

Naval War College Review

Volume 24
Number 5 May

Article 8

1971

The Rearming of Germany 1950-1954: A Linchpin in the Political Evolution of Europe

Benjamin M. Simpson III
U.S. Navy

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Simpson, Benjamin M. III (1971) "The Rearming of Germany 1950-1954: A Linchpin in the Political Evolution of Europe," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 24 : No. 5 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol24/iss5/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

76 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

Diplomacy of the early 1950's culminated in an agreement among the NATO allies that permitted a sovereign and rearmed West Germany to be integrated economically and militarily with the rest of Western Europe. It was the overcoming of historic distrust and rivalries among the European powers that has been crucial to the ultimate security and well-being of all Europe. In retrospect, it appears that the rearmament of the Federal Republic of Germany has been the linchpin in the political evolution of postwar Europe. The alternative might have found an isolated Germany turning to the Soviet bloc.

THE REARMING OF GERMANY 1950-1954: A LINCHPIN IN THE POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF EUROPE

A research paper prepared

by

Lieutenant Commander Benjamin M. Simpson, III, U.S. Navy

Ten years to the day after the German surrender at Rheims, General Rommel's chief of staff stood beside the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, as the German flag was raised at Allied Headquarters, Germany, or at least the western part of it, had made the transition from vanquished enemy to rearmed ally.

The arming of the Federal Republic of Germany was not an isolated event. It occurred in a context of cold war politics and military necessity, against a background of the Marshall plan, the North Atlantic Treaty, and positive moves toward European integration. It closed an era which had started with the Allies and the Soviet Union triumphant at the collapse of Nazi Germany. The arming of the Federal Republic represented the establishment of an equilibrium of sorts in Europe.

Twenty-five years ago Germany ceased to exist. In 1945 the territory of the Third Reich was conquered and

occupied by the victorious Allies, who then instituted military governments. At the Potsdam Conference, East Prussia was divided between Poland and the Soviet Union, and the provinces of Pomerania and Silesia east of the Oder and Neisse Rivers also were given to Poland for "administration."

Ten years later, in 1955, Germany remained divided, but German military forces, wearing the uniform of the Federal Republic of Germany, were admitted to NATO pursuant to a treaty which provided specifically for the rearmament of the Federal Republic. By adopting a policy of rearmament, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer sought to weld the Federal Republic to Western Europe, even at the price of postponing the reunification of all of Germany, which could only come about with the specific approval of the Soviet Union.

German rearmament is a condition of fact in any general European settlement. It plays a major role in the strategic

REARMING OF GERMANY 77

considerations of the Atlantic Powers, German rearmament can best be described by two crucial facts: there has been no European war, and Germany has not been unified. While all men can rejoice at the former, opinion is somewhat less unanimous in regard to the latter. This division remains a sore point for Germany and a potential danger to the remainder of Europe, as well as to the United States and the Soviet Union.

In September 1955, only 4 months after the Federal Republic entered NATO, the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with the Bonn Government. Fifteen years later, on 11 August 1970, the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic concluded a non-aggression treaty. They not only renounced the use of force for the settlement of disputes, but significantly, the Federal Republic agreed to the inviolability of the European frontiers as they existed on that date. This meant the Federal Republic accepted the Oder-Neisse line and in effect renounced claims to the eastern territories lost in 1945.

The stabilization of Western Europe, including the phenomenal domestic success of the Federal Republic, has been accompanied by a containment of Soviet military power to Eastern Europe, outright violent rebellion against that power in some cases, and more subtle exercises of independence in others. Today, communism in Europe is no longer the monolith it once was. However, many of the fundamental problems connected with the projection of Soviet national power remain.¹ Whether there is a causal connection between the events antecedent to the arming of the Federal Republic and subsequent developments remains to be seen.

Fifteen years do not provide a vantage point for a definitive historical perspective (if one is ever possible), but it does provide a sufficiently good point from which to look back and analyze

some of the currents and elements which led to the phenomenon of the Western Allies arming their late enemy in defense against their former Soviet ally.

Background. Following World War II, U.S. policy toward Europe manifested itself in many ways. Perhaps the most obvious example is the Marshall plan. The premise of this policy was stated by Secretary of State Marshall, who posited a faith in the vigor of Western civilization to rise above the destructive effects of war and to restore a healthy society.² The Communists openly predicted that such a restoration would not take place.

In 1949 Secretary of State Acheson noted how closely interwoven were U.S. policies toward Germany and toward Europe. He saw clearly that the problems of Western Europe were not compartmented and that Germany must share the obligations as well as the benefits of the structure started by the free people of Europe.³

European security could be insured only if there were set in motion in Germany those forces which would create a governmental system dedicated to upholding the basic human freedoms through democratic processes. This assumption had been basic to U.S. policy in Germany since the collapse of the Nazi state in 1945. Acheson urged a radically new reciprocal approach which, in effect, meant all nations in Europe, Germany included, must come to realize that the benefits to be derived from community efforts would exceed by far those to be achieved by any individual efforts. He alluded to the paradox that the fruits of sovereignty and independence could be best achieved by subordinating them to measures of European integration, although he did not use that term.

