

The Marshall Plan & its Meaning for the US Foreign Policy: The Geopolitical Justification



George K. Filis, Ph.D.

Adjunct Professor of European Issues and the Middle East, Department of International Business

Member of the Academic Board, Institute of Diplomacy & Global Affairs

DEREE – The American College of Greece

Visiting Lecturer of Geostrategic Issues, Hellenic National Defence College

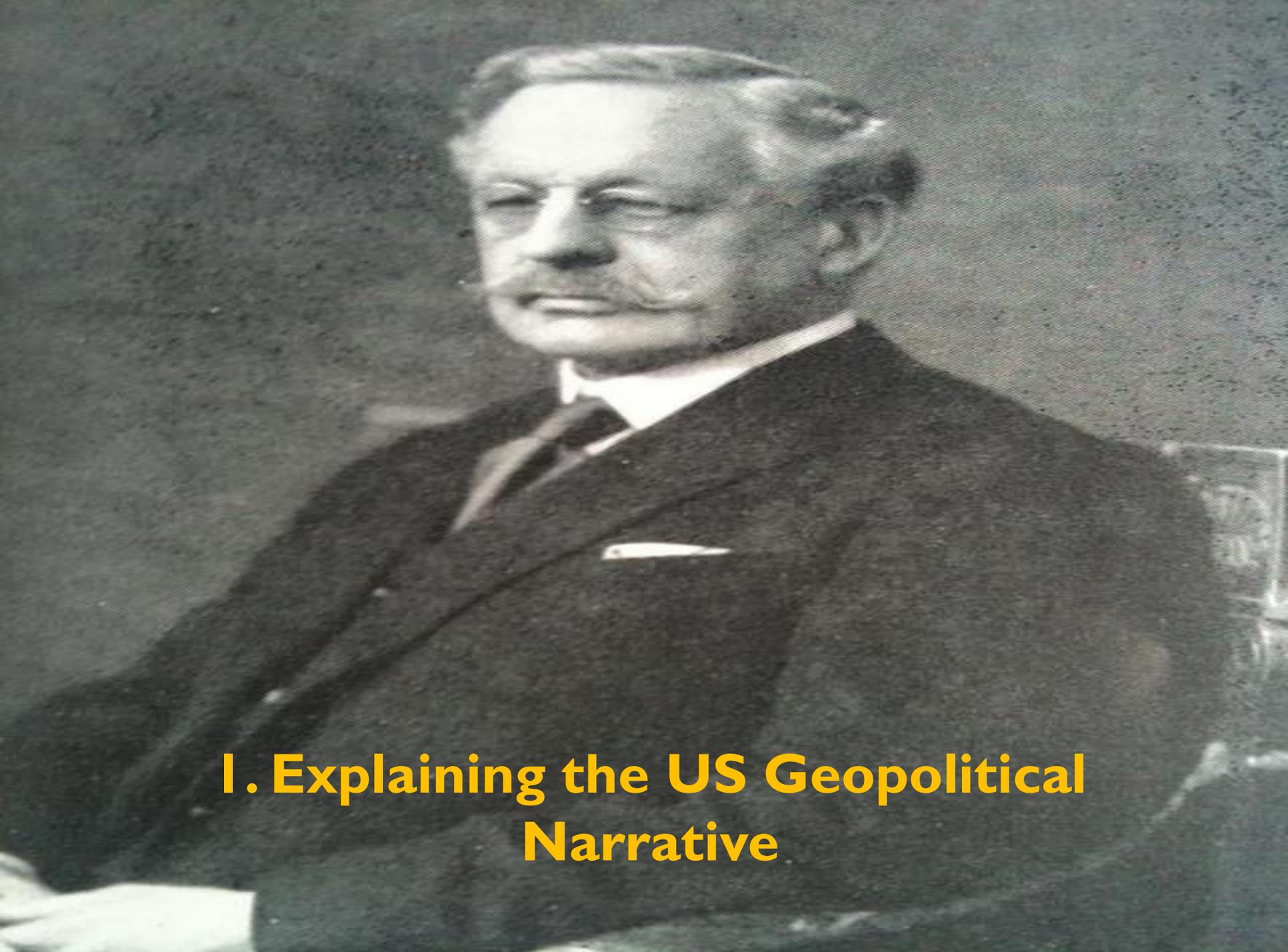
Visiting Lecturer of Geopolitics, postgraduate program of the Faculty of Turkish Studies & Modern Asian Studies, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens

IDGA: 70th Anniversary of the Marshall Plan in Greece, March 22, 2018

Contents



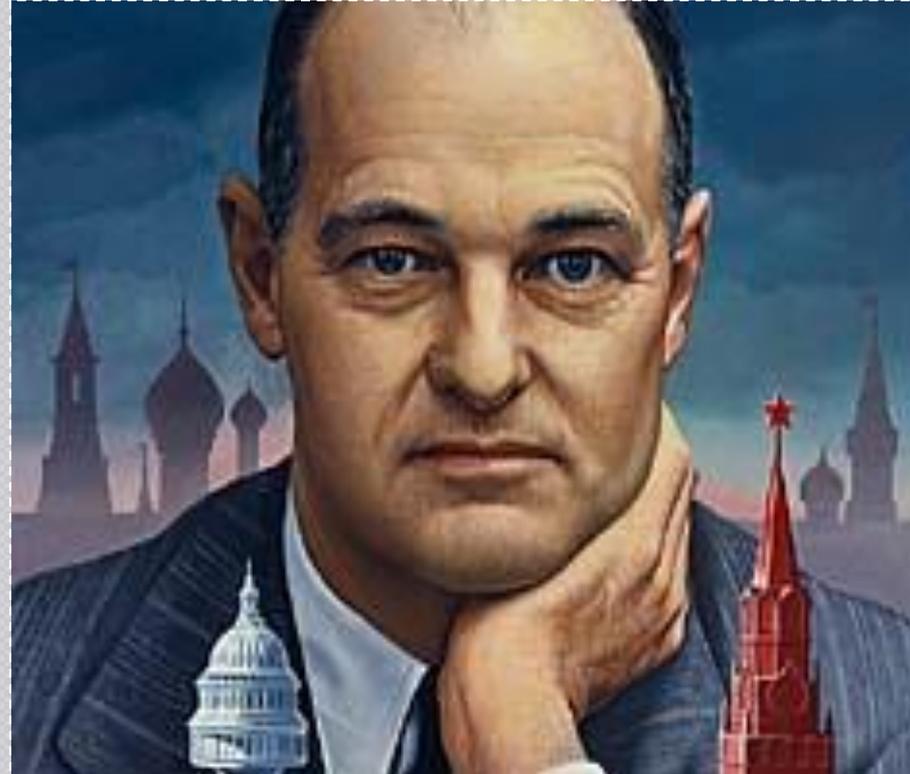
- 1. Explaining the US Geopolitical Narrative**
- 2. Marshal Plan: Economic Arrangements – Political Implications – (Geo)economic/political Outcomes**
- 3. Concluding Remarks: Fitting the Marshal Plan on the US Geopolitical/Foreign Policy Narrative**



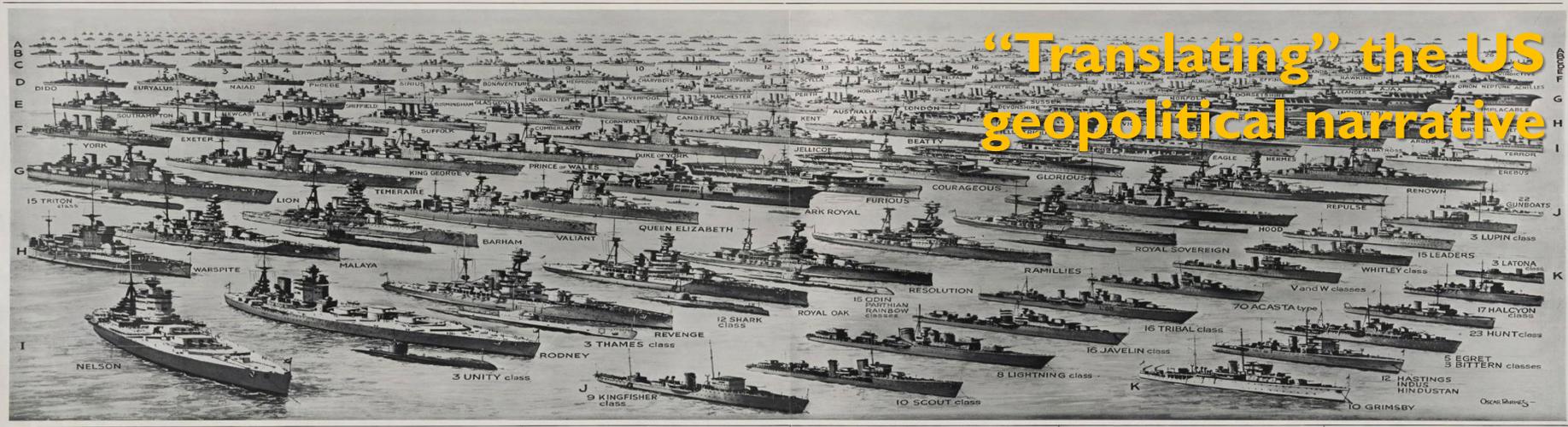
I. Explaining the US Geopolitical Narrative

