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The Postwar Conversion to German Rearmament: A Look at the Truman Administration, Congress, and American Public Opinion

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THE POSTWAR CONVERSION TO GERMAN REARMAMENT:
A LOOK AT THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION, CONGRESS,
AND AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
David T. Rhoads

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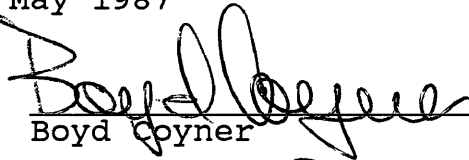
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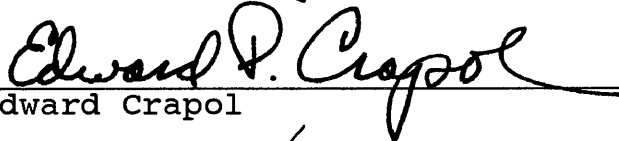


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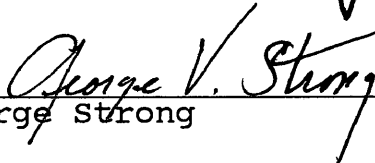
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine and examine the reactions of Congressional and public opinion to the Truman administration's reversal of its demilitarization policy for Western Germany.

In September of 1950, the Truman administration responded to increasingly alarming Cold War developments by deciding to arm Western Germany as a bulwark against Communist expansion into Western Europe. Advocacy for this policy change originated in the Defense Department. The State Department subsequently adopted it as practical for the political purposes of the United States, and President Truman was ultimately convinced of its necessity by the outbreak of armed conflict in Korea.

Congressional opinion before the advent of the Korean conflict actively opposed German rearmament on the grounds that a remilitarized Germany might resume the ultranationalist activities of the Third Reich. After June of 1950, however, Congressional quickly shifted to a position of support for German rearmament.

Public opinion likewise reflected a distrust of Germany prior to the Korean conflict, as well as a strong current of opposition to German rearmament. By the end of 1950, however, a majority of Americans had switched to a position of advocacy of German rearmament.

Congress and the public, despite strong opposition to German rearmament prior to June of 1950, quickly fell in line behind the Truman administration's new policy after September. No organized protest against the policy ever developed. It is suggested that a combination of the Cold War realignment of world power and the immediate military crisis in Korea caused a perception of the new Soviet threat to outweigh lingering fears of Germany and therefore permitted Congress and the public to acquiesce to a policy of German rearmament.

THE POSTWAR CONVERSION TO GERMAN REARMAMENT:

A. LOOK AT THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION, CONGRESS,

AND AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION

INTRODUCTION

The foreign policy of a democracy cannot be successfully carried on for very long unless the policy-makers continually consult public opinion. (1)

---George Gallup

In the governmental system of the United States, foreign-policy decisions are the province of the President. As the chief official of the executive branch, the President necessarily has the ultimate say in matters of foreign policy and consequently assumes responsibility for the success or failure of policies he has authored or approved. Assisting the President in the making of foreign-policy decisions are a number of other officers representing the various departments built into the executive structure of the government. Of these officers, the Secretary of State traditionally assumes the most significant and visible role. Though the Secretary's actual powers are only vaguely hinted at in the Constitution and are in practice therefore limited by the whims of the President in office, the Secretary of State and the department which he heads wield considerable influence upon the President and upon the nature of United

States foreign policy. Similarly, the members of the Defense Department, who offer recommendations concerning national security based upon the current and projected military status of the United States, exert a powerful influence upon the President, particularly since the twentieth-century advent of the United States as a world power. In the end, though, the power to make decisions affecting the tenor of American foreign policy rests with the President alone.

The ability of the President to translate those decisions into actual, functioning foreign-policy programs is subject, however, to a series of specific checks which reside within the houses of Congress. By direct action, Congress can affect American foreign policy in three ways. First, a two-thirds vote of approval in Senate is required to ratify any treaties concluded by the United States with foreign governments. Second, Congress as a whole controls the fabled "purse strings" of the federal budget and by withholding the necessary appropriations can prevent the President's foreign policy-programs from being carried out. Third, when a foreign-policy decision requires legislation for its enactment, Congress can voice its support or lack thereof through normal legislative channels.

In addition to these direct methods of influencing the foreign-policy programs of the United States, Congress also contributes in two indirect ways to the decision-making

process involved in the executive creation of foreign policy. Both houses of Congress regularly propose and adopt resolutions relative to current political questions which are subsequently directed to the executive. These resolutions can exert considerable pressure upon foreign-policy makers and, as Charles Lerche noted in his Foreign Policy of the American People, are "especially effective when they represent accurately the state of public opinion and when they are passed prior to the making of a firm commitment by the executive." (2) Both houses are also empowered to authorize investigations into all facets of the foreign-policy process, including both the creation and implementation of policies as well as the progress of policies already in place. The publicized results of such investigations can create "powerful currents of public opinion," and therefore have the potential to influence the decisions of the executive. (3) In short, then, Congress' role in the making of American foreign policy can be reduced to endorsing (or refusing to endorse) executive decisions through ratification, appropriation, and legislation, and to participation of sorts in the executive decision-making process by means of Congressional resolutions and investigations, both of which frequently invoke the specter of public opinion.

This specter, in turn, raises another series of limiting factors on the President's ability to conduct

foreign policy: those ways in which the attitudes of the American public can influence the executive decision-making process. Difficult though it is to accurately gauge so-called "public" opinion when, as Gabriel Almond has theorized, there exist in reality several publics (general, attentive, and elite, as well as ethnic, religious, and other interest groups), the prevailing attitudes among the mass public, or the public as a whole, unquestionably serve to either legitimize or condemn the foreign-policy decisions of the government.(4) Specifically in the arena of foreign-policy, the public performs three basic tasks. The first of these is to determine the "outermost limits of permissible government actions." Simply put, the government cannot indefinitely act in a fashion which is unacceptable to the majority of American people. Though the government quite often undertakes clandestine activities, particularly in civil-military settings, so as to avoid the pressure of unfavorable public opinion, major far-reaching foreign-policy programs cannot ultimately be kept secret and must therefore be resolved by means to which the public gives its approval, tacit or otherwise. The second task of public opinion is to "delineate the general direction in which policy should move and to isolate certain landmark objectives" of foreign policy. Substantial public outcry concerning foreign-policy issues will almost certainly prompt political responses designed to still that outcry,

even when shifts in the direction of foreign policy are distasteful to the policy-makers in office. The final task performed by American public opinion regarding foreign policy is to debate and decide "crucial issues so important in themselves that the government dare not proceed until public sentiment has come to rest."(5)

In practice, then, the American foreign-policy process is a three-fold one: the executive branch of government assesses the problems facing the United States within the foreign-policy arena and devises policies to meet those problems; Congress attempts to influence the executive as it undertakes to make policy decisions, and then exercises the right to "veto" policy programs requiring legislation, appropriations, or Senate ratification; the American populace, finally, reacts to policy decisions which have been made public and eventually voices its approval or disapproval, thereby indicating to the executive certain directions and parameters for future foreign-policy decisions.

In 1948, Harry S. Truman was elected President of the United States, and he and his new Secretary of State Dean Acheson spent the next four years directing the foreign policy of the United States through the formative years of the Cold War. Their policies with regard to Western Europe and Asia, combined with a newly militant anti-Soviet stance, created a political legacy which would profoundly affect

American foreign relations for years to come. The North Atlantic Alliance and the attempt to create a political and military union among the nations of Western Europe assumed a particular importance for the Truman administration and were hailed by the New York Times in June of 1952 as the "most exciting and revolutionary foreign policy adventure since World War II." (6) Central to this adventure was the American decision to rearm Germany, a decision representing a complete reversal of the administration's previous German policy. The study which follows is a brief examination of the events leading to Truman's and Acheson's decision to rearm Germany, of Congressional and public reaction to that decision, and of the extent to which the opinions of Congress and the public coincided with and served to influence the foreign policy of the Truman administration in this area.

Notes for Introduction

(1) George Gallup, Foreword to The Public and American Foreign Policy 1918-1978, by Ralph B. Levering (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1978), p. 9.

(2) Charles O. Lerche, Foreign Policy of the American People, 3d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976), p. 56.

(3) Ibid., p. 55.

(4) Gabriel A. Almond, The American People and Foreign Policy (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1960), p. 138.

(5) Lerche, Foreign Policy of the American People, 3d ed., pp. 31, 32.