The theme frequently heard was one of American approbation of a European community as the end result of the American European efforts. However,

78 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

the long-range purposes or results of such a consummation were discussed less frequently. A Europe composed of states closely cooperating in political, social, and economic matters would no longer be either dependent on the United States or fearful of attack from the East. Such a Europe would be a stabilizing force with great influence in world affairs.

The Petersberg Agreement. From the conclusion of hostilities in 1945 until the promulgation of the Occupation Statute in September 1949, Germany was governed by military governors in their respective zones of occupation. When it became obvious that inter-Allied cooperation in regard to the occupation of Germany had become a chimera, the three Western Allies co-ordinated their policies and cooperated extensively among the three zones. The end result was the Occupation Statute, which replaced the military governors by an Allied High Commission, clothed with certain limited and defined powers. It also granted to the new Federal Republic of Germany a certain degree of internal autonomy and responsibility. This step was highly significant in that it heralded the return of a German Government at least partially responsible for the fate and interests of Germany, although the responsibility and powers of that Government were severely limited.

Against this background, Konrad Adenauer successfully negotiated the Petersberg Agreement of 1949 with the three Allied High Commissioners. The Germans sought to limit dismantling of the German industrial complex and to obtain a relaxation of restrictions on certain industries, particularly ship-building. The Allies were anxious to secure German participation in the Ruhr Authority.

The net result was an agreement that, to a great extent, curtailed industrial dismantling and permitted German ship

building (thereby creating employment in the Socialist strongholds of Hamburg and Bremen to the benefit of the Christian Democrats). The Allies sought and obtained German participation in the Ruhr Authority. In addition, the Federal Republic was permitted to establish consular offices abroad and to join international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Germany was also free to join the Council of Europe. At the time, all German political parties agreed that the Federal Republic should remain demilitarized.

The significance of the Petersberg Agreement was precisely what Adenauer intended: a turning point in the relations of the Federal Republic with the occupying powers. It marked not only the return of a responsible government, capable and willing to negotiate for German interests, but also the emergence of the Federal Republic into the international community, although with powers less than those of a completely sovereign state. Part of the price was an agreement by the Federal Republic to remain unarmed.

One observer commented on Adenauer's policy and negotiating skill to the effect that Adenauer was able to strike a balance between German interests and those of the Western Powers and at the same time to shape events in a desired direction.⁴

In the months immediately following the Petersberg Agreement, John J. McCloy, the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, clearly stated U.S. policy in a series of speeches and reports. The first objective was a reunification of all occupation zones of Germany on a democratic and federal basis. Of course, by this time the Russians had established a rival Communist regime in their zone of occupation, and any lingering hopes for early reunification were fast fading. McCloy precluded any arrangement whereby Germany might be united and Communist.⁵

REARMING OF GERMANY 79

A leading principle of U.S. policy in Germany was that, when ready, Germany should share in the benefits and assume the obligations of participation in the economy of free Europe. American policy in regard to Germany neatly meshed with her policy toward Europe, to the extent that Germany should play an active part in the economic and political organization of Europe. In other words, German security would be protected by German participation in a closely knit Western European community.

In April 1950 McCloy saw that the fate of Germany was closely tied to that of Europe. There could be no solution to the German problem without fitting it into the larger context of a united Europe. Union was the best solution for Europe's economic problems, and such a union would go far in solving the political problem of restraining a revival of pernicious German nationalism. Perhaps more important yet, he pointed out the psychological benefits to be gained by widening horizons and focusing ideals for the war-weary and disillusioned people.⁶

In short, U.S. policy by May of 1950 was definitely committed to a healthy Germany in a healthy Europe, on the assumption that the two were mutually dependent.

The Schuman Plan. On 9 May 1950, the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, publicly proposed the pooling of both the French and the German steel and coal industries under a common higher authority, within the framework of an organization open to the participation of other nations.

The significance of the Schuman plan was not lost upon Adenauer. It was not only designed to meet very real economic needs in industries basic to the economies of both France and Germany, but also it provided a revolutionary solution to a problem which had divided France and Germany so often in

the past. This solution would tend to draw Germany into Europe and to further the ideals held by both Schuman and Adenauer of a larger European community as opposed to separate European nations.

From an American standpoint, the Schuman plan was viewed as a European initiative to solve a European problem. It dovetailed with U.S. policy toward Germany and showed one way of eventual German integration into Western Europe.

