

THE CASE OF GERMAN REARMAMENT: ALLIANCE CRISIS IN THE “GOLDEN AGE”

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*The ambiguities and complexities of recent NATO crises have given rise to a nostalgic yearning for a return to the days of unity that seemed to characterize the Alliance in its formative years. In this article, Thomas Schwartz challenges this notion of early solidarity by revealing the divisions and delays that marked NATO's first security crisis — the 1950 decision to rearm Germany. Making use of recently released governmental sources, personal papers and memoirs, both European and American, the author provides a more complete and well-rounded picture of the crisis. In his account, Mr. Schwartz argues that particular solutions can best be understood by looking at the relative strength of the cross-national bureaucratic coalitions that form around them. Mr. Schwartz concludes that NATO's history reveals a recurrent pattern in the origin, development and resolution of security crises. This pattern of historical resiliency, he suggests, should caution against the tendency to view present discord as a threat to the future viability of the Alliance.**

In a recent article in *The Fletcher Forum*, Dr. A. W. DePorte wrote, “It is a myth that there was once a golden age when Europeans followed American leadership compliantly and cheerfully and put their faith in American power and goodwill without question.”¹ On the contrary the Alliance has had a “long history of disagreements.” But these recurrent crises, DePorte argues, have never prevented the Alliance from achieving its most important goals, namely the preservation of European stability and the deterrence of Soviet aggression.

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* Special thanks to Greg Mark and Jennifer Laurendeau for their comments on earlier versions of this article. I have examined such material in the course of working on my doctoral dissertation, “From Occupation to Alliance: John J. McCloy and the Allied High Commission in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1949-1952.” Of particular importance on American policy were the records of the Truman and Eisenhower Presidential Libraries, the Defense Department's records in the Modern Military Branch of the National Archives, and the *Foreign Relations* series (FRUS) of the Department of State. I have not footnoted extensively in this article, but have rather sought to single out important and representative sources.

1. A. W. DePorte, “NATO of the Future: Less is More,” *Fletcher Forum* 7 (1983): 11.

The 35-year history of NATO reveals remarkably similar patterns in the origin, development, and resolution of security crises. But while the NATO allies have always managed to reach agreement on security issues, it has only been after long delays and innumerable compromises in original objectives. Sometimes the compromises have led to solutions which bore little relation to the original problem. Also the divisions in the crises were not only between "Europeans" and Americans, but between the European countries themselves and within an often-divided American government. For example, the German rearmament issue of 1950 was NATO's most protracted and bitter crisis. It struck at the very core of the Alliance, raising in an immediate and direct manner the question of whether the United States would defend Western Europe from Soviet attack.

In September 1949, the detection of a successful Soviet atomic test raised questions about the effectiveness of an American nuclear umbrella protecting Europe from the Red Army. Konrad Adenauer, the aged Chancellor of the new Federal Republic of Germany, immediately recognized the implications of the loss of America's nuclear monopoly. He told his Cabinet that it created a "whole new situation" for Germany and feared that the United States would now be more eager for some accommodation with the Soviet Union.² Because of the wide imbalance in conventional forces in Central Europe — 80 or more Soviet divisions to 12 Allied — Allied strategy called for the abandonment of most of Germany east of the Rhine in the event of a Soviet attack. Germany's sense of vulnerability was heightened by intelligence in 1949 that the 50,000 man East German *Volkspolizei* or "People's Police" was receiving extensive paramilitary training. From the very beginning of his Chancellorship, Adenauer pressured American High Commissioner John J. McCloy for a "guarantee" of Germany's security. The Chancellor argued that since the Allies had disarmed Germany, they were responsible for its defense. He told American reporters that while he was opposed to the recreation of the *Wehrmacht*, he would consider a German contribution to some type of European force. After his request

2. Ulrich Enders and Konrad Reisen, eds., *Die Kabinettsprotokolle der Bundesregierung, Band 1, 1949*. (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt, 1982), p. 315. For a new understanding of the German position, I have also relied on the work of the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt in Freiburg, particularly that of Norbert Wiggershaus. Wiggershaus's work is of special importance because of his access to Herbert Blankenhorn's diary. Blankenhorn was Adenauer's most important foreign policy adviser in the early years of the Federal Republic.