“We can see that our [US] security has been dependent throughout much of our history on the position of Britain ... Britain’s position ... depended on the maintenance of a balance of power on the European Continent. Thus, it was essential to us, as it was to Britain, that no single Continental land power should come to dominate the entire Eurasian land mass. Our interest has lain rather in the maintenance of some short of stable balance among the powers of the interior, in order that none of them should effect the subjugation of the others, conquer the seafaring fringes of the land mass, become a great sea power as well as land power, shatter the position of England, and enter ... on an overseas expansion hostile to ourselves and supported by the immense resources of the interior of Europe and Asia ... we have had a stake in the prosperity and independence of the peripheral powers of Europe and Asia ... those countries whose gazes were oriented outward, across the seas, rather than inward to the conquest of power on land”

Defining the US geopolitical narrative



George Kennan (1904-2005)
The American Diplomacy, 1951



THE IMPERIAL BRITISH NAVY is strikingly depicted in this perspective, specially drawn for the Daily Telegraph by Dr. Oscar Purdon, the naval artist, which shows what the composition of the Navy is likely to be when the immense programme of new construction and re-armament has reached full maturity. Most of the vessels depicted are already in service or approaching completion, and today the British Navy is the most formidable in the world.

It is important to note that the illustration does not include any vessels of the 1939 construction programme.

The small vessels seen at the bottom of the picture (line K) are minesweepers and minelayers. Forward of them are the smallest of high speed and novel design, vessel type now seen on the stocks, but are not shown in the picture. — Line J is a column of patrol vessels.

destroyers reconstructed as A.A. and anti-airborne escorts and other units which, although constituting only the "fringe of the fleet," are essential to the maintenance of our sea power as their larger sisters.

Seen in line (I) will be observed the familiar outlines of the two Nelsons, the five sister battleships of the Royal Sovereign class, with the battlecruiser Hood (the world's largest combatant, 42,000 tons), and four traditional destroyers, Rapace and Bonaventure, and submarines and minelayers.

Above these (H) are the five Queen Elizabeth battleships which have been completed, the three Despatchs, A.B. Royal, Victoria, Courageous, Glorious, Eagle, and other smaller vessels of the same type. In line (G) will be noted the two new battlehips of the Lion class, each of 40,000 tons (to be armed with 16in. guns), which have only just been laid down; the five almost equally powerful ships of the King George V type (38,000 tons, ten 15in. guns), launched this year, and the large 25,000 ton group of aircraft-carriers known as the Illustrious class, each capable of taking to sea between 60 and 70 aircraft.

Above (C, D, E, F) will be seen several columns of cruisers, ranging from a few survivors of the war programme to the very latest types including the 10,000 ton Belfast and Edinburgh, just completed, the 9,000 ton Southampton class, the 8,000 ton Fiji, which denote their modern armament of 8.2 in. guns, and the small but exceptionally powerful "fast cruisers" of the Moho group. The completion of all these vessels will bring us within measurable distance of the maximum

regular strength of 70 qualified in the White Paper of Defence. Together with the advent of scores of reconstructed escort vessels, and no mention the big aircraft-carriers, they should go far to ensure the safety of our trade routes to war-time.

In the background appear more escort vessels, minesweepers, patrol units, destroyers, depot ships and netlayers, completing the vast and intricate organization which is necessary for operating the greatest fighting fleet in the world. It should be noted that this programme exhibits no details of any new class which have not been published, and that in some cases, such as the Lion class of battle-ships, the illustrations have no more than a faint significance.

The 1939 construction programme, in which reference has been made, comprises over 10,000 ton battlehips of the Lion class, four 8,000 ton cruisers of the Fiji class, one large aircraft-carrier, probably

of 25,000 tons, 16 large destroyers, four submarines, 20 high-speed escort vessels, and two of novel type, and a number of auxiliary craft, all due to be completed by the end of 1942.

The personnel will soon reach an establishment of about 150,000, figures anticipated for any other navy.

The 1939 construction programme is as follows:

1. The 1939 construction programme, in which reference has been made, comprises over 10,000 ton battlehips of the Lion class, four 8,000 ton cruisers of the Fiji class, one large aircraft-carrier, probably of 25,000 tons, 16 large destroyers, four submarines, 20 high-speed escort vessels, and two of novel type, and a number of auxiliary craft, all due to be completed by the end of 1942.