On the eve of Korea, U.S. policy in Germany was essentially concerned with politics and economics. Military considerations were limited to stationing Allied forces in Germany as occupying troops. As late as 5 June 1950, Secretary of State Acheson denied before the House Armed Services Committee any intention of rearming the Federal Republic.⁷

Korea. The attack by the Communist North Koreans against the non-Communist Republic of South Korea was a profound shock to Europe and particularly to Germany. The parallel of a state divided into Communist and non-Communist portions, with the former attacking the latter, was obvious for all to see. The year before, in 1949, the Atlantic Powers had concluded the North Atlantic Treaty. This marked a radical change in American peacetime policy, which was motivated by the possibility of a Russian military move against Western Europe. Now, in many minds, this possibility had been raised to a probability. Even if the parallel were inaccurate, the weakness of Europe's defenses was a matter of grave concern to the West and particularly to the Federal Republic, which had no forces of its own and had to rely on occupation forces for external security.

Adenauer was particularly fearful of a situation arising in which Stalin would make the Grotewohl government of East Germany push the large and well-

80 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

armed People's Police into West Germany to "liberate" the Federal Republic while the West Germans looked on passively, partly because the invaders would be their own compatriots and partly because they had lost faith in the strength of the United States. In view of the threatening and bellicose statements coming from East Germany, Adenauer felt that the Government of the Federal Republic was shouldering an immense burden without the corresponding means of discharging its obligations. He requested the Western Powers to demonstrate their military strength more visibly, and he also requested permission to create a security force of the same strength and armament as the People's Police in East Germany.

At the end of August 1950, Adenauer sent a memorandum to the U.S. High Commissioner in Germany in which he reviewed the lack of security of the Federal Republic. He repeated the declared readiness of the Federal Republic to make a contribution of a German contingent to an international army in Western Europe, but he rejected the idea of a remilitarization of Germany by means of creating a separate German national army.⁸

Simultaneously with this memorandum, he sent a letter to the Allied High Commission with a request that the contents of the letter he submitted to the forthcoming Foreign Ministers Conference scheduled to meet in New York the next month, September 1950. Adenauer drew the political conclusion that a "reordering of relations" between the Federal Republic and the occupying powers was warranted. He pointed out that not only had the Federal Government consolidated its position at home, but also that it had sought by every possible step to integrate itself into Western Europe. It was, therefore, necessary to "place the relationship between Germany and the Allied Powers on a new basis." The legal state of war must be terminated, and con-

tinued occupation should be for purposes of "security against external danger." The Occupation Statute should be progressively replaced by a "system of treaties or contractual agreements."⁹

Foreign Ministers Conference 1950. Arming the Federal Republic was formally and seriously discussed for the first time at the September 1950 Foreign Ministers Conference in New York. Acheson notified the French and British Foreign Ministers on the eve of their departures for New York that he would raise the question of German rearmament. Apparently Acheson's late notification of his colleagues was not because he wished to avoid a background chorus of adverse comment, which might have been the case if the French and British Foreign Ministers had had time to do adequate staff work. It was because the U.S. position had not become firm until shortly before the convening of the conference.

The idea of arming the Federal Republic or, put another way, permitting that nation to make a contribution to the defense of Western Europe on a basis of equality with the other Western European nations originated in the Pentagon as a logical answer to both a military and a political necessity. As one observer has pointed out, "The closer Germany came to sovereignty and the greater the attention paid to the task of defending Western Europe, the more difficult it became to leave out of calculation the military potential of a major European nation."¹⁰

After Acheson had raised the question of arming the Federal Republic, only the French steadfastly refused to accept even the principle of German rearmament. French objections were based on the dangers to France of German arms. At the 1950 Foreign Ministers Conference, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France were able to agree only that the creation of a German national army, pure and simple

REARMING OF GERMANY 81

and free of all restrictions, "would not serve the best interests of Germany and Europe."¹¹

Finally, the French yielded to the pleas of their allies and proposed in October 1950 the Pleven plan, or European Defense Community. In so doing, Rene Pleven injected an entirely new concept into the politics of Europe by agreeing to German rearmament within the context of a European army, not subordinate to any nation, but to a supranational defense minister. After extensive and intensive negotiations, the Pleven plan was embodied in a series of treaties and protocols which provided essentially for a European Defense Community (EDC), sovereignty for the Federal Republic of Germany, and an extension of the North Atlantic Treaty protection to the territory of the Federal Republic. The agreements were contingent upon each other to be effective. In other words, if any one failed of ratification, none would be effective.

All the elements embracing cold war strategy—European defense, European integration, and the future of Germany—were drawn into this maelstrom, which was not resolved until after the French National Assembly failed to ratify EDC in 1954. The 1954 Nine Power Conference in London then produced a substitute series of protocols which finally achieved ratification by the signatory states. To understand how arming the Federal Republic was the catalyst of this series of events, it is necessary to analyze the underlying problem and how it was met.

The Problem. Nearly 5 years elapsed from the first serious discussion of rearming the Federal Republic in September 1950 until the Germans were finally admitted to NATO in 1955. During that time the ambitious, if not revolutionary, scheme of a European Defense Community was proposed by the French, accepted by all European parties (except the British who declined

to participate), and finally, not without irony, killed by the French National Assembly.