(6) "Parties United On Europe Despite Campaign Oratory," New York Times, 12 June 1952, p. 5.

CHAPTER I

THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION TO REARM GERMANY

Throughout history, those who have tried hardest to do the right thing have often been persecuted, misrepresented, or even assassinated, but eventually what they stood for has come to the top and been adopted by the people. (1)

---Harry S. Truman

As the Second World War drew to a close in Europe in spring of 1945, the problem of what to do with Germany, how to incorporate it eventually into a reconstructed European community, assumed a position of primary importance on the agendas of Allied leaders. That the defeat of Germany would remove the practical underpinnings of the Soviet alliance with Great Britain and the United States presaged an inevitable political conflict of interests as to the fate of Germany and of Central Europe as a whole. Meanwhile, as Allied forces rapidly occupied German territory and exposed the full extent of Nazi atrocities, a global sentiment quickly emerged which called for the punishment of those responsible. In light of these developments, opinions on how to deal with Germany after the war proliferated in the

United States, running the gamut of extremes from Henry Morgenthau's proposal to reduce Germany more or less permanently to an agricultural state to General Patton's half-cocked scheme to enlist German military aid in a campaign against the Soviet Union.

Thus it was that in April of 1945, when Germany's defeat had become imminent, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a directive (JCS 1067) to General Eisenhower, then Commander-in-Chief of the United States Forces of Occupation in Germany, defining the immediate and long-range goals of military government in occupied Germany. In paragraph 4, article c, of JCS 1067 the "principal Allied objective" was defined as preventing Germany "from ever again becoming a threat to the peace of the world." A series of steps essential to the realization of this principal objective was then outlined and included "the elimination of Nazism and militarism, . . . the industrial disarmament and demilitarization of Germany, . . . and the preparation for an eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis." These basic steps formed the core of the policy conducted by the American military government in its zone of occupation and subsequently in bizon and trizon.(2)

A second directive relative to American policy toward occupied Germany (JCS 1779) was issued by the Joint Chiefs in July of 1947, this time in a climate of deteriorating

relations between the Soviet Union and the United States and Great Britain. The American commitments to denazification, demilitarization, and disarmament of Germany were reiterated and, reflecting a declaration made by Secretary of State Marshall before Congress in early 1947 that the economic revival of Germany was necessary to the restoration of the European economy, the directive stated as general United States policy that, in order to ensure a lasting peace, "an orderly and prosperous Europe requires the economic contributions of a stable and productive Germany as well as the necessary restraints to insure that Germany is not allowed to revive its destructive militarism."(3)

This latter statement of general policy toward Germany implied an American realization that Germany could not be allowed to remain a prisoner of war indefinitely. To American policy-makers, the economic well-being of Western Europe depended upon an industrially revived Germany aligned both politically and economically to the West. The increasingly alarming breakdown of four-power cooperation in governing occupied Germany had already prompted the United States, Great Britain, and France to take measures, independent of the Soviet Union, to insure that the Western occupation zones, at least, would conform to their vision of a "stable and productive" Germany. In January of 1947 the United States and Great Britain began the process of merging their zones of occupation, and later the same year France

agreed to merge its zone as well with those of the British and Americans. Soon thereafter, at a series of meetings in London between February and June of 1948, the United States, Great Britain, and France determined to coordinate the economic policy of the three Western zones, to include West Germany in the European Recovery Program, and to write a democratic constitution for West Germany which would provide for a constituent assembly and a federal German government.

Confronted with the establishment of an economically revived and democratically aligned West German state, the Soviet Union, which had wanted to create a united but demilitarized Germany existing either neutrally or under Soviet influence, was forced to take parallel measures to secure its hold over the eastern zone of Germany. Thus, a de facto division of Germany came about which caused the development of a new strategic situation in Central Europe and, as the Cold War took shape, planted the seed which would grow during Truman's second administration into a new American policy for Western Germany: rearmament and incorporation into a Western European defense network.

This new policy, amounting as it did to a complete reversal of one of the basic objectives which the United States had pursued in Germany since the end of the war (industrial demilitarization and disarmament), was arrived at gradually and through specific stages. It began in 1949 in the Department of Defense as a reassessment of the

military needs of Western Europe in the face of a powerful Soviet adversary; it was eventually adopted by Secretary of State Acheson as a practical means of simultaneously achieving his political objectives in Western Europe as well as providing for European defense; and finally, it was approved by President Truman as he faced war abroad and political opposition at home. Furthermore, between 1948 and 1950, events conspired to point American policy in Germany toward the decision to rearm.

The Soviet blockade of Berlin was the first of these events and the first major post-war confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Instituted as a challenge to the efforts of the United States, Great Britain and France to unite the three Western zones economically and politically, and as a response to the prospect of a revitalized Western outpost well inside the Soviet occupation zone, the blockade closed off all overland access to West Berlin on 24 June 1948, using as an immediate pretext the announcement of currency reforms in the Western zones and West Berlin.(4) Truman's response was to hold firm by organizing a counterblockade and a round-the-clock airlift to supply the isolated city. A stand-off developed and continued for almost a year until the Soviets, unwilling to raise the level of force and convinced that the United States would not abandon its plans for a West German state, began to lift the blockade in April of 1949.

Though the entire episode amounted to a diplomatic defeat for the Soviet Union, the blockade served to heighten tensions between the Western Allies and the Soviets and to dramatize the potential for a military conflict in Central Europe. Reflecting upon the blockade in his memoirs, President Truman concluded that it was a "move to test our capacity and will to resist. This and the previous attempts to take over Greece and Turkey were part of a Russian plan to probe for soft spots in the Western Allies' positions all around their own perimeter." (5) Thus the incident demonstrated to the Truman administration the efficacy of a firm response to Soviet advances, and it also sparked an anxious reappraisal among American military leaders of Soviet willingness to play the aggressor in Europe. The subsequent signing of the North Atlantic Pact on 4 April 1949 reflected a growing concern with the military defenses of Western Europe against possible Soviet aggression.

The successful explosion of an atomic bomb by the Soviet Union in September of 1949, several years before Western experts had predicted the Soviets would achieve atomic capability, further complicated the strategic situation in Europe. This breaking of the American atomic monopoly forced American military leaders to begin to reevaluate the grand strategy of the United States. In a future war with the Soviet Union, the American military could no longer expect to compensate for inferior

conventional forces by the exclusive use of atomic weapons. If the Soviets assembled an arsenal of atomic bombs, manpower would once again become "queen of the battle," and in manpower, particularly in the European theater, the Soviet Union enjoyed a decided advantage over the Western Allies.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, President Truman authorized the development of a hydrogen bomb, hoping to regain for the United States the technological lead in strategic weaponry. American military leaders, however, began to lobby for increasing conventional military presence in areas of strategic importance, including the rearming of Germany to provide for the defense of Western Europe.(6)

Simultaneously with this reappraisal of American defense requirements, a similar reappraisal of Cold War foreign policy occupied the members of the National Security Council who, in early 1950, began to draft a highly secret blueprint of American geo-political objectives. This document, which was masterminded by Secretary of State Acheson and which came to be known as NSC-68, emphasized the new polarization of world power between the United States and the Soviet Union and the fundamental ideological antagonism between the political systems of the two states. It further warned that the Soviet Union fully intended to impose its absolute authority upon those geographical areas "now under [its] control," and ultimately upon the entire

"Eurasian land mass."(7) To prevent this catastrophe from occurring, NSC-68 asserted, the United States was to assume the task of imposing "order" upon those areas not already under Soviet control so as to provide a political and economic environment within which free societies could grow and flourish. To that end, NSC-68 presented an outline of specific policy recommendations for the United States, one of which was to rapidly increase American and Western conventional military forces as a deterrent against Soviet aggression and as a means of realizing American political around the globe.

There were critics of NSC-68 within the State Department, notably George F. Kennan and Charles Bohlen, each of whom disagreed with Acheson's analysis of Soviet policy as "nothing more than an absolute determination to spread the Communist system throughout the world." Kennan and Bohlen took a more realistic approach to understanding Soviet foreign policy by assuming that the Soviet Union was acting as a national state whose primary interest was to protect itself and its satellites, whereas the "extension of Communism to other areas [was] a theoretical and secondary goal."(8) Acheson, however, rejected this line of thought, and Kennan's departure for Princeton in early 1950 effectively neutralized his influence in the State Department. And Bohlen, who was in France at the time NSC-68 was drawn up, did not read it until 1951, well after

the issue was decided in Acheson's favor.