2. The personnel will soon reach an establishment of about 150,000, figures anticipated for any other navy.

3. The 1939 construction programme, in which reference has been made, comprises over 10,000 ton battlehips of the Lion class, four 8,000 ton cruisers of the Fiji class, one large aircraft-carrier, probably of 25,000 tons, 16 large destroyers, four submarines, 20 high-speed escort vessels, and two of novel type, and a number of auxiliary craft, all due to be completed by the end of 1942.

4. The personnel will soon reach an establishment of about 150,000, figures anticipated for any other navy.

5. Dorthian, 6. Dorian, 7. Dorothea, 8. Dorothea, 9. Dorothea, 10. Dorothea, 11. Adventure (minelayer), 12. Caradoc, 13. Calliope, 14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

6. Dorthian, 7. Dorian, 8. Dorothea, 9. Dorothea, 10. Dorothea, 11. Adventure (minelayer), 12. Caradoc, 13. Calliope, 14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

7. Dorothea, 8. Dorian, 9. Dorothea, 10. Dorothea, 11. Adventure (minelayer), 12. Caradoc, 13. Calliope, 14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

8. Dorthian, 9. Dorothea, 10. Dorothea, 11. Adventure (minelayer), 12. Caradoc, 13. Calliope, 14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

9. Dorothea, 10. Dorothea, 11. Adventure (minelayer), 12. Caradoc, 13. Calliope, 14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

10. Dorothea, 11. Adventure (minelayer), 12. Caradoc, 13. Calliope, 14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

11. Adventure (minelayer), 12. Caradoc, 13. Calliope, 14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

12. Caradoc, 13. Calliope, 14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

13. Calliope, 14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

14. Carleton, 15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

15. Capetown, 16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

16. Carleton, 17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

17. Carleton, 18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

18. Carleton, 19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

19. Carleton, 20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

20. Carleton, 21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

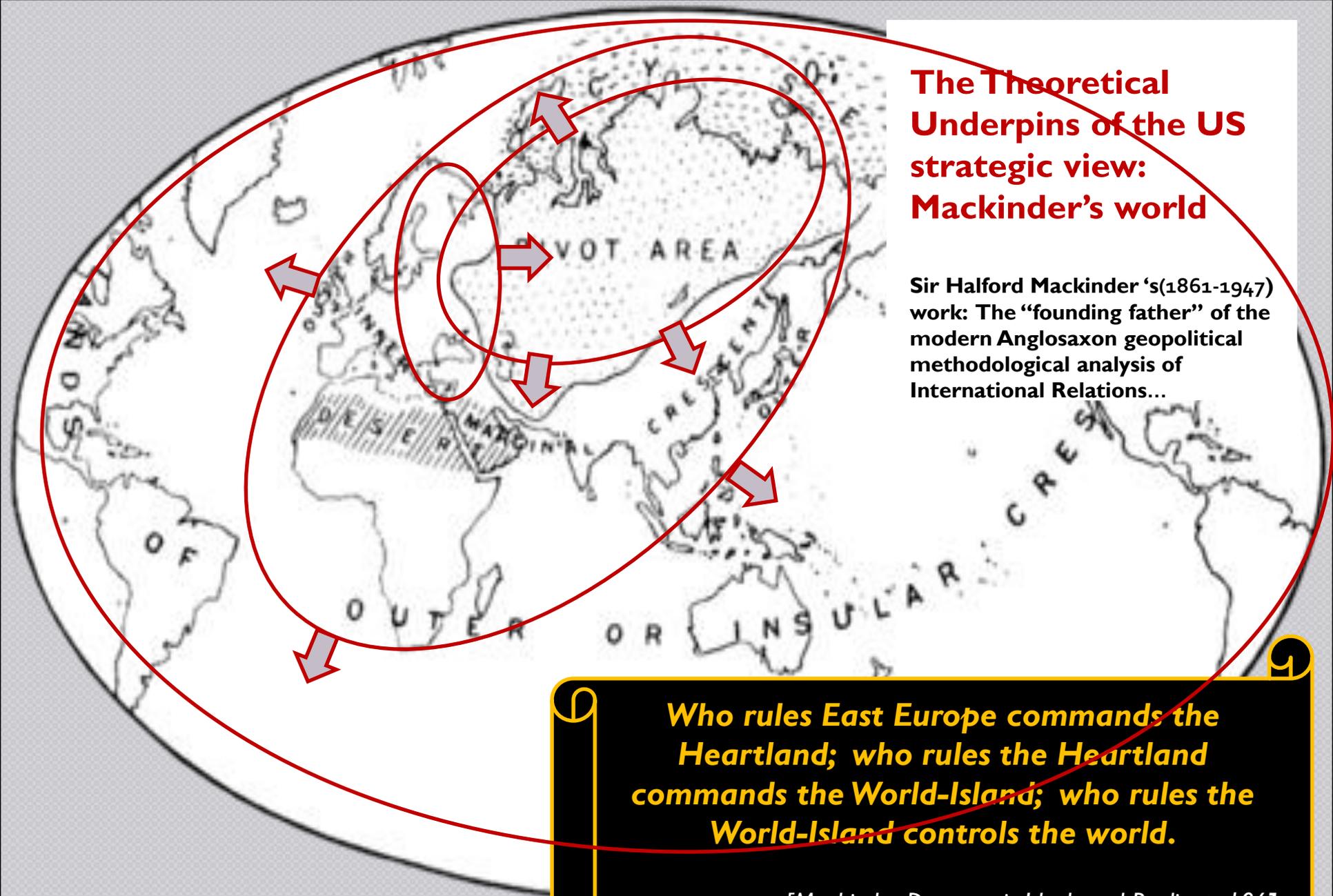
21. Carleton, 22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