At the start the question of arms for the Federal Republic was a military problem born of necessity with very heavy political overtones. After the failure of the EDC, it became a political problem of the first magnitude. Although the emphasis shifted to the political aspects, many of the same considerations endured throughout the entire period. These considerations were the important ones and were of immediate concern.

Logically, the first question to arise was whether an active military ground defense was both feasible and desirable. Some concluded that since the task of stopping the Red army was so staggering, the West should rely on American nuclear weapons to protect Europe and on the political venture implied in the North Atlantic Treaty. They felt that since the Russians had not already overrun Western Europe, they probably would no do so.

Following the attack in Korea, whatever merits European neutrality, or even German neutrality, may have had were lost in a rising tide of anxiety over the deplorable state of Western European defenses. Not only were European defenses inadequate in themselves, but the United States was then committed to a sizable ground war, with sea and air support, in Korea. Considering the size of the U.S. forces in being after Louis Johnson's force reductions, the United States was doubly concerned with doing something to bolster European defenses without making a dent in the forces available for Korea.

An early and important step was the agreement to establish SHAPE. This step was significant, in a practical sense, because it provided for more efficient utilization of forces available through coordination, cooperation, and some degree of command integration. Also, with an American general at its head, it

82 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

symbolized a positive American commitment to the defense of Western Europe.

At this time American policy was based on the assumption that the security of the United States was indissolubly linked with that of Europe. The problem facing the United States was twofold: first, how to keep Western Europe out of the Soviet orbit; and second, how to defend Western Europe against Soviet attack. The first part of the problem was being met by the European Recovery Program, and the second part was under consideration. Some planners wanted a one-package deal in which the establishment of SHAPE and German armament would be a part. However, the United States finally adopted a position more in tune with political realities, and SHAPE was established while Acheson continued negotiations for German armament.

The decision to arm the Federal Republic was not as easy as it might seem today. The first question was whether the North Atlantic powers—and particularly the Europeans in the light of the U.S. commitment in Korea—could raise sufficient forces to meet a possible Soviet ground attack. The price might have been to jeopardize the European economic recovery already achieved and to bankrupt the European economies, thereby sowing the seeds of domestic discontent and providing the Communists with new opportunities for mischief in Western Europe.

Economic considerations were not limited solely to the effects of military expenditures. One British writer raised the question as to the ultimate effect of a NATO German Army on European integration, and he felt that such an effect would be adverse. However, he agreed that integration was a necessary step in a return to multilateral trade and expanding worldwide exchanges.¹²

Aside from the adverse economic effects of Europe defending herself without the aid of Germany the

obvious fact remained that Germany would be the frontline in a war with the Soviet Union. The possibility that the West might be forced to defend the Federal Republic against a "war of liberation" launched by the East Germans, while the West Germans looked on, was something to be avoided if at all possible.

Starting with the assumption that the means of defending Western Europe were inadequate, the solution was a choice between the Allies making a greater effort toward their own rearmament or finding some way of making a German contribution acceptable and possible. Military necessity demanded a choice, but only policy could make it.

At the time the United States, the United Kingdom, and France decided not to establish a German national army, free of all restrictions, because it was felt that rearmament of Germany would be antithetical to the democratization program which had been pursued since the collapse of the Nazi state in 1945. Not only might another Wehrmacht have threatened democracy in Germany, but also a military establishment would have required the creation of an industrial complex capable of supporting it. This reasoning, coupled with fears of a revival of German adventurism and irredentism, underlay the decision of the Foreign Ministers to accept the Pleven plan.

One recent study has concluded that Western opinion in the early 1950's greatly exaggerated the importance of adventurism and irredentism in Germany and equally underestimated the German concern for external security.¹³ Although Western opinion, including that of the policymakers, may have been guilty of such an exaggeration, it was an error *sans faute*, because consideration of German rearmament arose in a context of either a European army or an integrated NATO command. Furthermore, the Germans were intimately concerned with questions of

REARMING OF GERMANY 83

their own security. A continuous theme of Adenauer's politics was that the security of the Federal Republic lay ultimately in a close association with Western Europe. This policy precluded an independent national German Army.

National security is a prime concern of any state; and although the Federal Republic did not enjoy full sovereignty, that Government was still concerned with security, particularly since the state was weak. There was also the danger that continued German weakness in the face of Soviet strength would lead the West Germans to believe that national security would be served better with the Soviet Union as a friend, no matter how difficult that would be, rather than as a foe.

From the standpoint of the Allies, a Federal Republic divorced from Europe would have been exceedingly vulnerable to subversion and eventual absorption into the Soviet bloc. Ultimately the Allies would have liked to have had a reunited Germany firmly allied to or integrated into the West, but since all of Germany could not be held, their policy was to hang on to what had already been gained, while trying to deny control of the remainder to the other side.

