970).

Having created an institutional basis for adopting a unified policy stance, the Six was able to insist on multilateral negotiations with Washington and showed their political assertiveness in world affairs. This of course made the Nixon administration frustrated. President Nixon would never want to see a European Community, whose weight was increased by first its economic integration and then its political cooperation, to modify Washington's foreign policy and security agenda on European terms and conditions. For the Nixon administration, the increasing reaffirmation of the Six was unacceptable and Kissinger vowed to "*kill the Davignon Committee*" (HAK telcons, 1974).

Having focused on the opening to China and the détente with the Soviet Union, and having seen the Six's attempts to deepen and complete their integration project through the EPC, President Nixon and his administration recognized that Washington's policy to reduce tensions in international relations had pushed the European Community to be closer. President Nixon was of understanding that the continuity of cooperation among the member states of European Community was necessary as underlined by John Foster Dulles: "*We are engaged in a global struggle, as in World War II. We cannot expect success if we so scatter our efforts that we are ineffectual everywhere. We have made the recovery of Western Europe our major initial goal, but it must not be our sole concern. As quickly as possible, we need to turn elsewhere. To do that safely requires increased unity in Europe.*" (John Foster Dulles 1950, 223). As an experienced politician and leader, President Nixon knew that before his administration could turn elsewhere, he had to ensure European unity would not be detrimental to his foreign policy goals. Especially, by the late 1960s, according to U.S. National Intelligence Estimate: "*Western Europe today is more prosperous, more democratic, and more secure than at any time in modern history.*" (National Intelligence Estimate, FRUS, 1969-1976).

As the European Community's economic strength was increased its leaders had endeavor to raise its voice in international affairs. The dilemma that the Nixon administration had was that how to realize its policy of reducing tensions with the Communist world while preventing any cartel move in Western Europe which might adversely affected Washington's strategic interests. This led to the adaptation in U.S. policy towards European integration which could be described as "*a form of wary containment*" (Smith 2012, 223). The European Community's plan for political cooperation constituted a source of worry for the Nixon administration. It is noted that European declaration on political cooperation basically did not result in substantive change in U.S. policy to reduce tensions with the Soviet Union and normalize relations with China. However, the developments of détente with the Soviets and opening to China on

the Nixon administration side and the dynamics of political cooperation on the European Community revealed that the United States needed Western Europe as much as the Western Europe needed them. The European integration process was mainly driven by the Europeans as response to their alleged challenges. Also, it was apparent that the course of European integration to certain extent had been and would be affected by the Nixon administration's policy changes as the U.S. National Intelligence underlined: *"Although the policies of the European states and the pace and extent of integration will be determined by the Europeans themselves, they will also be influenced by the attitudes and policies of the US. For the past 25 years, the US has been the single most important political, economic, and military factor in Western Europe. In these circumstances, periodic tension and strain between the US and various nations over specific issues or general concepts is both natural and unavoidable. The US has been the guarantor of West European security, the principal sponsor of Germany's political rehabilitation, the major source of technological progress, and the mainstay of economic and financial stability. As such, it has been the target of criticism by some but of courtship by all."* (National Intelligence Estimate, FRUS, 1969-1976).

To sum up, the Nixon administration's shift from the age of confrontation to the age of negotiation had repainted the picture of the international environment. President Nixon and his team had placed the détente with the Soviet Union and the rapprochement with China as the first priorities on their foreign policy agenda. This implied that Western European integration was downplayed in the Nixon years. U.S. policy makers knew that this shift in international relations was crucial to protect and promote their national interests. Reducing tensions between the West and the Communist World was somehow welcomed by the European Community's leaders as they saw opportunities to avoid all-out war or nuclear war between the two world's great power, whose main battlefields would be in Europe. Also, the European Community's leaders, who had been pursuing to enhance Western Community's material strength, wanted to penetrate into China's massive market. Actually, there was a linkage between the Nixon administration's policy to the Soviet Union and China and the European integration project. This linkage has been ignored in the academic research. Nixon administration's policy to the Soviet Union and China was a one of the driving forces behind the European Community's attempt to establish EPC as Mike Smith observed that *"the Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy conducted between the late 1960s and the mid-1970s played a crucial catalytic role."* (Smith 2012, 222). The plan for EPC, in the Nixon administration view, might be Western European efforts to challenge the United States' leadership in the free world. Thus, the Nixon

administration towards European integration in general was not favorable as it used to be in the previous administrations. President Nixon and his administration saw *“the European integration as much more of a problem than a solution.”* (Smith 2012, 222).