In April of 1950, NSC-68 was presented to President Truman who concurred wholeheartedly with the world-view offered in the report and agreed with the conclusion that the Western Allies must indeed increase their armed forces to meet the Russian danger.

The North Korean invasion of South Korea on 25 June 1950 convincingly demonstrated to the Truman administration the veracity of the assumptions underlying NSC-68 and provided ample opportunity for the implementation of new policies consistent with the secret Cold War blueprint. And though the immediate military conflict had occurred in Asia, it inevitably drew American attention once again to Europe and to the heart of American foreign policy. From a military standpoint, the situation in Germany in 1950 was roughly analogous to that in Korea. Both states were divided politically and constituted potential flash-points along the perimeter of the Soviet Union. The stakes in Europe, however, were much higher than those in Korea, and at the time of the North Korean invasion the defenses of the Western Allies were less than ideal. A Soviet-supplied police force numbering 60,000 men had been raised in East Germany and was supported by twenty-seven Soviet divisions in the Democratic Republic. Seventy-five more Soviet divisions were readily available for deployment in the Central European theater. Against this force, the Western

Allies in NATO "could muster only twelve divisions, ill-equipped, uncoordinated, and deployed with no thought of combat." (9) Clearly Western Europe in 1950 was unprepared to defend itself against a Soviet Union determined to impose its will upon the entire Eurasian land mass.

By late 1950, then, as the United States found itself locked into a global political struggle with an enemy perceived to be fanatically determined, an enemy whose aggressiveness had been demonstrated by the Berlin Blockade and by the Korean conflict, an enemy with formidable conventional forces and a newly acquired atomic capability, the global political environment had shifted to the point that the Truman administration was willing to embark upon a radical new course in American foreign policy. And integral to that new course was the decision to rearm West Germany scarcely five years after Germany, under the Nazis, had been forced to halt its own bid for European domination.

As previously noted, this movement to rearm Germany began with the strategic musings of the Department of Defense. Reflecting on the European situation in early 1950, Dean Acheson stated that "for some years the Defense Department had held that Europe could not be defended without the willing and active participation of Western Germany." (10) Though the State Department and the President held steadfastly to the principle of German demilitarization, Defense Department officials continued to

stress the need, from a purely military standpoint, of rearming Germany. By late 1949, following the Berlin Blockade and the successful Soviet atomic explosion, military leaders began to advocate publicly the use of German troops for Western defense. On 21 November 1949, General Lucius D. Clay, the former Chief of United States Forces in Occupied Germany, proposed the creation of a composite European military force, including German units, as "a means of building a unified Europe free from fear of Russian aggression." (11) General Clay stressed that, though the composite force should be strong enough to contain Soviet advances, no one of the participating nations should be capable of waging aggressive war on its own. Several days later, on 9 December, the weekly U.S. News and World Report published an article entitled "German Army? Generals Say Yes," in which a group of unidentified Western generals gave a "hard-headed military appraisal of what is going on as military men express it in their own language." (12) In no uncertain terms, this article warned of the determination of the Soviet Union to gain control of Germany, discounted the effectiveness of the atom bomb as a defensive weapon, and insisted that the next war would be decided, as always, by land armies. Warning that "time is growing short for Western armies to catch up," the article ended with a recommendation for the construction of a German army as a necessary ingredient in the defense of Western Europe.

The public arguments of these "hard-headed" generals echoed the private sentiments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who began, through the National Security Council, to put pressure on President Truman to consider the possibility of arming Germany. National Security Council memorandum number 71 reported that the Joint Chiefs, as of 2 May 1950, were of the opinion that "the appropriate and early rearming of Germany is of fundamental importance to the defense of Western Europe against the USSR." (13) This statement was followed up on 17 May by a recommendation that 5,000 federal police be created in Western Germany as an "initial step in the eventual rearming" of Germany. (14) John J. McCloy, then American Commissioner in Germany, also advocated the formation of a West German federal police force to counter the Soviet-supported East German build-up of a para-military police force which had begun in late 1949. (15) By early 1950, then, the Department of Defense was fully committed to the rearming of Germany, and, from a military point of view, the sooner the better.

State Department officials, however, were much more reluctant than their Defense Department counterparts to embrace a policy of German remilitarization. Wary of the political repercussions of arming West Germany, the State Department repeatedly pledged American commitment to the policy of disarmament throughout 1949 and the first half of 1950. Of primary importance was minimizing the potential

for creating strife among the Western Allies over the question of German participation in Western defense. France, in particular, was extremely hostile to the notion of a remilitarized Germany. Also worrisome were the possibility of provoking military countermeasures by the Soviet Union and the increasing likelihood that the two zones of Germany, if armed one against the other, would never in future be reunited. With these possibilities in mind, Secretary of State Acheson told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April of 1949 that "the disarmament and demilitarization of Germany must be complete and absolute," and that "a discussion of including West Germany in the [North Atlantic] pact" was impossible.(16) One year later, in April of 1950, Acheson publicly reiterated the "firm adherence" of the United States to the continued disarmament of Germany.(17)

Within the secret confines of the National Security Council, however, a new mindset conducive to the rearming of Western Germany began to emerge in early 1950. NSC-68, Acheson's blueprint for conducting the Cold War, was drafted and submitted to the President in April, and in the context of NSC-68 the rearming of Germany as advocated by the Defense Department seemed a logical step toward the creation of sufficient force-in-being to deter Soviet aggression in Europe. But through June and July of 1950, Acheson remained unwilling to offer the State Department's recommendation for

such a step. On 5 June, during a statement before Congress requesting Mutual Defense Assistance funds, Acheson declared "that the United States would continue the policy of German demilitarization." (18) And in an addendum to NSC-71, the State Department refused to "advocate or press for action" in the question of German rearmament. (19)

Ultimately, it was the North Korean invasion of South Korea which provided the catalyst necessary to force Acheson's hand on the matter of Germany. In Present at the Creation, Acheson attests that his "conversion to German participation in European defense was quick. The idea that Germany's place in the defense of Europe would be worked out by a process of evolution was outmoded. Korea had speeded up evolution." (20) Several weeks after the invasion, when it had become apparent that the conflict would protract into a sustained commitment, Acheson became confident in the opportunity that Korea provided for implementing the political programs outlined in NSC-68. On 31 July 1950, Acheson proposed to President Truman that a European or North Atlantic army be created and that German troops be enlisted within it. (21) The President reluctantly approved this line of thought and set the State and Defense Departments to work negotiating a plan for German rearmament which would be acceptable to the United States' European allies.

By 5 September, the State and Defense Departments had

agreed upon a program which subsequently became known as the "package deal." This program called for the creation of ten German divisions to shore up the Western defense. Bound to this rearming of Germany, and conditional upon it, were three other elements designed to gain Allied cooperation, all of which were to be presented to the North Atlantic Council as part of a single package: American reinforcements in the form of four to six divisions were to be deployed in Europe as a peace-keeping force; a Supreme Allied Commander was to be appointed to coordinate Western defense and to ensure that the German troops remained in a subordinate position; and American financial aid to Europe was to be increased. Acheson considered these elements to provide enough incentive and sufficient reassurance against possible German aggression to persuade the NATO countries to agree to German rearmament. Several days before the September meetings of the North Atlantic Council in New York, the package deal was forwarded jointly by the Departments of State and Defense to President Truman for official approval.

Truman, like Acheson, had long been wary of considering the possibility of German rearmament. The President feared both the political consequences of such an act and, like the French, the possibility that a rearmed Germany might once again become a threat to world peace. For these reasons, he favored the continuation of German disarmament as he began

his second administration and was moved on occasion to repudiate in "vehement terms" rumors that the United States was planning to allow West Germany to build up an army.(22)

Nevertheless, the escalation of the Cold War weighed heavily upon him and he reacted to Soviet moves such as the Berlin Blockade and the explosion of an atomic device in decisive fashion by mounting an airlift, approving the North Atlantic Treaty, and authorizing the development of the hydrogen bomb. The idea of German rearmament remained distasteful to him, however, despite the strategic recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As late as 16 June 1950, Truman warned in a memorandum to Acheson against allowing Germany to create a police force which could become the basis for a future German war machine.(23) But the invasion of South Korea on 25 June apparently convinced Truman of the necessity of reorganizing the defense of Western Europe. On 31 July, Truman accepted Acheson's North Atlantic Army idea, and on 9 September he gave his approval to the package deal proposal.