By renouncing neutrality and by joining Western Europe, the Federal Republic may have delayed the reunification of Germany, but Adenauer's point was that reunification could only come about from the strength and not from the weakness of the Federal Republic. He was also pursuing a course that would weld Germany firmly to Europe and would make impossible the former rivalries which twice in his lifetime had convulsed Europe. In general the Allies agreed with him, but for very different reasons: tying Germany irrevocably to the West would, by definition, preclude any future turning toward the East for strategic reasons or for communism.

EDC: the First Solution. And so it was by different routes and for different reasons that the feeling grew that the Federal Republic must be armed. Winston Churchill proposed to the Council of Europe that a European army be created. On 11 August 1950, the Council of Europe adopted the famous Strasbourg Resolution, which called "for the immediate creation under the authority of a European Minister of Defense, of a European army, subject to proper unified, democratic control and acting in full cooperation with the United States and Canada."¹⁴

When Acheson raised the question of arms for the Germans at the 1950 Foreign Ministers Conference in New York, the French were in a difficult position. On the one hand, domestic opposition was partly based on the not entirely unreasonable fear of armed Germans. But on the other hand, they became subject to well-taken criticism that, for their own advantage, they were delaying European defense and thereby giving the Russians a diplomatic opening.

The Strasbourg Resolution was an invitation to proceed with German rearmament along the lines of the Atlantic Pact. Indeed, the United States and the United Kingdom assumed that a tightly knit Atlantic alliance would be strong enough to control and direct any German contribution to defense. This assumption went far in meeting the French position which was that, even accepting the ultimate necessity of some form of German rearmament, it was not a matter of immediate urgency, and an organization within the framework of the Atlantic Pact would provide the best answer.

The solution was the Pleven plan. The results as embodied in the treaties of 1952 differed only in degree from the original proposal, which essentially was for a European army under a supranational authority, headed by a

84 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

European Minister of Defense. West Germany would contribute on a basis of equality with other states. The European army would be tied to the NATO integrated command. The protection of the North Atlantic Treaty would be extended to cover the territory of the Federal Republic. The occupation would end in Germany, and the Federal Republic would regain full sovereignty with the Allies retaining certain rights for emergency situations and without prejudicing Allied rights pending conclusion of a final peace treaty.

The advocates of the European army urged the view that the idea of European rearmament originated in Europe under such good Europeans as Churchill. They were highly disappointed that when Churchill returned as Prime Minister for the second time, the United Kingdom followed the policy of the previous Labor Government. In so doing it declined to participate in the European army on the grounds that Britain's worldwide commitments precluded such a participation.

Schuman replied to the suggestion that Germany could be integrated into an Atlantic Pact force by pointing out that such a force would involve only a unified command and would allow the survival of national armies. He said, "The Atlantic Pact has a temporary aim. The European army in our view is a permanent solution, and must insure peace against all threats, internal and external, now and in the future."¹⁵ Many of the supporters of the EDC hailed it as a prelude to a European federation which, paradoxically, turned out to be both its strength and its fatal weakness.

There was much dissent in West Germany over rearmament. While an analysis of the origins and forms of this dissent are beyond the scope of this essay, the widespread lack of enthusiasm for a military organization were important in themselves. They were illustrative of a change from the former

Nazi militancy. The United States re-framed the question from how the willing Germans can rearm to how best could a reluctant Germany be persuaded to accept her rightful position in the mutual defense system of the Western World. Adenauer accepted German rearmament as the price of German sovereignty. And here it should be remembered that in the 1949 Petersberg Agreement, he had accepted demilitarization as the price of internal autonomy.

Western European Union: the Second Solution. From the conclusion of the EDC agreements in 1952 until the ultimate interment of the EDC by the French National Assembly on a procedural motion at the end of August 1954, the substance of the issues was generally removed from the international scene, pending ratification by the various parties. However, Washington was constantly exhorting the signatory states to ratify the EDC treaty. This was particularly important since none of the agreements could come into force until final ratification of all the agreements. For the Federal Republic, ratification by all parties was especially important, since the Occupation Statute would remain in force and sovereignty would be delayed until the other agreements came into effect.

The reasons behind the failure of the French to ratify the EDC—which precipitated what might be described as a major diplomatic crisis—are multiple, complex, and somewhat obscure. This failure was indicative of the boldness of the EDC concept, which many Frenchmen were not willing to accept, rather than opposition to the concept of German rearmament *per se*.

French partisan politics played a large role in the defeat of the EDC. By early 1954 Bidault replaced Schuman in the Foreign Office, which represented a slight but crucial shift in party alignment in the National Assembly. In fact, it was the first time in several years that

REARMING OF GERMANY 85

Schuman was neither Prime Minister nor Foreign Minister. In the summer of 1954 Mendes-France was Prime Minister, and he was faced with serious problems in Indochina, brought to a head by the fall of Dienbienphu. The Geneva Conference by which France departed Indochina was concluded only the month before the EDC was lost in the National Assembly.