Two important examples of Wiggershaus's work are his essay, "Zur Frage der Planung für die verdeckte Aufstellung westdeutscher Verteidigungskräfte in Konrad Adenauers sicherheitspolitischer Konzeption 1950," in *Dienstgruppen und westdeutscher Verteidigungsbeitrag* (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt, 1982) pp. 11-82, and his essay in the large volume, Roland Foerster, et al., eds., *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik 1945-1956, Band 1, Von der Kapitulation bis zum Pleven Plan*, (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1982).

for a 25,000 man "police force" was rejected by the Allies, Adenauer secretly told McCloy he was prepared to send 20,000 men to France for military training in order to develop some form of security for the young republic. He complained bitterly to McCloy that Allied weakness in the face of Soviet military strength might even force West Germany to turn to the East for its security.³

McCloy sympathized with Adenauer's concerns, but recognized the political problems rearmament would cause. He told the Chancellor that his first task should be reconciliation with France. This advice was designed to dovetail with Secretary of State Acheson's German policy which allowed France to set the pace for Germany's "integration" into the West. Acheson considered the rebuilding of a stable France to be vital to his own strategy of creating "situations of strength" to deal with the Soviet challenge. He also sought to support Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, who had recently proposed the formation of the European Coal and Steel Authority. Because of the weak constitutional position of French governments in the Fourth Republic, and the strength of Gaullists and Communists, Acheson did not want moderate French politicians to lose popular support through an excessively pro-German American policy. While Acheson believed that America should "strongly" encourage Schuman's conciliatory German policy, the pace of that development had to be what French politics could sustain.⁴

American willingness to defer to French initiatives reflected uneasiness over the political reliability of the Germans. It was feared that an easing of Allied controls on Germany would encourage more nationalist demands for reunification, leading West Germany to play off East against West to achieve this objective. Although many State Department officials recognized the need for greater security, there was concern about the effects of rearmament on a German civilian government.⁵ They shared the commonly held sentiment that, "Germans talk differently with guns in their hands."⁶ The State Department believed it had sufficient time to strengthen France politically and militarily before seeking a German contribution to Western defense.

In contrast, the Defense Department viewed this problem through a different lens and with a greater sense of urgency. The Army considered the French military forces in Europe to be dispirited and in disarray. They believed that the best French soldiers were preoccupied in Indochina and

3. Herbert Blankenhorn, *Verständnis und Verständigung* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1980), p. 92.

4. *FRUS*, 1949, vol. III, pp. 600-01, 623. The policy of strengthening France also contributed to our initial commitment in Indochina. *FRUS*, 1950, vol. VI, p. 714.

5. *FRUS*, 1950, vol. IV, pp. 691-94, is a succinct statement of the State Department's views.

6. See *New York Times*, 21 December 1949.

that the officer corps was infiltrated by Communists.⁷ The combination of French weaknesses, Truman's budgetary cutbacks, respect for the fighting qualities of the Germans, and the belief that Western Europe could not be adequately defended without German assistance, pushed the Joint Chiefs of Staff in April 1950 to urge immediate steps to bring about the rearmament of West Germany. The obvious policy conflict in the U.S. between the State and Defense Departments was exacerbated by the deep personal animosity between Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson and Secretary Acheson. In this case President Truman backed the State Department, considering German rearmament "as wrong as can be." To Truman, it was a "decidedly militaristic" step and "not in keeping with present conditions."⁸

While the debate raged in the American government, the other Allies were also grappling with the German problem. The British High Commissioner Brian Robertson was jolted when British troops had to be used to put down riots against the dismantling of the old Hermann-Goering Steel plant in early March 1950. With London's approval Robertson secretly encouraged Adenauer to appoint Graf von Schwerin, a former General with an anti-Nazi past, as "Security Advisor." The British wanted Schwerin to begin the planning for a paramilitary "police force" which could provide Adenauer with a means to enforce Federal authority. At the same time the British hoped it would serve as the nucleus of a future German army. Such a force would protect internal security, while serving as a deterrent to any aggressive move by East German forces against West Germany.⁹ On the political side the Foreign Office decided early in 1950 to urge the abolition of the High Commission. The British were convinced that German politicians would begin to act responsibly only when they possessed the final authority over their country. Like the American defense establishment, the British experienced a growing disenchantment with the political instability and military paralysis in France. One Foreign Office official told the Americans that "the French were no damn good," and that the Germans would be a "more reliable partner."¹⁰ Acheson

7. Letter, General Thomas Handy to General J. Lawton Collins, June 4, 1950, General Bradley Files, CJCS, 091 France 1950, RG 218, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, MMB-National Archives. For my argument on the military's position on rearmament, I have relied on Jennifer Laurendeau's unpublished essay on "Presidential Transition and the EDC."