In his memoirs, Truman commented upon the simple logic behind the inclusion of Germany in Western defense saying that "without Germany, the defense of Europe was a rear-guard action on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. With Germany there could be a defense in depth, powerful enough to offer effective resistance to aggression from the East."(24) By September of 1950, therefore, Truman had made

the decision to rearm Germany. He authorized Acheson to present the package deal at the North Atlantic Council meetings in New York a few days later, and the new American commitment to German rearmament became a matter of public record. Though France predictably balked at the idea, every other NATO country agreed to German rearmament in principle, and the United States continued to adhere to the policy of rearmament throughout the remainder of Truman's administration, supporting the ill-fated European Defense Community as well as ultimate German inclusion in NATO.

Notes for Chapter I

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(3) U.S. Department of State, Germany, 1947-1949: The Story in Documents, JCS 1779, 11 July 1947, p. 34.

(4) Marshall D. Shulman, Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 19.

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(8) Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History, 1929-1969 (New York: Norton, 1982), p. 290.

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(10) Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 435.

(11) "Defense Plan Offered," New York Times, 21 November 1949, p. 5.

(12) "German Army? Generals Say Yes," U.S. News and World Report, 9 December 1949, pp. 22, 23.

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(22) "German Army Aim Denied," New York Times, 18 November 1949, p. 10.

(23) U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, vol. IV, Memorandum from President Truman to Acheson, 16 July 1950, pp. 688, 689.

(24) Truman, Memoirs, vol. 2: Years of Trial and Hope, p. 253.

CHAPTER II
CONGRESS AND GERMAN REARMAMENT

[A United States Senator] is an honest man, he is an intense fellow, he gets all worked up, the blood rushes to his head, he takes on kind of a wild, stary look at you, and I just do not think his mind works in a normal way when he gets excited.(1)

---Dean Acheson

Even as the executive branch slowly proceeded during 1949 and the first half of 1950 toward the decision to rearm Germany, an open-ended debate concerning the future status of Germany picked up steam in the houses of Congress. During the 1948 elections, both the Democrats and the Republicans had included in their platforms foreign policy planks condemning Communism, and Congressmen of both parties generally agreed on the reality of the Soviet threat to Western Europe. And in that context, the Berlin crisis had focused national attention upon the precarious position of Germany as a player in the Cold War in Europe. Though never officially consulted, Congress had given strong support to Truman's handling of the situation, and, by the end of 1949, Congressmen were aware of the inclinations of American

military leaders to include German forces as part of the defense network of Western Europe. They also understood that Allied occupation of Germany could not continue indefinitely. Thus, they addressed the "German problem" periodically on the floors of the House and Senate and within the meeting-rooms of those committees slanted toward foreign policy. And, gradually, two opposing camps began to emerge within Congress, divided over the issue of German rearmament. To arm or not to arm, that was the question, as each side presented its case.

At the heart of the matter for those who voiced opposition to German rearmament was the fear that the German people, despite their defeat in 1945 and subsequent Allied efforts to denazify them, still harbored a dangerous feeling of ultra-nationalism and a disregard for Western democracy. If the Germans were permitted to arm themselves again, the argument went, they would undoubtedly resume the aggressive ways of the Third Reich and provoke yet another European or world war. This perceived possibility of a resurgence of German fascism provided a persuasive and popular case against rearming Germany in the houses of Congress during the first months of Truman's second administration.

In the House of Representatives, concern about German nationalism and resurgent fascism was expressed periodically during 1949, prompted in part by rumors that the military was considering German rearmament and in part by the

imminent creation of the Federal Republic. In January, Representative George Sadowski (D, Michigan) introduced into the Congressional Record an article entitled "German Giant Revived," which emphasized that rebuilding a strong Germany in order to "take her off the American taxpayer's back" would result in a "restored Germany again ready for war." (2) Chet Holifield (D, California) echoed this sentiment in April when, voicing his alarm over the failure of American military leaders to "protect the democratic principles in the rehabilitation of Germany" and lamenting a similar failure among State Department officials, he quoted from the pamphlet "Prevent World War III" for the Record: "[The Germans] have a long way to go to prove that they are trustworthy in economics and politics. So far they have merely confirmed our fears that they remain unrepentant supernationalists who are waiting for 'der tag' [sic]." (3)

In 1950, more members of the House of Representatives placed their remarks in the Record opposing German rearmament on the ground that Germany had not yet earned the trust of the Western democracies by renouncing its aggressive brand of nationalism. Among the more outspoken were such men as Abraham Multer (D, New York), Jacob Javits (R, New York), William Granahan (D, Pennsylvania), and Herman Eberharter (D, Pennsylvania). This whole line of thought was perhaps best summed up by Representative Granahan who urged in an address delivered at Mann School in

Philadelphia on 20 April 1950 that "we must all have a hand in the great crusade to stem the tide of extreme nationalism and the remilitarization of an enemy nation that twice in our lifetime has attempted to enslave the world. We cannot afford to give Germans weapons because they will be turned on us."(4)

In the Senate, those who opposed rearmament also invoked the specter of German nationalism. Senator Guy M. Gillette (D, Iowa), worried by reports that denazification and democratization efforts in Western Germany were being undermined by a willingness of occupation officials to cooperate with former Nazis in political, industrial and educational arenas, declared in a radio interview in June of 1949 that "We simply must know what is going on in Germany, whether or not the German mind remains the repository for the Hitler doctrine. Left to fester and ferment, this poison will spread, and in 5 years, or 10, . . . we will be confronted with Nazi fascism again."(5) Senator Estes Kefauver (D, Tennessee) reiterated this point of view in October of 1949 and warned that the Germans had not yet earned the trust of the Western Allies, as did Senator Robert Hendrickson (R, New Jersey) who decried the coddling of former Nazis by the occupation hierarchy and publicly opposed the military's "fantastic plans for restoring German military might" in a speech to the Jewish War Veterans of the United States on 17 June 1950.(6)

In addition to the danger of resurgent fascism in Germany, some Congressmen opposed German rearmament in 1949 and 1950 because they feared the possibility that a remilitarized Germany might enter into an opportunistic alliance with the Soviet Union. Lumping Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany together in the catch-all category of totalitarian states and recalling the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact, men such as Representatives Jacob Javits and Arthur Klein (D, New York) and Senator Guy Gillette worried that a rearmed Germany, instead of acting as a bulwark against Communism, would cast its lot with the Soviets against the Western democracies. On 8 August 1949, on the floor of the House, Javits declared that "Russian manpower and fanatism, joined with German technical resources and skill in military organization could be the solution--sought by totalitarians of the left and right alike--as to how American might could be broken." (7) Senator Gillette concurred, and in February of 1950 singled out what he felt to be the greatest danger then facing the United States in the European theater: "the danger that a rebuilt, rearmed super-nationalist Germany will unite in totalitarian brotherhood with the Soviet Union in a third attempt in this century to conquer the world." (8)

Alarmed, then, by the support of American military leaders for German rearmament and fearful that the occupation had not succeeded in eliminating German

nationalism and adherence to Nazi doctrines, those congressmen who opposed rearming took such action as they could to assess the true situation in Germany and to discourage remilitarization. On 7 June 1949, Senators Guy Gillette, Robert Hendrickson, Irving Ives (R, New York), and Claude Pepper (D, Florida) introduced a resolution (Senate Resolution 125) which authorized the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to conduct an investigation of "all matters relating to the conduct and status of the denazification program" in the American occupation zone.(9) Among those questions considered especially important were whether or not there was a resurgence of intensive militant nationalism, whether or not there was a rise of strong neo-Nazi political parties, and whether or not former Nazis had been eliminated from influential positions in public office and industrial organizations. Rearmament of Germany, despite the strategic situation in Europe, was unthinkable, the Senators argued, until these issues had been effectively addressed. A similarly-worded resolution (House Resolution 489) was submitted in February of 1950 in the House of Representatives by Emanuel Celler (D, New York).(10)

In addition to these resolutions, members of Congressional fact-finding missions in Europe used their highly public profiles to express opposition to German rearmament. On 26 November 1949, five of six members of the Senatorial Appropriations Subcommittee, having just

completed a five-week investigation of economic and military integration in Western Europe, declared in London that they would "oppose any proposal to rearm the West German state until the latter was economically stable and democratic 'in the Western sense of the word.'"(11) A House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee returned a similar verdict in December of 1949 following a mission of inquiry in Europe. The group unanimously condemned German rearmament because, member Jacob Javits reported, the Germans still harbored strong feelings of "ultranationalism."(12)

On the other side of the coin, however, was a somewhat smaller group of Congressmen who voiced their support for German rearmament. Though wary of German nationalism, this group subscribed to the Defense Department's view of the strategic situation in Europe. Like the Joint Chiefs, these Congressmen considered a strong Germany necessary to the European balance of power, both economically and politically, and regarded the use of German manpower, military prowess, and territory as necessary for a defense-in-depth against Communist aggression from the East. Some supporters of German rearmament qualified their support by proposing that strict controls be placed upon any German units raised, while others favored giving Germany a relatively free hand; but all agreed on the principle of German rearmament.

