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Mr. President:

Last week, the Soviet Union and Western Germany initiated a non-aggression pact. The agreement still awaits formal signature and ratification by both nations.

Nevertheless, the initialing of the pact is in itself an event of great importance. That such is the case is indicated by the comments of both the West German Foreign Minister Walter Scheel and his Soviet counterpart Andrei Gromyko when, after twelve days of negotiations, they concluded the agreement.

According to press reports, the pact encompasses the usual provisions for renunciation of force in settling disputes. It goes beyond, however, to include a mutual pledge to accept Europe's current national borders and to work for an improvement in East-West European relations. The pact leaves open the door to eventual German reunification. Finally, it offers assurance that the rights of the Western Allies of World War II in the Berlin situation will not be impaired.

This agreement seems to me to operate in concert with two decades of Presidential pronouncements regarding this nation's policies. It is a landmark in the detente which has been in progress for many years in Europe, between East and West. It appears to be a link in the evolution of European relations towards an all European approach to a stable peace. These relations have emerged from the fear and hostility of the immediate post World War II years via the routes of commerce, travel and cultural interchange between East and West.
the initiating of this agreement may well point towards a full European diplomatic reconciliation.

In that sense, the German Soviet pact underscores what so many in the Senate have been urging for so long. It is urgent that this nation readjust its policies to the changing realities in Europe, and notably as they involve a massive and costly U. S. troop deployment in Western Europe. In great measure this expenditure has been more than a needless drain on our dwindling resources. In the rigidity with which it has been maintained, the deployment has acted to reduce the relevance of U. S. policy to the flow of events in Europe.

The $14 billion annual drain on U. S. resources is made even more anachronistic by the latest development in West Germany-Soviet relations. It would be my hope that the Executive branch will now be moved to act promptly to begin an orderly and a planned reduction of the over 500,000 U. S. forces and dependents in Western Europe, to the end that this excessive and wasteful expenditure of resources may be made to serve more useful purposes, defense and non-defense.

I cannot stress too much the Senate's interest in this matter which is not unrelated to the military authorizations and appropriations which are now moving through the Congress. May I say that if the President takes an Executive initiative which would act to redirect the usage of some of this needlessly excessive expenditure in Europe, he can count on the full cooperation of the Senate in bringing about the adjustment.