8. *FRUS*, 1950, vol. IV, p. 688. Truman's handwritten note was on the copy of the proposal in the President's own papers.

9. My views on Great Britain's policy were shaped by examining the records of the Foreign Office in the Public Record Office in London, especially in the correspondence in FO 371/85048-85058. I am also indebted to Heinz Schulte for many discussions of this topic, and his own essays. Heinz Schulte, "The Dilemma of German Rearmament After the Second World War," *Army Quarterly and Defense Journal*, April 1980, pp. 189-204.

10. *FRUS*, 1950, vol. III, p. 934. The remark was made by Iyonne Kirkpatrick in conversation with Byroade.

feared the British attitude would undermine whatever progress Schuman could make in encouraging Franco-German rapprochement. He strongly protested British dealings with Schwerin, arguing that any news of a "secret rearmament" would spell the ruin for the Schuman Plan.¹¹

The German issue was one of the most sensitive issues in French politics because the French were deeply and passionately fearful of a resurgence of German power. Their defeat in 1940 had left a psychological scar that the "Anglo-Saxons" never fully understood. The cruelty and barbarism of the Nazi occupation, symbolized by the massacre at Oradour-sur-Glaine, had touched almost every French family. French commitments in Indochina and the difficulties of rebuilding their own army increased French anxiety about plans for a German army. Because of the strength of their own communist party and their 1944 treaty with the Soviets, the French were reluctant to initiate any final break with the Soviet Union over Germany and opposed the incorporation of West Berlin into the Federal Republic.

But French leaders could not ignore the expansion of Soviet power in Europe, and the danger to their own security of a power vacuum in Germany. As Wolfgang Krieger has recently written, in 1947 and 1948 French military leaders secretly expressed to American officials their desire for military cooperation in Europe in the event of any Soviet move. Krieger argues that one reason for the French willingness to support the creation of a West German state was the desire to have a forward "buffer" area in which Allied forces could be deployed against the Soviets.¹² For security reasons, a unified, neutralized Germany was losing its appeal to the French. Schuman himself had recognized the inevitability of Franco-German cooperation as a defense against Soviet power. The Coal and Steel Union, he told Adenauer, would make war between their two countries impossible. But this reorientation from one enemy to another would take time, and Schuman believed that this is what Acheson was giving him.

On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces rolled across the 38th Parallel, and a new phase of the Cold War began. If before the war Europe felt that America was not doing enough to defend Europe, the outbreak of the Korean conflict ushered in a tense period in which the Europeans feared American overreaction. Like Afghanistan in 1979, Korea was a galvanizing event for American policymakers signalling the end of complacency and the beginning of a new alertness. The rapid advance of the North Korean forces, heavily equipped with Soviet weaponry, also un-

11. The French Deputy High Commissioner in Germany recorded in his diary that the British were following a path of "surrender" which reminded him of their policies in the 1930's. Armand Bérard, *Un Ambassadeur Se Souvient: Washington et Bonn 1945-1955*, II (Paris: Plon, 1978), pp. 302-03.

12. Wolfgang Krieger, "Kennan vs. Clay: American Policy and the Founding of West Germany 1948-1949," unpublished essay, Feb. 1984. Krieger is the author of a forthcoming book on General Clay and the American Military Government in Germany.

dermined Europe's belief in American invincibility. Because the pattern of Soviet behavior in Germany seemed to parallel the Korean situation, Europeans began to fear a repetition of these events. The establishment of the East German Army and the intense propaganda campaign about German unification both raised the specter of a Russian-planned, Korean-style invasion in Europe.

Despite important differences between the situation in Germany and that in Korea — particularly the presence of substantial Allied forces in Germany — the parallel took an immediate hold over many Washington policymakers. The luxury of time evaporated. The Soviet timetable for world conquest, as described by NSC-68 (the U.S. directive calling for mobilization and rearmament) seemed to have been pushed forward. A bitter debate raged within the State Department between those who wanted to maintain the policy of strengthening the French, and those who saw the need to "do something" with the Germans. Both sides wanted to send more American forces to Europe. But the only way to persuade the Defense Department was by agreeing to some form of German rearmament. Henry Byroade and the Bureau of German Affairs thought that only an "international force," a Schuman Plan approach, could permit the rearmament of the Germans and still gain French approval. Byroade even hoped he could convince Schuman to present the idea at the next NATO meeting in September.¹³

