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THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF WEST GERMAN MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE

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THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF WEST GERMAN MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE

SUMMARY

The members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have agreed in principle on the desirability of West German contributions to European defense, although differences in regard to the exact nature, extent, and timing of such contributions still persist. For the purposes of this paper, it is assumed that: (1) Germany will contribute to West European defense approximately ten ground combat divisions, totaling about 170,000 officers and men; (2) these divisions will be under the command of NATO, and not under a German General Staff; (3) these divisions will be dependent upon NATO for the procurement of their arms and equipment; (4) Germany will have no navy or strategic air force, but will have such tactical air units for the support of the combat divisions as the NATO unified command deems necessary; (5) German military production will be under NATO control.

Although the West Germans have increasingly shown concern for their own military security and desire for strengthening Allied forces in Germany, public opinion is still unformed concerning German participation in Western defense. The Federal Government favors such participation for its effects on German military security, bargaining power with the Allies, international prestige, and internal economic expansion. The Socialists, whose support would be essential to effective remilitarization, will be particularly insistent on prior attainment of German sovereignty and equality and on major increases in Allied military strength before consenting to German remilitarization.

Remilitarization would extend federal control over the *Laender* and might eventually

require some form of military conscription. It would also result in a general expansion of industrial activity and absorption of a large number of the unemployed, thus compensating for a possible consumer goods shortage. Serious problems for future German political development along democratic lines would arise from the introduction into the present West German scene of a German military organization. It is possible that the officers, with their strongly authoritarian political tendencies, might again become a powerful factor in West Germany. A problem to Western interests would be posed by the Eastern orientation of some officers, who might attempt to reach agreements with the USSR. Although effective NATO controls would tend to counter the adverse implications of West German remilitarization, such controls are likely to become increasingly difficult to maintain over an extended period of German economic and military mobilization.

Although the NATO countries have accepted the necessity of German military participation in a Western defense force, early implementation will encounter considerable obstruction, especially on the part of France. The development of an effective Western defense system with German participation will, however, engender a feeling of security among the peoples of Western and Northern Europe.

The Kremlin has probably realized for some time that its global strategy and the creation of the East German Alert Police would eventually lead to some form of West German remilitarization. While the USSR will probably rely on political and diplomatic means to prevent the effective participation of West Ger-

Note: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force have concurred in this report. It contains information available to CIA as of 10 November 1950.

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many in the Western defense system, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the USSR will resort to military action. Such action would probably not be taken at least until the USSR concludes that these means have failed and that West German remilitarization will

make the NATO military establishment a serious threat to the USSR. Even under these conditions, a Soviet decision to use military force, which would mean war with the West, would involve larger considerations than West German remilitarization.

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THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF WEST GERMAN MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE

Introduction.

The rapid growth of interest in West German remilitarization, reflecting the increased tension of the international situation and culminating during September 1950 in the New York Tripartite Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the US, UK, and France and of the Foreign and Defense Ministers of the North Atlantic Pact nations, has helped to crystallize the probable form of future remilitarization. Clearly rejected in the majority of West German comment, as well as by the Defense Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), is the recreation of an independent, national German army. The Tripartite Foreign Ministers and the NATO officially agreed in principle on the desirability of West German contributions to European defense. Differences among the various powers as to the exact nature, extent, and timing of such contributions still prevent agreement on the details.

For the purposes of this paper, therefore, it is assumed that: (1) Germany will contribute to West European defense approximately ten ground combat divisions, totalling about 170,000 officers and men; (2) these divisions will be under the command of NATO, and not under a German General Staff; (3) these divisions will be dependent upon NATO for the procurement of their arms and equipment; (4) Germany will have no navy or strategic air force, but will have such tactical air units for support of the combat divisions as the NATO unified command deems necessary; (5) German military production will be under NATO control. (The term "remilitarization" is used in this paper to denote German rearmament in accordance with the foregoing assumptions.)

Reaction and Implications in West Germany.