In addition to the Indochina war and the shift to the left in the Government, both of which boded ill for the EDC, the Communists opposed it on general principles, and the Gaullists found it anathema for other reasons. The EDC was thus left with only some Center support. Previous governments had not pushed it because they were uncertain of support and did not want to fall on that issue.

Whatever else can be said about the EDC, it provided for a supranational Defense Ministry without a corresponding Foreign Ministry and other apparatus necessary to a European federal government. This would have been an anomalous situation at best, and at worst it might very well have proven unworkable.¹⁶

Lest all the blame be heaped upon France, it should be remembered that the British refusal to participate raised understandable fears that Germany might eventually dominate the EDC.¹⁷ Blame has also been placed upon Secretary of State Dulles for both threatening the so-called agonizing reappraisal of U.S. policy toward Europe if the EDC failed and for other proddings from Washington. U.S. anxiety, however, was understandable, particularly in the light of American worldwide commitments.

Juridically speaking, the demise of the EDC left the questions of sovereignty for the Federal Republic and the defense of Western Europe in an unchanged position. Relatively speaking, the members of the Atlantic community were worse off than before, if only because there was now no solution on

hand to the complex problems which would have been dealt with by the EDC package. A Nine Power Conference met in London at the end of September 1954 in an attempt to resolve the crisis. On his departure for London, Dulles clearly stated that the initiative rested with the Europeans.

In London, Dulles spoke frankly and candidly. He said in effect that if arrangements were agreed upon for continuing the hope of unity among the countries of Europe, then the United States would be disposed to renew its pledge to maintain armed forces in Europe. Dulles was careful to point out that the commitments of one President to a particular policy cannot constitutionally bind another President.¹⁸

The outcome of the London Conference was the establishment of the Western European Union (WEU), achieved by a modification of the 1948 Brussels Treaty, which interestingly enough was originally aimed against Germany. WEU provided for a German military contribution to the defense of Europe. Although no European army was established, an integrated NATO command was established under SACEUR, who would exercise operational control of the limited German military forces authorized by the treaty. The Occupation Statute was to lapse, and the Federal Republic was to obtain full sovereignty under essentially the same conditions previously agreed upon.

A particularly significant difference in this set of agreements was British participation in WEU, as well as Eden's pledge that the United Kingdom was willing to abandon her traditionally insular policy, join the Brussels Treaty powers, and maintain four divisions of ground forces and tactical air strength permanently on the Continent.

The protocols were rapidly ratified, although the French provided some suspense. By the spring of 1955 the Federal Republic was rid of the Occupation Statute and was free to engage in 10

86 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

normal diplomatic intercourse. In ratifying these protocols, the French accepted a German national army within the framework of an integrated NATO command only a few months after they had rejected a German contribution within the context of a European army.

Undercurrents. Even though the protocols were ratified and came into effect, they were of such a profound nature that examination of the negotiations and of the main provisions of the protocols will fail to reveal their full import. Speaking for the State Department, Livingston Merchant stated three propositions in regard to Germany:

- No one can hold indefinitely in the status of an occupied country a proud and industrious people.

- Effective defense of Western Europe requires a German contribution.

- For Europe to be rid of the threat of internecine wars, Germany and her neighbors must be bound together in a new relationship, which so weaves together their economies, their defense arrangements and their institutions so as to make another war within the Western European family not merely unthinkable, but actually impossible.¹⁹

While there may have been fairly general agreement in both Europe and Washington as to the correctness of these propositions, their application raised large domestic questions in Germany as to the policy of the Federal Republic. For the Federal Republic the issues involved in the EDC package and later in WEU were identical for all practical purposes. For this reason the debates on the EDC are pertinent to a consideration of German policy in regard to the arrangements which ultimately led to German rearmament.

Domestic opposition to Adenauer rested on the proposition that reunification should come first. Adenauer felt this was a rather shortsighted view, since reunification, if at all possible, could be had only at the price of neutrality and

the loss of European integration. Reunification in that case would mean isolation, which could only exacerbate smoldering resentments in the rest of Europe and would do nothing to solve the larger problem of how to build a European community. No evidence has been found that indicates Adenauer deliberately chose joining Europe rather than pursuing reunification. Such an implication would be grossly unfair, as well as undocumented. Adenauer apparently pursued both goals and took the one that was closest to fruition, in the belief that the other could only be achieved through close association with Western Europe.

On 10 March 1952 the Soviet Union proposed a conference to meet within 2 weeks to discuss German reunification, the price of which would be German neutrality. The Allies and the Federal Republic refused this bait, not only because the time limit precluded proper staff preparation for such a conference, but also because they had every reason to believe it a transparent attempt to impede constructive Western development. While the Soviet proposal was superficially reasonable, they had everything to gain and very little to lose.