## **IMPACTS ON THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION’S ATTITUDE TOWARDS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**

President Nixon’s trip to European capitals in February 1969 was seen as a signal of bringing the relationship between the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean to a new height. Western Europe expected that the new president would do something to renew U.S. relations with the Europeans as he announced in his inauguration. Nixon’s promise was not realized as his administration sought to implement the diplomacy of great power politics with the Soviet Union and China. The European Community’s leaders soon realized that their hope for having a central place in the Nixon administration’s foreign policy was illusionary. President Nixon did not have intention to make major diplomatic efforts to strengthen the partnership with Western Europe. He did not want the United States to involve in a more interdependent Atlantic alliance. His core diplomatic goals were to regain for Washington its freedom to act and freedom to pursue its strategic interests. The Nixon administration wanted the United States to be seen as an ordinary nation. Implicitly, the Nixon administration sought to free the United States from unnecessary responsibilities to pursue great power diplomacy and Western Europe was expected to solve its own internal problems.

After a long time of supporting and promoting European integration as a means towards a peaceful and prosperous Europe, the United States under the Nixon administration had to review its foreign relations and realized the country needed to rebalance its focus on the global chessboard. Western Europe constituted one of various elements in the system of great power politics and thus the concentration on building a partnership with Western Europe was, in the Nixon view, out dated in a new era. Thus, the Nixon administration’s policy and position in changing international order was not in favor of Western Europe and its integration process.

The Nixon administration’s diplomacy of great power politics started with détente with the Soviets and opening to the Chinese. This policy to rebalance Washington’s external relations, which aimed to shift its focus from Europe to Asia, was embraced by the European Community’s leaders who expected to avoid potential armed conflicts in Europe and discover China’s massive market. While President Nixon was preoccupied with the diplomatic activities with the Soviet

Union and China, the European Community's leaders were preparing to deepen European integration with the creation of EPC as a forum for coordinating the member states' foreign policy on intergovernmental basis (Peterson 2008, 203). The Davignon Report approved by the Foreign Ministers of the Six in Luxembourg in October 1970 was the starting point of the EPC. The implementation of this Report intensified a growing sense that a common European political and foreign policy was taking shape and it outlined the institutional structure for such European common policy to be realised. Despite showing its enthusiasm to the European endorsement of the Davignon Report, the Nixon administration knew from the outset that EPC might become a challenge to the United States as it used collective power of the Six to raise its concern about great issues in world affairs. In his memorandum entitled "*West European Political Cooperation and US-European Community Relations*" to President Nixon, Kissinger wrote that "*we should encourage the new European consultation initiative, which is consistent with our support for European unity. It could lead to greater European interest in problems outside the NATO area. We will want to stay in close touch with this development, which could, of course, yield more coherent European views that diverge from our own on certain questions.*" (Memorandum From Kissinger to President Nixon, FRUS, 1969-1976).

## CONCLUSION

Facing economic challenges from its friends and allies made the Nixon administration realize that the United States was now embarking in a new era in which a multi-polar international system was taking shape. The Nixon administration saw the need to shift its foreign policy priorities from the West to the East. It started negotiations with the two communist giants and this led to changes in the U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union, China. Instead of claiming these nations to be U.S. enemies, the Nixon administration shook hands with the leaders of these nations and invited cooperation for peace from them: "*We have always made it clear that we have no permanent enemies and that we will judge other countries, including Communist countries, and specifically countries like Communist China, on the basis of their actions and not on the basis of their domestic ideology.*" (Kissinger 1979, 192).

This shift of foreign policy focus from the West to the East was in parallel with Washington's wish to be seen as an ordinary nation, not as a superpower in the world affairs. This implied that the Nixon administration needed to incorporate new elements in its policy design towards the European Community and European integration process. The United States could no longer enthusiastically support

any moves towards European integration. The United States had to act as an ordinary nation. President Nixon had to look after his national interest. The Nixon administration's policy to seek détente with the Soviet Union and rapprochement with China could be seen as one of the driving forces behind the creation of the EPC. The European Community's leaders endeavored to build an institutional foundation for their unified positions on world affairs. This collective strength would be useful in protecting the European Community's strategic interests in political discussions with the United States. Though embracing the birth of the EPC, the Nixon administration knew that the European Community was becoming assertive politically. Seeing a united Europe emerging as an economic competitor and a political challenger, President Nixon and his administration had to re-examine U.S. policy towards European integration.

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