22. Carleton, 23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

23. Carleton, 24. Carleton.

24. Carleton.

- I. US security is based on Britain's security (London's fleet "buffers" threats against the American "island")
- II. Britain's position is based on maintaining a balance of power in Cont. Europe & Asia
- III. None Eurasian power (Fr., Ger., Rus., Ch.) should dominate the landmass and its coastland
- IV. In such a case, a unified Eurasian power should control the ports, sea-lines and immense sources of Eurasia thus it will become a great naval power
- V. Thus, the security of Britain and then of the US will be severely compromised (loss of maritime supremacy / continental outposts / vulnerable to invasion)
- VI. Consequently, the US -with Britain- should: (i) Not allow the unification of the continental Europe & Asia under a continental power (ii) Try to keep the Eurasian Coastland states independent of the continental powers and "linked" to them



The Theoretical Underpins of the US strategic view: Mackinder's world

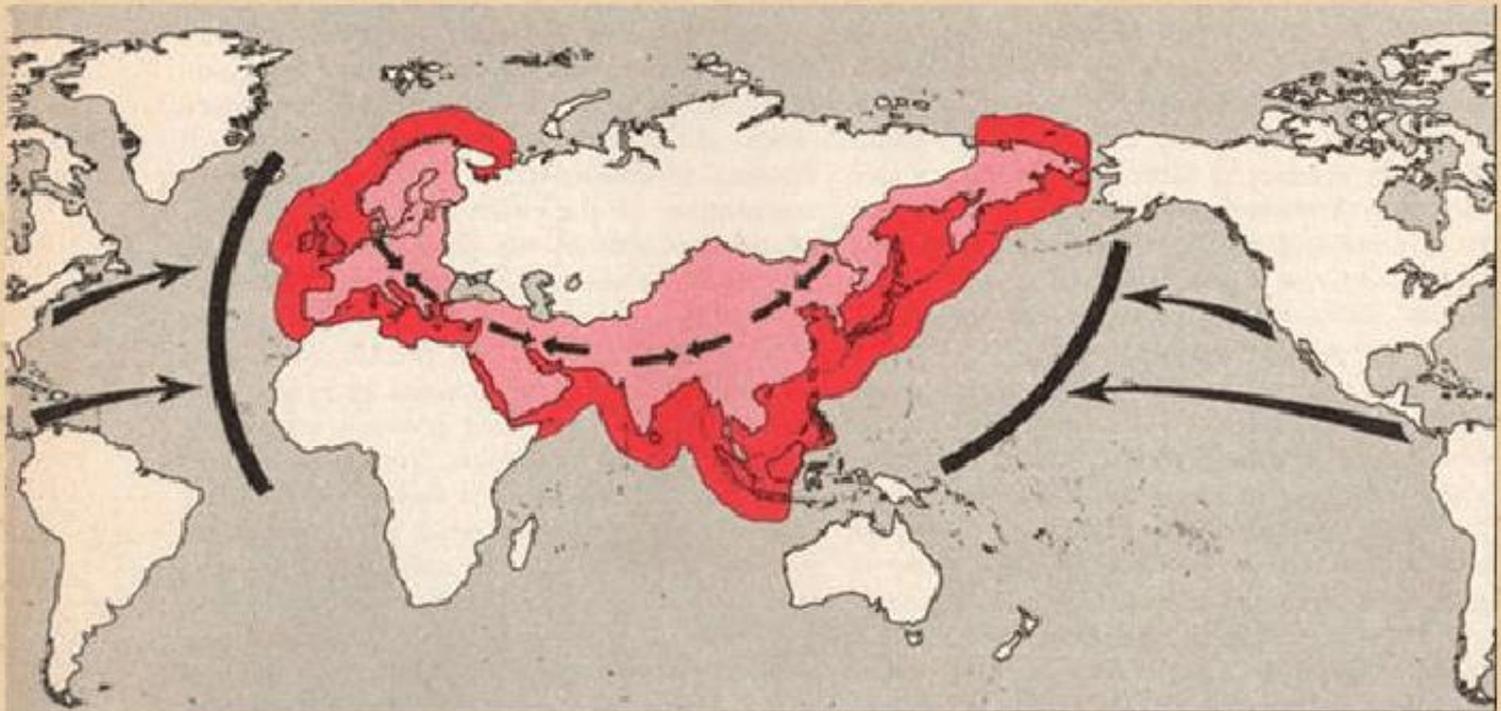
Sir Halford Mackinder (1861-1947) work: The "founding father" of the modern Anglosaxon geopolitical methodological analysis of International Relations...

Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island controls the world.

[Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, p. 106]

Nicholas J. Spykman (1893-1943)

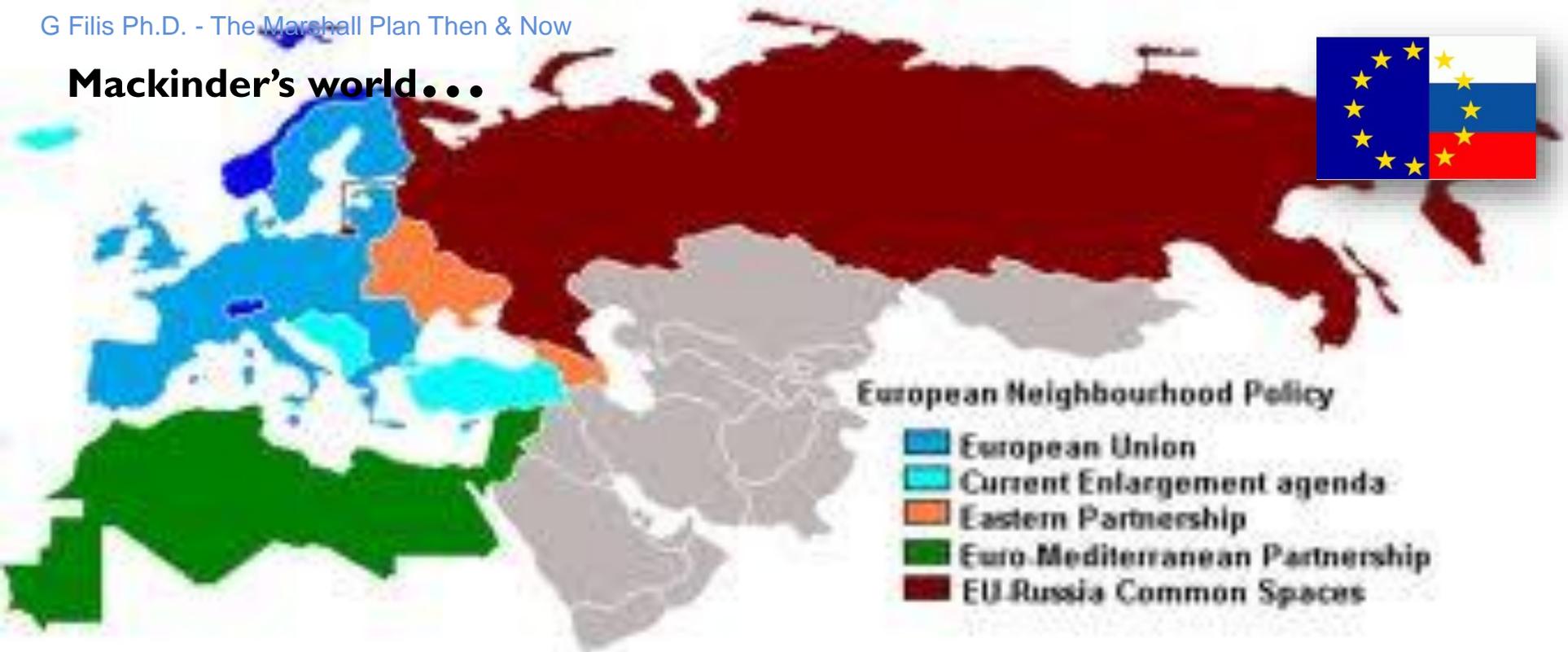
Spykman Geopolitical Map



*Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia;
Who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world.*

© Ellis Ph.D. - The Marshall Plan Then & Now

Mackinder's world...