McCloy and the U.S. High Commission were thinking along similar lines. They had been struck by the deterioration in German morale as North Korean forces pushed back American and South Korean troops. With State Department approval, McCloy authorized his deputy, General George Hays, to conduct secret exploratory negotiations with Adenauer's aides, Schwerin and Herbert Blankenhorn, about measures to adopt in the event of an emergency. McCloy even suggested allowing Germans to enlist in the American Army to fight against a Soviet invasion.¹⁴ His cables back to Washington grew more desperate, with the message that the United States might "lose" West Germany unless something was done. These cables strongly influenced Acheson's and Truman's decision to support some form of German rearmament. McCloy still feared the effects of rearmament on the young and fragile German democracy. In cooperation with Byroade's group in Washington, he proposed a "European Defense Force" (EDF) — an army which would be under NATO command but consist of divisions from the various Continental nations, including Germany.

13. Interview with Ambassador Henry Byroade, 20 October 1982.

14. *FRUS*, 1950, vol. IV, p. 698.

By proposing the EDF, they hoped to prevent the emergence of a separate German national army, General Staff, and Defense Ministry. The EDF proposal also had the advantage of linking the popular idea of a European force with the unpopular concept of rearmament in an effort to sell the latter through the former. The Americans involved were also enthusiastic about broader possibilities for European integration and unity.

The State Department's EDF provided the opening for which the Defense Department had been waiting. Having finally obtained State's agreement that German forces were necessary, Army planners rejected the EDF as an unwieldy and unnecessary complication to their task. They agreed to go along with certain restrictions on German officers and weaponry — with cynics claiming that the State Department officials were looking for guns that only fired east. The final compromise between the State and Defense Departments, approved by Truman, provided that America would send additional divisions to Europe and appoint a Supreme Commander *only* if the other Allies agreed to German rearmament. The "package proposal" was the "bomb" which Acheson brought to the September Foreign Ministers' Conference in New York.¹⁵

While the rigidity of the American proposal surprised the Allies, the necessity for German forces had become increasingly apparent. The British had reacted to the Korean attack in a fashion similar to the United States. Even before Korea, their own Chiefs of Staff had agreed with their American counterparts that 20 German divisions were necessary for the defense of Western Europe. But in the internal British debate, the Foreign Office utilized the American State Department's earlier objections to German rearmament. Acheson's protests over Schwerin's activities prior to Korea led the British to believe that the Americans could only be convinced of the need for German rearmament if rearmament was started in a slow and indirect fashion. The British saw the threat to Germany more as one of "civil war" than direct Soviet attack.¹⁶ Knowing through their contacts with Schwerin that Adenauer would propose a 100,000 man "police force," the British went to New York to urge approval of his request. They believed that if the Allies simply approved a German request, they could not be forced into any further concessions concerning sovereignty which Adenauer might demand.

The British were particularly scornful of McCloy's EDF proposal, considering it an example of American "woolly" thinking and a hindrance

15. Lawrence Martin, "The American Decision to Rearm Germany," in Harold E. Stein, ed., *American Civil-Military Decisions: A Book of Case Studies* (Birmingham: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1963), pp. 645-63 remains an excellent study, though it does lack a detailed sense of the inter-Allied character of the deliberations.

16. FO 371/85051, Public Record Office, London. This was a particular concern of Bevin.

to practical steps.¹⁷ Ivonne Kirkpatrick, the new British High Commissioner, thought he could convince McCloy of the necessity of beginning with the police force idea. But McCloy and the State Department made a sharp distinction between their approval of a limited "Federal Police" and the creation of an army. They thought that any intermingling of the army and police would damage German democracy, and revive memories of the Gestapo.¹⁸ A "secret rearmament" also conjured up memories of the Von Seeckt conspiracy of the 1920s, and would make the job of selling the proposal more difficult. What the British failed to realize was that their German political allies, the Social Democrats, also disliked the "police force" concept. Although Acheson's "package proposal" came as a surprise, Foreign Minister Bevin embraced it fairly quickly. The American proposal prevented further complications between the British and their German allies over the Federal police force.