In the Bundestag debate on ratification of the EDC on 3 December 1953, Adenauer skillfully kept the question from becoming a choice between either arms or reunification. He presented the question as one of German security, which indeed had been a consistent element in German policy. German security could be had, not at the detriment of any European nation, but within a context of mutual advantage to all concerned. This approach was both original and novel, if not revolutionary. Adenauer's plea was essentially for Europe which, as a polity, could provide both physical security for Germany and for her neighbors, as well as the necessary moral strength which Germany so sorely needed.²⁰

Adenauer's position was identical to

REARMING OF GERMANY 87

that of the United States, as stated by McCloy, who insisted that Germany could not be set adrift without protection from aggression and that the best means of achieving German security was through the European Defense Force, built into the defense system of the Atlantic community. European integration and German reunification should be pursued simultaneously.²¹

The Idea of Europe. Perhaps in the long span of history the post-World War II period will be significant not necessarily because of the cold war, but because the movement to end traditional European rivalries was removed from the realm of the theoretical. Dreamers were replaced by statesmen and politicians, who took concrete action to further European integration.

When the United States inaugurated the Marshall plan, she wisely insisted on dealing with Europe as a whole and not with individual countries. The Europeans were compelled to think of Europe as an entity. Economic recovery was more rapid than expected, partly because of intra-European cooperation in areas of mutual problems. The Schuman plan and the European army were logical developments of this trend.

U.S. policy was unambiguous in this area. The United States consistently pursued a policy of encouraging a strong and healthy Europe in an Atlantic community on the assumption that a strong and prosperous Europe would be a reliable friend and ally not only in a confrontation with the Communist bloc, but also in meeting many of the other pressing problems in the world. There was a widespread conviction that Europe could not for long play a decisive role in world affairs as a congeries of independent states. The Schuman plan and the European army were looked on as steps toward obviating some of the age-old European problems of cartels, rivalries, and wars.

Adenauer pursued a policy which

encouraged European integration and unity, because he realized that not only German security, but also that of the rest of the Continent could be had only by authentic structural changes in Europe. He said,

We are certain that the narrow conception of the nation state which dominated the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century has today altogether outlived its validity . . . We must succeed, first of all, in re-establishing the unity of the European way of life in all its aspects and in all its fields.²²

Adenauer spoke of the larger considerations, those that pertained to Europe as a whole. He spoke not only as the good European that he was, but also as Chancellor of a highly industrialized and organized society that suffered as great a defeat and collapse as any nation has known. He was speaking against a background of the threefold collapse of 1945: political, economic, and spiritual. The German state had to be built along lines and in accordance with policies that would ensure its continued development and prosperity, as well as its peaceful existence with its neighbors.

In regard to the economic and political strength necessary for a complete European recovery, it soon became obvious that there could be no prosperous Europe if the German economy remained shackled. After the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, the European Payments Union, and later the Schuman plan, there was little official doubt of the worthiness of these arrangements. Indeed, 1955 saw the beginnings of negotiations that eventually led to the Treaty of Rome and the establishment of the Common Market.

Any discussion of the vast movement and the deep currents flowing toward integration must ultimately be based on

88 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

the intangibility of the ideal itself and the hopes that it expressed. General Eisenhower noted in his report as SACEUR that the central problem was one of morale.²³ The ideal of Europe was broad enough by definition to cover many shades of opinion and many interests. It was positive in that it worked to the detriment of no nation, and it offered hope that the errors of the past could be avoided in the future. Although the United States encouraged close German participation in an integrated Europe, this decision was one that the German people and Government had to make for themselves.

The immediate and most obvious mutual advantages of close German ties to Europe were fourfold:

- Europe would benefit from German industry and contributions to defense.

- The occupation of the Federal Republic would end and that state would achieve full sovereignty.

- The fate of Germany would be so intertwined with that of Europe that Germany would be unable to turn on Europe again.

- The situation where either a weak Germany might be a prey of the Great Powers, or a strong Germany might turn on Europe, would be avoided.

One observer pointed out that in a strong Western European economic and political community in which the Federal Republic was an integral part,

It will be very difficult for the Federal Republic either to accomplish reunification upon Russian terms or to drag the West into a revisionist war. . . . All her ties, military, political and economic will then be to the West. To sever these would result in a national catastrophe for her. Furthermore, she would almost certainly become a battlefield in any future war.²⁴

In testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee which was considering the 1954 protocols, Dulles pointed out that the treaty establishing WEU was no scrap of paper embodying promises, but that it established a viable, living organism. He said he had always attached more importance to creating unity in Western Europe than he had to the question of how many divisions would be maintained there. He said the basic problem to be solved was that "these constantly recurring wars . . . must be ended if there is to be any salvation at all for the values that we believe in and call Western civilization."²⁵

When asked about the hindering effect of the protocols on a reunited Germany, Dulles disclaimed any practical application to such a situation, because the Federal Republic constituted such a large percentage of all Germany that, he said, "It is extremely unlikely that the unified Germany would adopt any course other than that which has been mapped out and adopted and committed to by the Federal Republic."²⁶

The United States realized a Franco-German rapprochement was fundamental to a long-term assurance of security and vitality for Europe and, therefore, for the Western World. Such a unity would be the opposite of the disunity that had led to two World Wars in this century.