What if the Great Continent, the whole World-Island or a large part of it, were at some future time to become a single and united base of sea-power? ... if we would take the long view, must we not still reckon with the possibility that a large part of the Great Continent might some day be united under a single sway, and that an invisible sea-power might be based upon it? ... *Ought we not recognize that is the great ultimate threat to the world's liberty so far as strategy is concerned, and to provide against it in our new political system?*

[Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals & Reality*, p. 70]

II. Marshal Plan: Economic Arrangements – Political Implications – (Geo)economic/political Outcomes



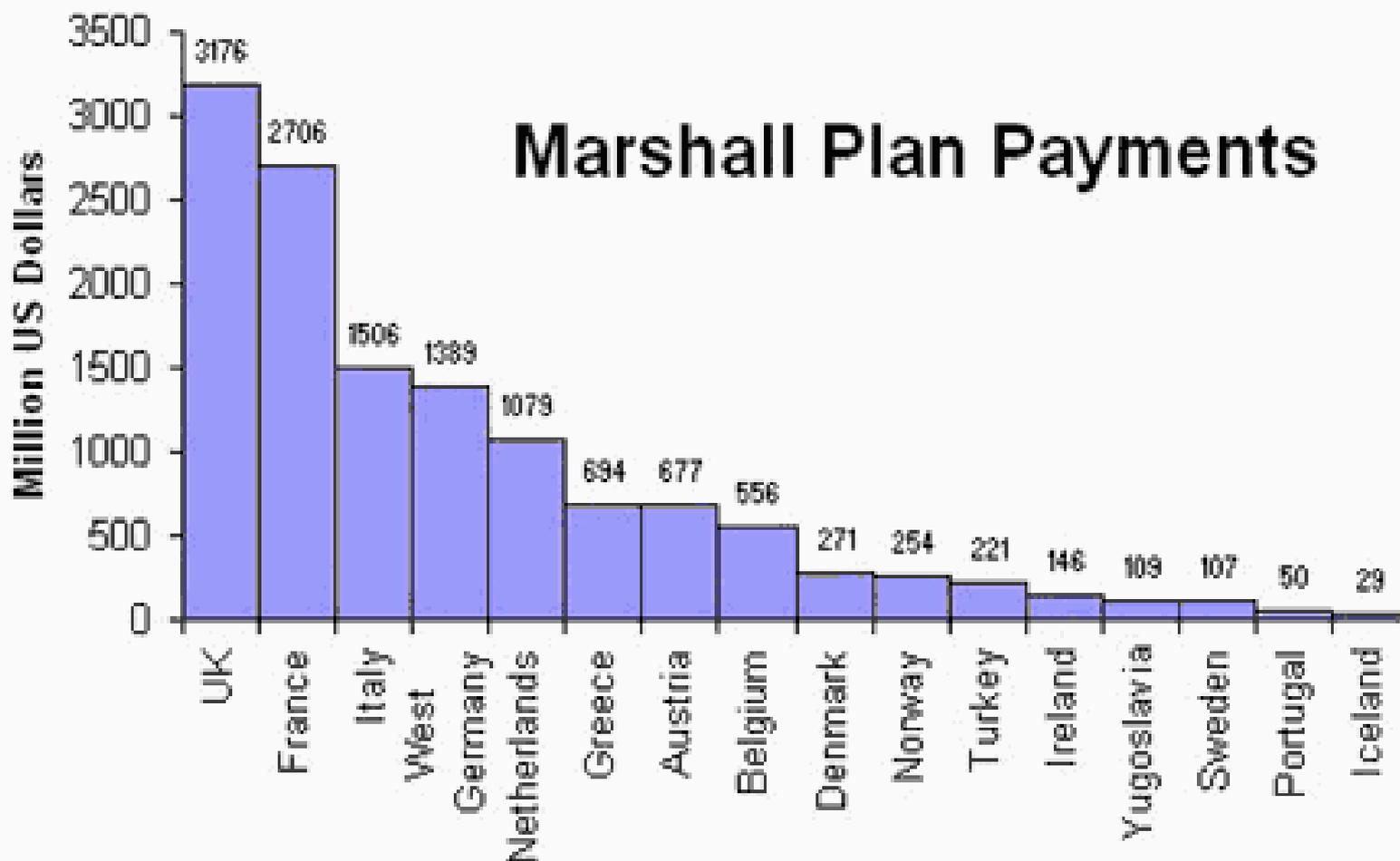
MP: The Economic Arrangements



➤ **The innovative rationale of the MP:**

- No money donation, but free supply of products based on annual requests of the states following a four-years plan
- The selling of the products in the domestic market would bring capital – denominated on local currency- utilized in ways agreed by the national governments and the US [i.e. use the capital for buying more products or storage it as reserve]

MP: The Economic Arrangements



MP: The Political Implications

- **The innovative effects of the MP:**
 - Forced the European governments to make long-term planning on their investment needs
 - Forced the European governments to negotiate between each other and between them and the US
 - Forced all the stakeholders in a country to talk and identify their needs and plans
 - Assured that Europe will not drift back to the devastating economic protectionism of the inter-war period



MP: The (Geo)economic/political Outcomes



- **On a country level:** Decisive contribution to the reconstruction and the economic and social welfare (i.e. France: 50% of the public investment program 1948-1952 / Greece: 50% of the country's GDP in 1950)
- **On a European level:**
 - 1947-1951, European GDP increased by 30%
 - 1949-1951, 80% of the wheat consumed in Europe
 - Profound psychological effects (depart from the heritage of the interwar period)
 - This economic program deterred a deeply political crisis after the war

[“The gravest danger for the US security is the possibility of the economic collapse of Western Europe, and the subsequent rise to power of communist elements” CIA Report, April 1947]

MP: The (Geo)economic/political Outcomes



➤ On a geopolitical level:

- **On the US-European level:** *“It is important to remain on friendly hands spaces that have or protecting deposits of minerals or oil and other natural resources, include strategic targets or spaces of strategic importance, they have a significant industrial potential, they acquire a labor force and sizable and organized armed forces, or for political or psychological reasons enable the US exert leverage for the global stability security and peace”*
[Report of an Ad Hoc Committee of the State Department, and the Departments of War and the Navy, April 21, 1947]
- **On the inter-European level:**
 - Avoid past mistakes: 1919 US contributed loans (pressure for repayment – pressure for war reparations – German economic collapse – rise of the Nazis) – 1947 MP was contribution
 - German Question: Economic & political revival of W. Germany (partitioned Germany, not unified) – link/contribution to Frances restructuring (BUT no war reparations)

Concluding Remarks: Fitting the Marshall Plan on the US Geopolitical/Foreign Policy Narrative

G Filis Ph.D. - The Marshall Plan Then & Now

- I. **MP:** Essential part of the introduced “containment” policy against the USSR
 - **Geopolitical Implication:** Not allowing the dominant Eurasian continental power (USSR) to expand to the European coastlands
- II. **MP:** Assuring that the major European continental power (Germany) will remain partitioned and controlled, while the European integration project will proceed in a controllable by the US manner
 - **Geopolitical Implication:** Continental Europe will be united under the US control –not under the main continental power and it will be separated by the main Eurasian power (USSR)
- III. **MP:** By including both Greece and Turkey in the project it tried to set firm control to a strategically important space of Eastern Europe
 - **Geopolitical Implication:** In the Anaglosaxon geopolitical analysis the specific space is part of the crucial Eastern European territory necessary for the control of the Eurasian landmass
- V. The MP was the essential step for the deployment of comprehensive US strategy based on **Geopolitical Realism & Idealist Rhetoric**
 - **Truman Doctrine** (Gr.-Tur. political assistance, after Iran-Straits-Civil War cases) – **Marshall Plan** (Economic assistance to avoid a political disaster) – **NATO** (military deterrence against the USSR)

«Ούτε μέμφομαι εκείνους που
θέλουν να άρχουν, αλλ' εκείνους
που είναι υπερβολικά πρόθυμοι να
υποτάσσωνται εις άλλους.»

["I am not blaming those who
are resolved to rule, only those
who show an even greater
readiness to submit"]

Ερμοκράτης, 1^η Δημηγορία προς
Συρακούσιους, 425 π.Χ.)

[Θουκυδίδης, Θουκυδίδου Ιστορία,
Βιβλίο Δ', 61, μετάφραση
Ελευθερίου Βενιζέλου]

gfilis@acg.edu

georgios.filis@hotmail.com

ΣΑΣ ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΩ!
THANK YOU!