The French Government approved of the American action in Korea, and saw a parallel with their own situation in Indochina. Throughout July and August the French Government drew up requests for American assistance to strengthen its army. Despite this official support, an undercurrent of French opinion feared what they saw as a massive American mobilization and overreaction to the Soviet danger. On July 16, 1950, Andre Francois-Poncet, the French High Commissioner in Germany, told Blankenhorn that the biggest danger to Europe was a preemptive Soviet attack in Western Europe to counter the American buildup. He was so pessimistic about the prospect of war that he discussed with Blankenhorn possible locations for a German capital in exile.¹⁹ Francois-Poncet, who often reflected the Quai d'Orsay's views, saw the next three months as critical. His fears were shared by Jean Monnet, the French internationalist, who wrote Prime Minister René Plevin that the increasing antagonism between the superpowers could lead to Western Europe's and hence France's destruction. Some way out of this dilemma was necessary. The Schuman Plan had seemed to point the way out of the dilemma but it too was in danger of being submerged in the rush toward rearmament.²⁰

The French, recognizing Europe's vulnerability, feared any provocative action by the United States. The Germans, on the contrary, feared that America would not act. Adenauer received a report from former General

17. FO 371/85052, PRO, London.

18. FO 371/85053, PRO, London. The Americans told the British that they feared that Adenauer would use the police to repress non-Communist social unrest.

19. Interview with Ambassador Herbert Blankenhorn, 26 May 1983.

20. Letter, Jean Monnet to René Plevin, 3 September 1950, AMI 4/3/6, Fondation Jean Monnet Pour L'Europe, Lausanne, Switzerland. The Monnet papers also provide an opening into the French archives, as Schuman's cables from New York also went to Monnet. AMI, 4/5/1-5, Monnet Papers.

Hans Speidel in early August which painted a bleak view of Germany's security.²¹ At the same time, a propaganda campaign from East Germany called for the "liberation" of West Germany and trial of the Chancellor and his associates by a "People's Court." Adenauer doubted that the Americans would intervene in a German "civil war" and even feared the Russians might put their own men in German uniforms to carry out such an attack. Despite his eagerness for an American commitment, Adenauer still attached political conditions to any rearmament — an end to the occupation and full equality for German forces. He outlined his conditions in two ambiguous memoranda designed to demonstrate the flexibility of his demands. Through informal channels Adenauer told American friends that Germany was the one continental "bulwark" against the Soviet Union, free of the communist "disease" which infected Italy and France. His message emphasized the potential importance of Germany's military contribution, but did not mention political conditions (such as sovereignty as a quid pro quo for German military contributions).²²

The September Foreign Ministers Conference is notable as one of the most bitterly divisive conferences in NATO's history. When it became clear that only French resistance prevented the dispatch of American soldiers to Europe, Schuman found himself isolated. The intensity of domestic French opposition to any measure of German rearmament, however, gave him no alternative except continued opposition. Schuman's cables to Paris expressed the difficulty of his position, limited as it was by the conditions of the Acheson "package proposal" as well as French fears. Schuman quickly summoned his Defense Secretary, Jules Moch, to impress upon the Americans the internal difficulties he faced in his coalition.²³ Moch, whose son had been killed by the Germans, was a leading member of the French Socialist Party (SFIO) and a passionate opponent of German rearmament. Without his party's support, Schuman's coalition would collapse, but Moch simply could not be persuaded. The deadlock continued.

Despite the improvement in the American position in the Korean War occasioned by MacArthur's success at Inchon, American leaders feared that French intransigence would create an isolationist backlash in the United States. During the Minister's Conference, McCloy sent Acheson

21. Speidel thought the East Germans would have an army of 150,000 by 1951, and be able to conquer West Germany in a short campaign. His memo is reproduced in Hans Speidel, *Aus unserer Zeit: Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1977), pp. 477-96.

22. Norbert Wiggershaus, "Bedrohungsvorstellungen Bundeskanzler Adenauers nach Ausbruch des Korea-Krieges," *Militär-geschichtliche Mitteilungen*, 25 (1979): 79-122, esp. p. 84, pp. 101-102, and p. 109.

23. Schuman simply kept repeating that discussing German rearmament was "premature" and "dangerous," but neither Acheson nor Bevin moved from their positions. AMI 4/5/3, Fondation Jean Monnet pour L'Europe, Lausanne, Switzerland.

a note pointing out that if American troops were attacked in Germany, and had no assistance from the Germans because of French intransigence, "I shudder to think" what the reaction of American public opinion will be. In the same letter McCloy reminded Acheson that the key point was not "the number of German divisions, but to keep Germany from drifting to neutrality or worse."²⁴ The other NATO allies, particularly those on the east side of the Rhine, the Netherlands and Denmark, also pressured the French to change their position. Still, the meeting ended in a stalemate.