In the House, William Lemke (R, North Dakota) was one

of a very few Representatives to go on record in 1949 as supporting German rearmament.(13) Though one of a handful of old progressives still in office, and as such critical of the Truman administration's extreme anti-Communist stance and its subsequent (and expensive) emphasis on national security, Lemke argued that Western Europe could not function while Germany remained an economic and political vacuum and he advocated the creation of a German army complete with its own general staff.(14) In the Senate, Walter George (D, Georgia), Elmer Thomas (D, Oklahoma), and George Malone (R, Nevada) each declared, in varying degrees, their support of a rearmed Germany. Senator George, second in seniority on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in September of 1949 that, in light of the danger to Western Europe from the Soviet Union, it was "very shortsighted to continue to tear down the arms factories in Germany." Germany ought to be permitted to arm itself against aggression from the East, he argued, and concluded that "the Germans alone can give military security to Western Europe."(15) Senator Thomas, a member of the Senatorial Appropriations Committee, also considered Germany the key to Western defense and proposed that "several divisions of German troops should be armed by the United States without Germany being herself permitted to manufacture arms."(16) And on 26 November 1949, Thomas was the only of six Senators to speak in favor of German rearmament following an

Appropriations Subcommittee investigation of economic and military integration in Western Europe.(17) Senator Malone, finally, proposed a remilitarized and industrialized Germany established as part of a European family of nations, a sort of United States of Europe, which would reap economic and defensive benefits while imposing checks upon aggression from within.(18)

Thus, by early 1950, two camps had developed in Congress, divided not along party lines but over the question of whether the United States ought to rearm Germany. Of the two viewpoints, to arm or not to arm, the latter was clearly the more pervasive given the all-too-recent memories of Nazi Germany and following as it did the official American policy at that time. But the outbreak of armed conflict in Korea in June of 1950 prompted a reevaluation of the armament question in the houses of Congress, just as it had in the executive branch of the government, and in light of this development the tide of Congressional opinion quickly changed.

In the collective thinking of Congress, the Korean conflict had, as Acheson put it, speeded up evolution concerning attitudes toward ultimate position within the Western European community. The Cold War had suddenly become a hot one, in the Asian theater at least, and a natural hardening of anti-Communist sentiment accompanied news of the invasion. The Defense Department's lobby for

German rearmament picked up steam and the New York Times reported on 27 June 1950 that "the campaign [in Washington] to rearm the West Germans and Japanese [had] increased over the weekend." (19) As the Korean conflict protracted into an extended military involvement incorporating the use of American troops and prompting military appropriations which put the United States on a wartime footing once again, members of Congress began to look at the situation in Europe from a more purely defensive standpoint, and what they saw there led most of them during the next two years to cast their lots with the executive. Quite simply, following the North Korean invasion, the military threat from the Soviet Union eclipsed the potential threat of resurgent Nazism in Germany, and the question that now faced Congress was no longer to arm or not to arm but how to arm and to what extent.

To be sure, there were still those in Congress who felt that the Germans' penchant for fascism was such that it precluded German military participation in Western defense, desirable as that may have been in the face of Soviet military might. Jacob Javits, notably, continued throughout the remainder of Truman's administration to oppose German rearmament in any capacity. Soon after the beginning of the Korean conflict, Javits personally visited President Truman and appealed to him to prevent the remilitarization of Germany, and as late as February of 1952 Javits declared

that "we are in danger of forgetting too soon the brutal aggression and unparalleled [sic] destruction of the moral code of civilization in World Wars I and II loosed by Wilhelm's Germany and Hitler's Reich." (20) Several other members of Congress also periodically sounded the warning that fascism was not dead in Germany, including Representative Arthur Klein and Senators Wayne L. Morse (D, Oregon) and James Murray (D, Montana), but the number of nay-sayers dwindled as the "fearful and fearsome year of 1951" progressed. (21)

A handful of other Congressmen, such as Representatives Toby Morris (D, Oklahoma) and Lawrence H. Smith (R, Wisconsin), voiced objections to German rearmament in 1951, not because of fear of resurgent fascism or because they objected to rearmament in principle, but because several polls conducted in Western Germany indicated that a majority of the German people themselves opposed the militarization of the Federal Republic. (22) Morris and Smith were afraid it would be extremely difficult to accomplish a policy of rearmament given such negative public opinion in Germany.

But the real debate in Congress over German rearmament after the outbreak of hostilities in Korea concerned not the principle of rearmament itself, which by September was a foregone conclusion, but the nature of that rearmament. On one side of this new debate stood those Congressmen who reluctantly accepted the inevitability of a rearmed Western

Germany, but who also insisted upon instituting controls, more or less rigid, upon whatever German military forces might be raised so as to prevent them from acting in an independent manner. On the other side stood those Congressmen who advocated giving Germany a relatively free hand.

In August of 1950, while addressing the issue of American commitments to Western European defense on the floor of the House, Representative William Poage (D, Texas) proposed as a solution to the manpower problem that twenty-five divisions of German nationals, including veterans of the Wehrmacht, be recruited and deployed. "Let their company officers be Germans," he suggested, "but make their field officers Americans. Equip them with American machines. Give them but a few days' supply of ammunition. Keep the ammunition reserves in France or even in England, as assurance that they will never turn on our friends."⁽²³⁾ This proposal reflected the basic tenor of the support for German rearmament qualified by specific controls which would emerge in Congress over the next two years. The Congressmen who subscribed to this viewpoint gradually created a general framework of sorts within which they would accept rearming Western Germany. This framework was characterized by integration of German troops into a European or North Atlantic army under the leadership of Allied commanders (essentially the same plan that the North Atlantic Council

was then considering), by strict regulations on the kinds of arms the Germans would be allowed to carry and manufacture (certainly not the "most modern" weapons), and by a simultaneous internal suppression of neo-nazism within the Federal Republic. These three conditions, it was argued, would allow the creation of a ground force sufficient to repel a Communist push into West Germany while providing adequate insurance against the newly-recruited German soldiers' becoming the war machine of a Fourth Reich.

Qualified support of German rearmament proved to be a popular position in Congress, especially after Acheson announced in September of 1950 that the United States had officially committed itself to rearming. A good number of Congressmen voiced their approval of a program of conditional rearmament, among them Senate Majority Leader Scott Lucas (D, Illinois) and Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Thomas Connally (D, Texas).⁽²⁴⁾ But there also emerged a smaller and more radical group of rearmament advocates who argued that by keeping Germany in a subordinate military position relative to themselves, the Western Allies would undermine rather than secure the integrity of Western defense efforts. Unless the United States made peace with Germany and allowed it to enter into the Western European partnership as a sovereign and equal state, this group maintained, "the continuance of Germany in a second-rate position [would] rankle in the bosoms of

German leaders of all parties, and the minority which today cries out that Germany is being frustrated could some day become a majority."(25) Treating Germany indefinitely as a conquered nation, in other words, would create an environment conducive to the rise of another Hitler. For this reason Representative Usher Burdick (R, North Dakota) urged on the floor of the House in September of 1950 that the United States sign a peace treaty with Western Germany and permit that country to arm itself.(26) Germany, he declared, could not remain "virtually a prisoner of war" any longer.(27) This viewpoint and all that it implied, including an independent German military force with its own general staff, was echoed periodically in the House and Senate during 1951 and 1952.(28)

But whether or not the rearmament of Western Germany was to be carried out under close Allied supervision or by the Federal Republic in an independent fashion, a consensus that rearmament of some sort was both necessary and inevitable spread through both houses of Congress in the months after the Korean conflict began. And that consensus was reflected in the actions undertaken by Congress in 1951 and 1952.