Since the outbreak of the Korean war, fear of Soviet aggression has increased sharply

among West Germans and expressed itself in demands for effective defense of Western Germany's eastern frontier by strengthened Allied armies. Despite this growing concern over military security, West German public opinion is still not crystallized concerning German participation in Western defense. Sentiment against rearmament is still strong, particularly among the young Germans. The fears most frequently voiced in connection with active German participation in a Western defense effort are: the outbreak of a general war; the likelihood of Soviet reprisals; the finality of the division of Germany; an armaments race between East and West Germany, with the eventual prospect of a civil war on German soil; and finally, the "sacrifice of German blood for foreign interests." Furthermore, virtually all Germans reject service in a Western force before Germany has been granted full sovereignty and equal status among the free nations.

In keeping with public opinion, the Federal Government and the political parties have shown increasing interest in German remilitarization. Chancellor Adenauer has repeatedly stated that the threat from the East must be met by: (1) a rapid increase in US forces in Germany to a total of at least ten armored divisions; (2) the creation of an integrated Western defense force; and (3) an early decision regarding German participation in this force. The Chancellor's desire for West German contributions to Western defense arises from a conviction that such contributions would: (1) materially enhance the military security of West Germany; (2) improve the Federal Republic's bargaining position with the Allies on other issues; (3) ensure rapid attainment of German international equality; and (4) serve to accelerate German economic recovery and Western European integration.

The chief opposition party, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), has stated that the only

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formula for remilitarization it would find acceptable would be German participation in a "European defense force." The SPD, however, refuses to consider any remilitarization plans until: (1) Allied forces in Germany are made strong enough not merely to defend the Elbe line successfully, but also to liberate East Germany immediately and carry the war onto enemy territory; (2) Germany is made fully sovereign and equal to the other Western European countries; and (3) a new *Bundestag* has been elected. In addition, the SPD has taken the position that remilitarization would have to be preceded by amendment of the Basic Law requiring a two-thirds *Bundestag* majority. The SPD might agree to support remilitarization for something less than satisfaction of its extreme demands, but it would be even more insistent than the Federal Government on a major increase in the strength of Allied forces in Germany. The very scope of the SPD demands, if not modified, would place the Adenauer administration in a difficult position. However, especially in view of the existing opposition to rearmament, SPD support would appear to be a necessary prerequisite for the implementation of the remilitarization program.

For West Germany as a whole, remilitarization would bring about a greater measure of sovereignty and international equality, strengthen German prestige and bargaining power, and increase the scope of federal authority over the *Laender*. Remilitarization would necessitate formation of a federal defense ministry and might eventually require some form of military conscription. It would shift the burden of industrial production from civilian use to military requirements. The general expansion of industrial activity would absorb a large number of the unemployed and increase the national product, thus compensating for a possible consumer goods shortage. An increase in taxation and allocation of materials in short supply would be inevitable.

The introduction of a German military organization into the present West German scene will pose serious problems for future German political development along democratic lines. Effective remilitarization of West Germany will require some use of the

old officer corps and of manpower trained and in service under the Nazi regime. Expediency, time, and available facilities would preclude selection of an entirely new officer corps. Even if the former officers were screened so as to eliminate the most active Nazis, they would still constitute a body with strongly authoritarian political tendencies, which might again become a powerful factor in Germany. Under their leadership, the new German military establishment might arouse extreme nationalist and irredentist sentiment (especially among the more than 8 million refugees and expellees), provide a cover or organizational center for various extreme rightist groups, and influence the government by the mere weight of its position in political and economic life. Military influence over the government might lead to the alienation of the trade unions, the SPD, and even the left wing of the CDU, and thereby weaken the cohesion of the present pro-Western front in Germany. Moreover, the coordinated development of German economic and military strengths may well lead to their amalgamation and eventual ascendancy over the Federal Government. The relative weakness of this government, stemming from its lack of firm popular support and the probable inability or unwillingness of the present German bureaucracy to combat the military, could promote such a development.