When scrutinized, the American position offered more to the Germans than they had expected. By proposing a German "army" rather than the more limited "police force," the Americans had given Adenauer a great tactical advantage — particularly leverage with respect to sovereignty. On an entire range of issues between the Germans and the occupying powers, he used this request for a defense contribution as a significant bargaining chip. The Germans would not fight unless their country was treated as an equal partner in the Alliance.

When the Soviet attack failed to materialize and the sense of immediate danger began to fade, Adenauer began to stress the political importance of rearmament. Such a shift in emphasis was occasioned by the strength of the *ohne mich* (without me) sentiment in Germany — a neutralist sentiment which was as strong, if not stronger, than the German peace movement of today. Rather than jumping at the opportunity to get back into uniform, the Germans of 1950 had had enough of militarism. State elections held immediately after Adenauer's rearmament bid resulted in significant defeats for his party. Even the Protestant Church entered the fray in opposition to the rearmament proposal. The Social Democrats demanded new elections, and the protests of the Protestant Church were reflected in the opposition of Pastor Martin Niemöller and the resignation of Interior Minister Gustav Heinemann. Rearmament seemed certain to drive the wedge between the two Germanies even deeper. To convince his people of the necessity of rearmament, Adenauer would need significant concessions from the Allies.²⁵

It is ironic that this German anti-militarist reaction did not impress French officials, who feared increasing German militance and a growth

24. Letter, McCloy to Acheson, 20 September 1950, Acheson Papers, Box 65, Truman Library. A recently declassified memorandum from McCloy to the President put the case in strong words, "The next six months are certain to be crucial ones in Germany," and even argued that the United States should promote a "grand coalition" government in Germany to insure that both major democratic parties supported rearmament. McCloy to Truman, 10 September 1950, Germany Folder 2, President's Secretary's File, Box 178, Truman Library.

25. Adenauer's public support dropped sharply. Erich Peter Neumann and Elisabeth Noelle, *Statistics on Adenauer* (Allensbach and Bonn, 1962) pp. 40-41. Sentiment in favor of neutrality remained at about half of the population. *Der Spiegel*, 6 June 1951, p. 15.

in aggressive nationalism. Monnet wrote Schuman in mid-September that the Germans were already displaying such behavior in the coal and steel negotiations.²⁶ The French feared that the Germans would now use their bilateral ties with the United States, strengthened by the rearmament request, to escape from any "European constraints." To the French, the Pentagon's restrictions on German officers and weaponry were hopelessly inadequate to prevent the development of a national German army and General Staff. The French worried about both a Soviet preventive attack designed to halt German rearmament, and a possible German-Soviet alliance after rearming. Schuman, Plevin, and Monnet were also convinced that a National Army would come to dominate any civilian government.²⁷ An independent German General Staff would be free to plan offensive operations designed to reunite Germany and regain the Eastern territories. With millions of refugees in West Germany, the French feared that German irredentism would find eager soldiers and followers. NATO itself could be drawn into a German war which could lead to Western Europe's destruction.²⁸

French fears were reinforced when Kurt Schumacher, the leader of the German Social Democrats, announced that one of his party's conditions for supporting rearmament was an Allied commitment to a "forward strategy." Schumacher demanded that the Allies station enough divisions in Germany so that in the event of Soviet attack, the war could immediately be carried into Eastern Europe and outside of German soil.²⁹ While Schumacher's concern was that Germany could not survive another war on its soil, his argument was precisely the nightmare of French politicians.

The deadlock between the French and American positions continued at the NATO Defense Ministers' meeting in October 1950. Throughout the conference Monnet and his advisors sought to draft a proposal that would break the deadlock. On October 24, French Prime Minister Pléven proposed the creation of a European Army, with a united Defense Ministry and budget. Its most controversial point was the call for an "integration" of the army at the level of the smallest unit. Supposedly patterned after the Coal and Steel Union, Monnet's idea in its original form reminded

26. AMI 4/4/5, Monnet Papers, Lausanne.

27. AMI, 5/2/2, Monnet Papers, Lausanne.

28. Wiggershaus refers to this concern, in somewhat surprised terms, in his article, "Zum alliierten Pro und Contra eines westdeutscher Militärbeitrages," in *Militärgeschichte: Probleme, Thesen, Wege*, Manfred Messerschmidt, et al. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag, 1982) p. 444. Not surprisingly, the French took this concern *very seriously*. Monnet's notes on a discussion with McCloy, October 27, 1950, AMI 5/2/2, Monnet Papers.