On 4 April 1951, the Senate passed a resolution (Senate Resolution 99) proposed by Tom Connally and Richard Russell (D, Georgia) and amended by Joseph McCarthy (R, Wisconsin) and Irving Ives (R, New York), which approved the actions of

President Truman (including the sending of four American divisions to Europe) in cooperating in the common defense efforts of the NATO nations. The amendment to the resolution read as follows:

It is the sense of the Senate that consideration should be given to the revision of the plans for the defense of Europe as soon as possible so as to provide for the utilization on a voluntary basis of the military and other resources of Western Germany and Spain, but not exclusive of the military and other resources of other nations. (29)

The resolution, as amended, passed the Senate by a vote of 69 to 21 with 6 not voting, and represented a concrete step toward Senatorial approval of the European Army then being discussed by Acheson and the North Atlantic Council. (30)

Several months later, Representative William Miller (R, New York) introduced a resolution requesting the negotiation of a peace treaty with the Federal Republic and the admission of Western Germany as a member of the Atlantic Pact agreement. (31) This proposal was quickly followed by a joint resolution passed by the House and the Senate to terminate the state of war between the United States and the government of Western Germany. (32) President Truman subsequently approved this resolution and it went into effect on 3 November 1951 as Public Law 181.

Meanwhile, as 1952 approached, Secretary of State Acheson was busily negotiating with the foreign ministers of the Western European powers on the subject of German

rearmament. After lengthy discussions, the Western Allies finally agreed upon a plan for a European Defense Community to be comprised of France, Western Germany and the Benelux countries, and which could cooperate militarily with the North Atlantic Alliance. Within the context of the EDC, which provided for specific controls on the nature of German military participation, Germany would be allowed to raise 500,000 men in twelve divisions. The EDC Treaty was signed in Paris on 27 May 1952 and though it did not require the approval of the United States Senate, both a protocol and a convention which were adjuncts to it and to the North Atlantic Treaty and which directly involved the NATO countries did require Senatorial ratification.

On 1 July 1952, then, the Senate convened to discuss and vote upon two orders of business concerning the future status of West Germany. The first, a Convention on Relations Between the Three Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany, constituted, in effect, a peace treaty with West Germany. The Senate debated the Convention and approved it by a vote of 77 to 5 with 14 not voting.(33) The second order of business, a Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on Guaranties Given by the Parties to North Atlantic Treaty to the Members of the European Defense Community, effectively admitted the members of the EDC into the North Atlantic Alliance. West Germany, significantly, was the only EDC member that was not already a member of NATO, so

the Protocol was contrived to bring the Federal Republic into the Western military alliance. After some discussion, the Senate consented to ratification of the Protocol by a vote of 72 to 5 with 19 not voting.(34) In so doing, the Senate, with very little internal dissent, voiced its approval of the Truman administrations's German policy, specifically that concerning rearmament, by means of direct action. Senator Tom Connally, during the discussion of the Convention, succinctly stated the reasons governing this Senatorial endorsement and identified the consensus at which the Senate (and Congress as a whole) had arrived by July of 1952: "It is obviously in our best interest that Western Germany be defended, not only because the free world cannot afford to lose its manpower and industrial capacity but also because it pushes the boundary of freedom just that much farther east."(35)

Notes for Chapter II

(1) Dean Acheson, Princeton Seminar, 22-23 July 1953, cited in Walter LaFeber, America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1980, 4th ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980), p. 82.

(2) U.S., Congress, House, Article by Thomas L. Stokes entitled "German Giant Revived," entered by Rep. Sadowski, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 27 January 1949, Congressional Record, 95: A403.

(3) U.S., Congress, House, Pamphlet entitled "Prevent World War III," entered by Rep. Holifield, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 7 April 1949, Congressional Record, 95: A2801.

(4) U.S., Congress, House, Address by Rep. Granahan relative to future of Germany, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 25 April 1950, Congressional Record, 95: A2998.

(5) U.S., Congress, Senate, Radio interview of Sen. Gillette relative to denazification program, entered by Sen. Pepper, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 22 June 1949, Congressional Record, 95: A3921.

(6) U.S., Congress, Senate, Radio interview of Robert Donihi by Sen. Kefauver relative to U.S. policies in Germany, entered by Sen. Kefauver, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 12 October 1949, Congressional Record, 95: A6227; U.S., Congress, Senate, Address by Sen. Hendrickson entitled "American Policy in Germany," entered by Sen. Gillette, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 21 June 1950, Congressional Record, 96: A4593.

(7) U.S., Congress, House, Article by Drew Middleton entitled "New German Threat," entered by Rep. Javits, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 8 August 1950, Congressional Record, 95: 11010.

(8) U.S., Congress, Senate, Article entitled "War on Russia's Side," entered by Sen. Gillette, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 8 February 1950, Congressional Record, 96: A928.

(9) U.S., Congress, Senate, Resolution authorizing an inquiry into the progress of the denazification program in the American zone in Germany, S. Res. 125, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 7 June 1949, Congressional Record, 95: 7319.

(10)U.S., Congress, House, Resolution authorizing an inquiry into the progress of the denazification program in the American zone in Germany, H. Res. 489, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 27 February 1950, Congressional Record, 96: 2454.

(11)"5 Senators Oppose German Troop Use," New York Times, 27 November 1949, p. 22; the five were Denis Chavez (D, New Mexico), John Stennis (D, Mississippi), Edward Thye (R, Minnesota), John McClellan (D, Arkansas), and A. Willis Robertson (D, Virginia).

(12)"House Group Bars German Rearming," New York Times, 14 December 1949, p. 19; members of the group were Jacob Javits (R, New York), Thomas Gordon (D, Illinois), Joseph Pfeifer, (D, New York), and Clement Zablocki (D, Wisconsin).

(13)U.S., Congress, House, Article by Charles L. Hall entitled "Eat Crow, America," entered by Rep. Lemke, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 7 February 1949, Congressional Record, 95: A547.

(14)Robert Griffith, "Old Progressives and the Cold War," Journal of American History, September 1979, pp. 334-347; Other old progressives in office during Truman's second administration included Representative Usher Burdick (R, North Dakota) who, in 1950, publicly advocated a peace treaty with West Germany and subsequent rearmament, and Senator William Langer (R, North Dakota) who voted consistently against S. Res. 99, the Convention on Relations Between the Three Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty. The old progressives as a group opposed the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, aid to Greece and Turkey, and the North Atlantic Treaty.

(15)"George Stirs Fight to Cut Arms Fund," New York Times, 22 September 1949, p. 25.

(16)"Paris Gets 3 Views on German Arming," New York Times, 23 November 1949, p. 6.

(17)"5 Senators Oppose German Troop Use," New York Times, 27 November 1949, p. 22.

(18)U.S., Congress, Senate, Remarks relative to German role in European family of nations, by Sen. Malone, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 2 May 1950, Congressional Record, 96: 6135.

(19) "War in Korea Overwhelms Atlantic Arms Opposition," New York Times, 27 June 1950, p. 5.

(20) "Javits Warns on Germany," New York Times, 13 July 1950, p. 11; U.S., Congress, House, Remarks relative to bargaining by West Germany on European Defense Community Plan, 82d Cong., 2d sess., 20 February 1952, Congressional Record, 98: 1203.

(21) U.S., Congress, House, Remarks relative to resurgence of Nazism, by Rep. Klein, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 24 May 1951, Congressional Record, 97: A3113.

(22) U.S., Congress, House, Remarks relative to arming of Western Germany, by Rep. Morris, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 15 January 1951, Congressional Record, 97: 267; U.S., Congress, House, Letter from a German woman opposing rearmament, entered by Rep. Smith, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 18 September 1951, Congressional Record, 97: A5738.

(23) U.S., Congress, House, Remarks relative to arming of Germany, by Rep. Poage, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 22 August 1950, Congressional Record, 96: 13034.

(24) "Arming of Germans Seen," New York Times, 15 July 1950, p. 6; "Action on Germany in Congress Seen," New York Times, 26 September 1950, p. 21; other Senators voicing approval of qualified rearmament included Wherry (R, Nebraska), Saltonstall (R, Massachusetts), Thye (R, Minnesota), Maybank (D, South Carolina), and McCarthy (R, Wisconsin).

(25) U.S., Congress, House, Editorial by David Lawrence entitled "The Same Mistake Twice," entered by Rep. St. George, 82d Cong., 2d sess., 24 March 1952, Congressional Record, 98: A1837.

(26) U.S., Congress, House, Remarks relative to need of rearming Germany, by Rep. Burdick, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 20 September 1950, Congressional Record, 96: 15304.

(27) Ibid.

(28) U.S., Congress, Senate, Resolution approving the action of the President in cooperating in the common defense efforts of the NATO nations, S. Res. 99, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 4 April 1951, Congressional Record, 97: 3282.