Another problem for Western security is posed by the doubtful position of some military circles in the East-West struggle. An anti-Communist attitude on the part of these cliques would not by any means exclude attempts to reach expedient agreements directly with the USSR or through East Germany. Such attempts would be in line with the thought, historically strong in German military sets, that Germany's destiny lies in the East, and that Germany has prospered most when it has been on friendly terms with Russia. The revival of this tradition, which finds support on both the extreme Right and Left, might be given impetus by the belief that the Western Powers will not be able to prevent a Soviet advance in Western Europe and that German unification can be achieved only with the help of the USSR. Those who seek an

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accommodation with the USSR do not fear that an alliance between Germany and the USSR would draw Germany completely into the Soviet satellite system and have often expressed the belief that such a development would be prevented by the political, strategic, and technological weight of a united and remilitarized Germany.

The imposition of effective NATO controls would tend to counteract the adverse implications of German remilitarization discussed in the preceding paragraphs. The denial of an independent economic basis and the limitation of the size and character of the forces would diminish the political weight which the German military establishment exerted under earlier regimes. The traditional German tendency toward militarism could probably be contained within the framework of Allied controls as long as these controls are effectively maintained. Such controls, however, are likely to become increasingly difficult as the German economic and military potential is mobilized for the Western defense effort. The Allies are committed to a policy of gradually transferring sovereignty and responsibility to the German authorities. German demands, however, will outpace Allied implementation of this policy.

Reaction and Implications in Western and Northern Europe.

The principle of eventual participation of German armed units in a Western defense force under the NATO was accepted by the Western and Northern European countries. Despite French acceptance of this concept regarding Germany, the deep-seated opposition to German rearmament before Western armed forces are built up or before the Schuman Plan is effective will continue. The French will insist on the priority of French rearmament and will resist any steps toward the equipment of German units which might divert arms from other Western European allocations. As a result, implementation of any program which includes the rapid creation of a large German ground force will encounter considerable French obstruction. Such obstruction might be viewed sympathetically by the Benelux countries and, to a lesser degree, by Norway and Denmark. To the extent that

West German military contributions result in an effective Western European defense system under NATO, however, a feeling of security will be engendered among the peoples of Western and Northern Europe.

Reaction and Implications in the Soviet Bloc.

The Kremlin has probably realized for some time that its global strategy and the creation of the East German Alert Police would eventually lead to some form of West German remilitarization. In an attempt to prevent such a development the USSR is now employing a variety of diplomatic and political measures.

Within this framework, the USSR could calculate that its only means to neutralize West Germany militarily would be an effective agreement among the Big Four, or more states, for the permanent demilitarization of all of Germany. Since such a demilitarization could be enforced only in a united Germany, the principal prerequisite would be Soviet acceptance of the Western position on free elections throughout Germany. This would greatly reduce the USSR's present control over East Germany. The USSR has given no indication of willingness to sacrifice such control.

Accordingly, the Soviet Union might calculate that a better course of action would be to accommodate itself to the fact of West German rearmament. The USSR might estimate that the Western Powers would, in order to ensure full West German participation in Western defense plans, have to remove all effective controls over West Germany and that this, in turn, would enable the West German Government to pursue an independent foreign policy. The USSR might believe that this situation could be exploited through negotiations with West Germany.

While the USSR will probably rely on political and diplomatic means to prevent the effective participation of West Germany in the Western defense system, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the USSR will resort to military action. Such action would probably not be taken at least until the USSR concludes that these means have failed and that West German remilitarization will make the NATO military establishment a serious threat to the USSR. Even under these con-

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ditions, a Soviet decision to use military force, which would mean war with the West, would involve larger considerations than West German remilitarization.

West German remilitarization will be used by the USSR as "justification" for retaining and, perhaps, increasing its own forces in East Germany and the other satellites. At the same time, the remilitarization of East Germany will be accelerated in order to increase the over-all military strength of the Soviet bloc. Also, the long-standing Soviet

propaganda effort against West German remilitarization will be intensified. By seeking to promote fear of German military resurgence, the USSR will attempt to divide the West and strengthen the pro-Soviet alignment of those of its satellites which have suffered from German aggression. Within Germany, the USSR will claim that the Western "imperialists" intend to use the Germans as dupes in an "international plot" to cause another war, which would completely devastate Germany.

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