29. Samuel Huntington has recently revived this idea in a slightly different form, but using some of the same arguments as Schumacher. See his recent article, "Conventional Deterrence and Conventional Retaliation in Europe." *International Security* 8 (Winter 1983-84): 32-56.

suspicious observers of the French Foreign Legion rather than a multinational force. Monnet, however, sincerely hoped to use the Army as a step toward his goal of European unification. His political allies also recognized the tactical advantage in a proposal which would delay the rearmament of Germany.

While Monnet was able to sell his idea to the U.S. Ambassador in Paris, David Bruce, McCloy and the State Department remained skeptical about the European Army scheme. At a small dinner party shortly after the plan was announced, Monnet convinced McCloy, a personal friend for more than twenty years, that the French would be flexible and willing to make the European Army a workable proposition. The Pentagon, however, saw Monnet's ideas as militarily hopeless and regarded them merely as a ploy to prevent rearmament.

The Allied negotiations over rearmament continued, but were complicated by a new Soviet bid for Four-Power talks on Germany, and a threat to the French that rearmament would constitute a major violation of their 1944 treaty with the Soviets. The massive Chinese intervention in the Korean War at the end of November spurred the Americans to press the French to agree to a compromise formula. Acheson promised Schuman in a secret personal letter that if he would agree to begin planning for German rearmament, Acheson would continue to lend his support to French initiatives on European integration:

If your government . . . could evolve the main outlines of a plan for binding the free nations of Europe more closely together in the spirit so well represented by the Schuman Plan, we could reasonably hope for the long term solution of our many problems, be they political, military, or economic. . . . I believe your leadership, so fruitful in the past, can go far to accomplish our common objectives.³⁰

Schuman responded quickly to Acheson's appeal and a compromise was agreed to in Brussels in December 1950 establishing a "dual-track" approach to German rearmament of conducting simultaneous negotiations to deal with the two distinct approaches: in the first, at Petersberg, the High Commissioners would plan a German defense contribution under NATO, and in the second, at Paris, limited to the Continental countries, the aim was the creation of a European Army. Having achieved a semblance of Allied agreement on the issue, Acheson was now prepared to probe the Soviet suggestions of talks. For political reasons both France and Great Britain were eager to explore this opportunity. The crisis atmosphere of

30. *FRUS*, 1950, vol. III, pp. 497-498.

that December, with the famous Truman-Atlee emergency summit about the use of the atomic bomb, had terrified Western Europe. To sell German rearmament to their skeptical publics, both Britain and France would need to convince them that the Soviets were intransigent on the issue of German rearmament.

Talks with the Soviet Union ended in June 1951, with the Four Powers unable to agree even on an agenda. Meanwhile the "dual-track" approach had mixed results. The negotiations of the High Commissioners produced a report in June 1951 calling for a German army of twelve full-sized divisions (each roughly 12,000 men) within NATO. The Germans insisted upon complete equality, and this meant in practice a separate Defense Ministry and officer corps. The European Army negotiations in Paris had deadlocked over the issue of division size, with the French insisting on keeping German units within the Army to a maximum size of 5000 to 6000 men. The American leaders in Europe, especially McCloy and Bruce, foresaw another alliance rift over this issue. They had watched the intense foreign policy debate within the United States of early 1951, brought to a fever pitch by the MacArthur firing, and feared that another public split in NATO would stoke the fires of isolationism. They became determined to bring the two plans for German rearmament together in some type of compromise.

McCloy's position and powers within Germany gave him the key role in this compromise. A longtime friend of NATO's Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, McCloy arranged a luncheon meeting between Eisenhower and Monnet.³¹ Ike was impressed by Monnet's concept of a "United States of Europe," and embraced the idea enthusiastically. The General convinced the French to accept a larger division size, in return for putting his prestige behind the now renamed "European Defense Community" (EDC). Eisenhower's willingness to support the EDC undercut the Pentagon's criticism, while McCloy convinced Adenauer to accept the French Plan. By the September 1951 Washington conference, the EDC was a fundamental part of American policy, the only way to resolve French fears and German demands.