(30) Senators voting "nay" on S. Res. 99, and not voting, were as follows: Nays: Bennett, Bricker, Butler

(Nebraska), Cain, Case, Cordon, Dirksen, Dworshak, Ecton, Ellender, Ferguson, Fulbright, Jenner, Kem, Langer, Malone, Mundt, Schoepfel, Welker, Wherry, Williams; Not Voting: Humphrey, Kefauver, McCarran, McKellar, Magnuson, Vandenberg.

(31)U.S., Congress, House, Resolution requesting negotiation of a peace treaty with West Germany and requesting admission of West Germany as a member of the Atlantic Pact agreement, H. Con. Res. 155, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 12 September 1951, Congressional Record, 97: 11213.

(32)U.S., Congress, House, Joint resolution requesting termination of state of war between United States and government of West Germany, H. J. Res. 289, approved by President Truman, becoming P. L. 181, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 3 November 1951, Congressional Record, 97: 13785.

(33)U.S., Congress, Senate, Senate vote on Convention on Relations Between the Three Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany, 82d Cong., 2d sess., 1 July 1952, Congressional Record, 98: 8696; Senators voting "nay" on Convention, and not voting, were as follows: Nays: Dirksen, Dworshak, Jenner, Langer, Welker; Not Voting: Anderson, Bennett, Brewster, Byrd, Capehart, Fulbright, Kerr, Lodge, Malone, McMahan, Millikin, Nixon, Taft, Tobey.

(34)U.S., Congress, Senate, Senate vote on Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on Guaranties Given by the Parties to North Atlantic Treaty to the Members of the European Defense Community, 82d Cong., 2d sess., 1 July 1952, Congressional Record, 98: 8703; Senators voting "nay" on Protocol, and not voting, were as follows: Nays: Dirksen, Dworshak, Jenner, Langer, Welker; Not Voting: Anderson, Bennett, Brewster, Bridges, Byrd, Capehart, Carlson, Fulbright, Kefauver, Kem, Kerr, Lodge, Malone, McCarran, McMahan, Millikin, Nixon, Taft, Tobey.

(35)U.S., Congress, Senate, Remarks relative to the Convention on Relations Between the Three Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany, by Sen. Connally, 82d Cong., 2d sess., 1 July 1952, Congressional Record, 98: 8667.

CHAPTER III

THE PUBLIC AND GERMAN REARMAMENT

A man who is influenced by the polls or is afraid to make decisions which may make him unpopular is not a man to represent the welfare of this country.(1)

---Harry S. Truman

We have become of a somewhat hypochondriac type, and ascertain our state of health by this mass temperature taking. Fortunately this was not one of the hardships of Valley Forge.(2)

---Dean Acheson

As the Defense Department clamored for a military solution to the German problem, as the Secretary of State wrestled with the political situation in Europe, and as Congress debated the wisdom of rearming a people which had only recently been an enemy of the United States, the American populace continued, as always, to occupy itself with the more immediate concerns of everyday life. Yet the public was not unaware of the issues related to Germany's future role in the European community or of the precarious position of Western Germany as a pawn in the Cold War confrontation between the East and the West. Indeed, judging from the results of George Gallup's public opinion

polls, the American people shared many of the doubts which troubled government officials during Truman's second administration.(3)

In the first week of July of 1949, for example, just over a month before the first elections were held for the West German parliament, a sample of Americans was asked whether it believed that the German people were yet capable of governing themselves in a democratic way.(4) Of those polled, fifty-five percent responded negatively, reflecting a general concern with the progress of democratization in occupied Germany. When asked in September of 1949 whether they thought that, in the event of another world war, West Germany would fight against the United States, thirty-two percent of those polled indicated that they believed the Federal Republic would turn against the United States.(5) And in May of 1950, of Americans polled who could correctly identify the countries then occupying Germany, fifty percent said that West Germany should not be permitted to rebuild an army as a protection against Soviet aggression.(6)

These responses demonstrated a public reaction to the possibility of rearming Germany similar in nature to that which occurred in Congress in 1949 and the first half of 1950. In the minds of many Americans, the memory of Nazi Germany was still too recent, and distrust of the German people still too great, to allow the creation of a new German army even as a deterrent to military threats from the

East.

A reluctance to endorse German rearmament, however, did not mean that the American populace discounted the Soviet Union as an adversary and threat to world peace. Results of surveys taken in May of 1949, soon after the lifting of the Berlin Blockade, indicated that the majority of Americans were extremely suspicious of the motives and intentions of the Soviet Union. When asked whether they believed the Russian government sincerely wanted peace, sixty percent of those polled responded in the negative.(7) When asked whether they thought the Soviet Union intended to "cooperate with [the United States] in world affairs," sixty-two percent said "no."(8) When asked whether they believed the Soviets were trying to become "the ruling power of the world," or "just building up protection against being attacked in another war," sixty-six percent responded that the former was indeed the case.(9) And by December of 1949 the percentage of Americans who believed the Soviet Union was out to rule the world had increased to seventy percent.(10)

At roughly the same time, then, that Secretary of State Acheson began work on the highly secret document NSC-68, American public opinion had already arrived at the basic assumptions which Acheson would use to underpin his blueprint for Cold War foreign policy. That the majority of Americans did not believe the Soviet Union wanted peace or

would cooperate politically with the United States paralleled Acheson's belief that the fundamental ideological differences between the two states would never allow them to peacefully co-exist. And the belief that the Soviet Union was building itself up to be the ruling power of the world coincided directly with Acheson's assumption that the Soviets fully intended to impose their absolute authority upon the entire Eurasian landmass.

Thus, by 1950, the majority of Americans independently concurred with the principles underlying what was to become the Truman administration's working outline for conducting its foreign policy. Yet the public, like Acheson and Truman, remained wary of the Defense Department's recommendations for rearming West Germany in response to the perceived Soviet threat in Europe. Ultimately, it would take an "uncontestable" confirmation of the Soviet Union's intent to exert its control through military means to convince the American public of the necessity of rearming the Germans.

That confirmation came in June of 1950 with the beginning of the Korean conflict. Like Acheson and Truman, most Americans assumed that the North Korean invasion was Soviet-directed.(11) As a result, by November of 1950, the percentage of the population that believed the Soviet Union was setting itself up to become the world's ruling power jumped to eighty-one percent.(12) When questioned about

China's entry into the fighting, moreover, eighty-one percent of those polled said that they thought China had also acted on orders from Russia, and, in February of 1951, seventy-nine percent of Americans polled indicated that they believed the Soviet Union wanted the United States to become entangled in a full-scale war with China "so that Russia [would] have a better chance of winning in Europe." (13)

The fighting in Korea, then, served effectively to corroborate the public's opinion of the Soviet Union's political and military intentions, to harden anti-Soviet sentiment, and, as the conflict protracted and threatened to become a war of major proportions, to focus attention once again upon the state of Western Europe's defensive capabilities. The question of German rearmament subsequently came to be regarded in a slightly different light after the North Korean invasion, and, even as it had in Congress, the newly-realized military threat from the Soviet Union began to push the memories of Nazi Germany into the past and to overcome American reluctance to arm a former enemy.

By August of 1950, seventy-one percent of Americans polled advocated the creation of a West German armed force of a size equal to that then being deployed by the government of the German Democratic Republic. (14) In December, responding to a question concerning the defense of Western Europe, fifty-five percent of those polled indicated

that they thought Western Germany ought to be allowed to build up an army capable of resisting an attack from the Soviet Union.(15) A further eight percent answered similarly, but qualified their approval of such a move by saying that the proposed German army ought to be under American or United Nations control.(16) And almost a full year later, in a survey conducted in September of 1951, fully seventy-two percent of the respondents favored the use of West German troops in an Allied European defense force under the command of General Eisenhower.(17)

Thus, American public support for a rearmed Germany quickly mounted following the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. Inasmuch as most Americans shared the Truman administration's perception of the Soviet Union, and because the Korean conflict appears to have provided a catalyst for re-examining the military situation in Western Europe both on official and public levels, it is reasonable to assume that a growing fear of the Soviet Union in the public mind eclipsed the old fear of resurgent Nazism, creating a climate favorable to the idea of German rearmament.