While under the treaties that actually came into effect political ties may be less than originally intended, economic ties have assumed an increasing significance in Europe's postwar evolution. A Paris-Bonn entente is fundamental to any ties, economic or political. France, when confronted with Germany's economic resurgence and enlistment as a major party in European defense, had the good sense to join Germany. Germany needed France to realize her full opportunities as a member of the Common Market and to participate in the

REARMING OF GERMANY 89

planning and direction of military affairs within the alliance. The result has been a new series of ties working against national separatism and in favor of regional integration.

Conclusion. A series of events involving such disparate elements as a cold war between the superpowers; recovery, reconstruction, and defense of Europe; creation of a new and democratic Germany; redirecting national energies from ancient rivalries and fears into more positive channels; replacing obsolete forms of thought and outmoded economic and political habits with structures more adequate to modern needs; the formation and execution of policy in a revolutionary era where at times change is the only constant factor—such a series does not lend itself to clear-cut conclusions. Indeed, the outcome is not yet in sight. But in retrospect it can be seen that German rearmament was the linchpin of this series of events.

It can be observed how men of vision, good-will, and political skill can boldly seize opportunities and bit-by-bit create the foundations of what may become a new political structure. It is worth noting that during World War I Schuman was a German, and shortly after that war Adenauer toyed with the idea of Rhineland separation. During the First World War their Italian colleague, De Gasperi, was a subject of the Hapsburg Empire. These men were truly

Europeans while in office, and they did much to create present-day Europe out of the postwar chaos.

Events have so far borne out the soundness of the overall U.S. policy, which went as far as it could to expiate the myopia and smugness of prewar American policy toward Europe. The assumptions upon which this policy was founded have in the balance been sound, and the programs that gave life to these assumptions have been generally well thought out and well executed. From the vantage point of 1970, the United States is entitled to a justifiable satisfaction as to the fruits of her European policies.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Lt. Comdr. Benjamin M. Simpson, III, U.S. Navy, holds an undergraduate degree in foreign affairs from Colgate University, an LL.B. degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and a doctorate from Tufts

University in international relations. A graduate of the Naval Destroyer School, he has served in a variety of operational assignments aboard carriers, destroyers, and amphibious craft. Lieutenant Commander Simpson is presently on the faculty of the School of Naval Command and Staff at the Naval War College.

FOOTNOTES

1. Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc*, rev. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1961), *passim*.
2. George C. Marshall, quoted in Dean Acheson, "A Perspective on the Problems Facing the Council of Foreign Ministers," *The Department of State Bulletin*, 29 May 1949, p. 675.
3. *Ibid.*
4. James L. Richardson, *Germany and the Atlantic Alliance*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 15.
5. John J. McCloy, "Progress Report on Germany," *The Department of State Bulletin*, 6 February 1950, p. 197.
6. John J. McCloy, "The German Problem and Its Solution," *The Department of State Bulletin*, 17 April 1950, p. 587.
7. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Relations, *To Amend the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949*, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1950), p. 22.

90 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

8. Paul Weymar, *Adenauer* (New York: Dutton, 1957), p. 332.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 333.
10. Lawrence W. Martin, "The Decision to Rarm Germany," Harold Steiu, ed., *American Civil Military Decisions* (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1963), p. 658.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 658.
12. David W. McLachlan, "Rearmament and the Shoek of Korea," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1951, p. 276-286.
13. Richardson, p. 5.
14. L.C.D. Onslow, "West German Rearmament," *World Politics*, July 1951, p. 456.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 471.
16. Daniel Lerner and Raymond Aron, *France Defeats EDC* (New York: Praeger, 1957), p. 2-24.
17. F.S.C. Northrop, *European Union and United States Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), passim.
18. "Agreement on Restoration of German Sovereignty and German Association with Western Defense System," *The Department of State Bulletin*, 11 October 1954, p. 523-525.
19. Livingston T. Merchant, "Progress toward Enropeau Security," *The Department of State Bulletin*, 6 December 1954, p. 844.
20. Weymar, p. 448.
21. John J. McCloy, "U.S. Attitude toward Germauy," *The Department of State Bulletin*, 10 December 1951, p. 943.
22. Weymar, p. 287-288.
23. Dwight D. Eisenhower, "First Anniversary of SHAPE as an Operational Headquarters," *The Department of State Bulletin*, 14 April 1952, p. 574.
24. H.L. Trefousse, "Germany: Key to American Foreign Policy," *Antioch Review*, March 1954, p. 128.
25. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee ou Foreign Relations, *Protocol on Termination of the Occupation Regime in the Federal Republic of Germany . . .*, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1955), p. 23.
26. *Ibid.*



There cannot be good laws where there are not good arms.

Niccolo Machiavelli: The Prince, xii, 1513