The EDC Treaty was signed in May 1952, along with agreements ending the occupation of West Germany. But more than two years later the proposal met its defeat in the French National Assembly, while the Americans and the Germans watched angrily from the sidelines. There were a variety of reasons for the eventual failure of the ambitious EDC proposal. Monnet and his allies were not as representative of French opinion

31. Letter, McCloy to Eisenhower, (undated but early June 1951), Pre-Presidential Correspondence (Series 16-52), Box 75, Eisenhower Library.

as the Americans had believed. Within France, EDC's opponents charged that the Americans were forcing German rearmament, a charge which, while oversimplified, was not far from the truth. The French debacle in Indochina had also left a strong anti-American feeling as well. The reluctance of patriotic Frenchmen to merge their army into a European force had grown, especially as the threat from the post-Stalin Soviet Union had receded. Adenauer's resounding victory in September 1953 indicated greater stability within Germany than the French had believed, and made the sacrifice of their national army seem less necessary. After EDC's defeat, England's Foreign Minister Anthony Eden recognized the changing atmosphere and produced a plan for a German Army directly within NATO. Agreement was quickly obtained, and West Germany regained its sovereignty and entered NATO in May 1955. The first German soldiers only began appearing five years after the "emergency" of 1950.

The history of the German rearmament question cautions against the oversimplification of Alliance disputes. German rearmament, like the recent INF dispute, did not originate as solely an American idea, though the American military was a forceful advocate in both cases. Other European nations recognized the necessity for some action, especially given the alternative of a "defense on the Rhine." Once the German decision was made, the speed which America insisted upon was characteristic, but the French were certainly able to affect decisively the manner in which the issue was resolved.

While Europeans often complain of the United States' narrow anti-Soviet outlook, the rearmament crisis demonstrates the importance of the American concern not to fracture the Alliance along French and German lines. While military demands often strained this latent tension in the Alliance, the American policy of promoting Franco-German rapprochement remained a central objective. This explains in part the enthusiasm for "European" solutions which many Americans felt. A "United Europe" was the skeleton key which could unlock the solution to many problems at once. Such a Europe would be able to stand on its own feet economically, and sustain a strong defense establishment against the Soviets. It also seemed the only way to end the enduring problem of Franco-German suspicion.

Differences between countries in the Atlantic Alliance frequently arise from internal differences between and within diplomatic and military bureaucracies. The adoption of particular compromises can best be understood by examining the strengths and weaknesses of the cross-national coalitions which form around them. This is an especially helpful technique in understanding crises within the Alliance, where the disproportionate weight of the United States is often offset by the internal chaos of its decision-making process.

It is especially important to remember that Europe does not speak with a unified voice. Many studies of the American and European approach to this first crisis exclude the nation which now constitutes our principal NATO ally, West Germany. But such an exclusion, while technically correct, hinders an understanding of the history of an Alliance which contains nations which have fought two bitter wars against each other. The United States, not the European nations, was the driving force behind integration. While cooperation and a sense of common identity have grown in Western Europe, real unity is not yet a reality. This important fact must always be remembered in approaching the history of the Alliance.

This article is written on the premise that a healthy dose of history sometimes helps in placing current problems in perspective. The case of German rearmament and the failure of EDC should sound a cautionary note, especially as we begin the consideration of such proposals as Henry Kissinger's suggestion of a "radical" restructuring of NATO, Samuel Huntington's call for a new conventional strategy, or the "No First Use" concept.³² One might argue that the United States eventually convinced France of the necessity of a German army, even if it had to adapt its own timetable and strategy to the realities of French politics. But the EDC, while well-intentioned and in many respects a noble effort, still demonstrates the limits of America's power to encourage European solutions even in the "golden age" of the Alliance. Will a 1984 version of the "package proposal," tying the continued presence of American soldiers in Europe to the proposed "Europeanization" of NATO have greater success than the EDC? Perhaps. Certainly Europe is far healthier economically and Franco-German relations much better in 1984 than 1950. But one wonders whether American ultimatums or warnings might not simply revive old ghosts within Europe, and create new crises, such as the question of a nuclear-armed West Germany. Josef Joffe has recently argued that "NATO's detractors ignore the central role America has played in pacifying a state system that almost consumed itself in two world wars."³³ Despite occasional frustration with our European allies, we must recognize that America's leadership and commitment within NATO have become indispensable to the stability of the international system. Unlike 1950, such leadership can no longer be part of a "package proposal," but is rather the foundation of the whole structure.

32. Henry Kissinger, "A Plea to Reshape NATO," *Time*, 5 March 1984, pp. 20-24.

33. Josef Joffe, "Europe's American Pacifier," *Foreign Policy* no. 54 (Spring 1984), p. 83.