To be sure, an undercurrent of public opposition to German rearmament persisted even after Korea. In early 1951, for instance, a number of organizations went on record as opposing German rearmament in any form, including the National Executive Committee of Jewish War Veterans and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union.(18)

But no sustained public protest against the government's commitment to rearming Germany ever materialized, and the issue never became a source of significant public debate, even when Acheson dropped the "bomb at the Waldorf" in September of 1950.(19) The American public, therefore, lent its tacit support to the principle of German rearmament and allowed the Truman administration (as well as subsequent administrations) a free hand in pursuing that policy after the fall of 1950.

Notes for Chapter III

(1) Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, vol. 2: Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956), p. 196.

(2) Dean Acheson, Princeton Seminar, 10-11 October 1953, cited in Walter LaFeber, America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1980, 4th ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980), p. 82.

(3) All Gallup poll data applies to a representative cross-section of the total United States adult, non-institutionalized population. Prior to 1950, the samples for all surveys were "a combination of what is known as a purposive design for the selection of cities, towns, and rural areas, and the quota method for the selection of individuals within such selected areas." Since 1950, "all Gallup polls have been based on a nation probability sample of interviewing areas." For more specific information on sampling techniques, see the Preface and Forewords to The Gallup Poll by George H. Gallup, Random House, 1972.

(4) George H. Gallup, The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1935-1971, vol. 2: 1949-1958 (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 841; Survey #444-K, question #12.

(5) Ibid., p. 867; Survey #448-K, question #8a.

(6) Ibid., p. 914; Survey #455-K, questions #12a and #12b.

(7) Ibid., p. 827; Survey #442-T, question #5b.

(8) Ibid., p. 826; Survey #442-K, question #5b.

(9) Ibid., p. 827; Survey #442-K, question #5a.

(10) Ibid., p. 881; Survey #450-K, question #1.

(11) Though the idea for the invasion probably originated with Kim Il-Sung, Stalin approved the move as part of a strategy designed to offset the development of a Western-oriented Japan, and the troops involved in the attack were Soviet-equipped and trained.

(12) George H. Gallup, The Gallup Poll, vol. 2: 1949-1958, p. 949; Survey #467-K, question #18.

(13) Ibid., p. 955; Survey #468-K, question #9d;
Survey #471-K, question #12.

(14) Ibid., p. 932; Survey #459-K, question #14b.

(15) Ibid., p. 951; Survey #467-K, question #11.

(16) Ibid.

(17) Ibid., p. 1017; Survey #480-K, question #9a.

(18) "Dockers Propose Armies Quit Korea," New York Times, 7 April 1951, p. 31; "Veterans Oppose Franco," New York Times, 8 April 1951, p. 21.

(19) Between June of 1950 and June of 1952, for example, only four letters opposing German rearmament appeared in the New York Times (10 August, 27 November 1950; 17 July 1951; 6 March 1952).

CHAPTER IV
A BRIEF CONCLUSION

Ideally, American foreign policy ought to reflect a general consensus among the executive branch of government, Congress, and the American public as to which actions and programs best serve the interests of the United States. In practice, however, because the initiative and ultimate responsibility for foreign policy reside with the executive branch, foreign-policy decisions, particularly those dealing with national security, are often made by the President without first consulting Congress or the whims of public opinion. In such cases, the repercussions of an unpopular foreign-policy program are left to work themselves out after the fact.

The Truman administration's decision to arm Western Germany was just such a case. By approving the package deal in September of 1950, Truman committed the United States to a policy of German rearmament only five years after the defeat of the Third Reich. In so doing, the President yielded to the wishes of the Department of Defense, which for some time had argued that arming Western Germany was a

crucial element in defending Western Europe against the Soviet Union, and of Dean Acheson's State Department which advocated German arming as a concrete step toward realization of the larger political plan put forward in NSC-68. Truman himself, though reluctant to give the Germans arms, finally agreed to do so soon after the outbreak of the Korean conflict, having become convinced of the Soviet Union's predilection for using force (albeit through a North Korean proxy) in pursuing its political goals and of the efficacy of a tough stance (as during the Berlin crisis) in opposing Soviet thrusts. In the minds of the members of the Truman administration, then, the looming threat of communist expansion had eclipsed by 1950 the lingering fears of a fascist resurgence in Western Germany, and the arming of the Federal Republic had become a logical step in the shoring up of Western Europe.

The announcement of this new policy, which amounted to a complete reversal of the administration's previous staunch commitment to a demilitarized Germany, might well have been expected to provoke a strong measure of Congressional disapproval, as well as substantial public outcry. Indeed, a sizable Congressional faction opposing German rearmament had repeatedly prompted the Truman administration in 1949 and the first half of 1950 to deny rumors that the United States intended to arm Western Germany, and American public opinion had likewise reflected fairly widespread suspicion

of the new German Republic and of the wisdom of arming it. Yet in the months following Acheson's dropping of the "bomb at the Waldorf" in September of 1950, organized Congressional opposition to the new policy failed to emerge, despite even the vigorous efforts of liberals like Jacob Javits. Instead, Congress gradually moved toward a position of acquiescence with regard to German rearmament and soon lent its direct support to the policy through such measures as the passing of Senate Resolution 99 and Public Law 181 and the ratification of the Convention on Relations and the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty. Nor did any substantial public protest against the new U.S. commitment to a rearmed Germany ever develop. Quite to the contrary, surveys conducted in late 1950 and in 1951 indicated that a clear majority of Americans were now in favor of incorporating German troops into the Western defense network.

Why, then, did no real domestic opposition to German rearmament materialize after September of 1950? To a large extent, the timing of the policy decision contributed materially to its eventual acceptance, coming as it did within a rapidly progressing geo-political realignment and coinciding with an immediate military crisis which together rendered German rearmament acceptable to a Congress and an American public otherwise indisposed to the idea of a remilitarized Germany so soon after the conclusion of the

Second World War. Just as the polarization of world power and the crystallization of the Cold War had become the primary issues facing American foreign-policy-makers in 1950, the East-West conflict had become a fact of life and a matter of great concern and anxiety for the American populace as a whole. And the North Korean invasion of South Korea, precipitating a direct military response from the United States complete with substantial troop commitments, brought the ideological confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States to a head. It was in this political and military context that Congress and the American public would find it both premissable and necessary to arm the Federal Republic of Germany.

Prior to the outbreak of armed conflict in Korea, the possibility that a rearmed and economically revitalized German state might once again become a threat to world peace had been sufficient to convince many Congressmen to oppose the viewpoint (held by the Defense Department and by a handful of Senators and Representatives) that a strong Germany was an essential component in defending Western Europe against the Soviet Union. Despite increasingly alarming Cold War developments, including the Berlin blockade and the Soviets' breaking of the American atomic monopoly, Congress apparently continued to fear the defeated Germans at least as much as it did the newly-powerful Soviet Union. The North Korean invasion of South Korea, however,

rather forcefully propelled Congress into the postwar era and convinced most Congressmen that global Communist expansion posed a greater threat to the security of the United States than did the dwindling potential of resurgent fascism in Western Germany. As the Soviets replaced the Germans as the American enemy of choice, Congress was quick to re-evaluate its stance on the priorities involved in Western European defense, aligning itself thereafter with the policy decisions of the Truman administration.

In the arena of public opinion, too, the Korean conflict seems to have provided the catalyst necessary for a public conversion to support of German rearmament. In 1949 and 1950, before the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, the American populace harbored a lingering distrust of the German people and appeared reluctant to rearm a nation so recently defeated as an enemy. At the same time, however, the public was becoming increasingly wary of the Soviet Union and of what it perceived (like Acheson and the NSC) as a Soviet intention to dominate the Eurasian landmass. The Korean conflict, subsequently, served to confirm the public's worst fears about the Soviet Union. Soon after its beginning, a majority of Americans began to support the idea of arming Western Germany as a means to prevent possible Soviet military advances into Western Europe. The fear of a real Soviet military threat had eclipsed in the minds of Americans the fear of a potential fascist resurgence in

Western Germany.

The crystallization of the Cold War, then, involving the American adoption of a relatively extreme anti-Soviet mentality, combined with the sensational nature of the Korean conflict to create an atmosphere favorable to the acceptance of German rearmament by the American public and Congress. The announcement of the new policy in September of 1950 met with no substantial opposition because Congress and the public, swayed by the same factors which earlier convinced Truman of the necessity of an armed Germany, had already arrived at the same conclusion: in the face of the perceived Soviet military threat to Western Europe, the arming of the Federal Republic of Germany was required for Western security. Thus, the pursual of the Cold War as policy by the Truman administration and the experience of the Cold War as reality by Congress and the public led inexorably to an American commitment to German rearmament and to Congressional and public acquiescence to that commitment.

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