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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY:  
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

A lecture delivered  
at the Naval War College  
on 3 December 1964

by

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I am glad to have an opportunity to discuss some of my country's problems. I would like to concentrate on some major political items, leaving aside the economic field in which I am no expert. Furthermore, I think I should refrain from commenting on my country's status and role in the world today. It will be up to you to make an assessment of Germany's status in the world; it is my task to furnish you with some facts.

I. The Division of Germany as a National and  
International Problem

In starting a description of the German situation one is tempted to begin with an adaptation of Julius Caesar's famous first line in 'De Bello Gallico': Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres' (Gaul as a whole is divided in three parts.) In political terms there is still one Germany within the borders of the German Reich of December 31, 1937. It is a Germany which awaits a peace treaty, divided and not yet under a central (unified) government. The western part of this Germany has been organized as a temporary entity with a freely elected government, the Federal Republic of Germany, for which I speak here today. The eastern-most parts of our country, namely, East Prussia, Silesia, and Pomerania, are under Soviet and Polish administration. The original German population of these provinces has been expelled to a large extent. The center part, the Soviet Zone of Occupation of Germany, has developed, under direct Soviet influence, into a regime called the 'German Democratic Republic,' which is, as you know, not recognized by the community of nations, with the exception of the states of the Eastern bloc, including Red China.

I am speaking here as a representative of the freely elected government of 55 million Germans. But this government also acts as spokesman for 17 million Germans in the Soviet-occupied zone, who are not at present in a position to join us. They are prevented by the force of Soviet arms from the exercise of their right of self-determination, the exercise of which would bring about an immediate reunification of the German people.

People living in the so-called German Democratic Republic are forcibly prevented from leaving their country in order to travel to the Federal Republic to see and join their relatives and friends. It is easier for them to go to Bulgaria, and even to China, than to make the 20-mile trip from Plauen (Saxony) to Hof (Bavaria). Hundreds of men have been killed or wounded, and thousands have been jailed, simply because they wanted to cross a demarcation line inside Germany. The impact of these facts upon German public opinion, and the necessity as well as the will to change this unbearable situation are, without doubt, the strongest political factors in Germany today. I am talking about the public feeling in both parts of Germany. The situation is so blatantly anomalous that it continuously stirs the conscience of the public. Polls in 1963 have shown that unification was considered, by far, the most important issue, ranking high (31%) above items such as the improvement of the economic situation (21%), maintenance of peace (15%), Berlin (12%), and unification of Europe (12%). Asked about the most ardent political wish, 69% of those interviewed in the Federal Republic in 1962, answered in favor of reunification, compared with 66% in 1957. I may add that the political will toward unification is no monopoly of one of the three parties represented in the Federal Parliament, the Bundestag. There is an absolute consensus in this respect: differences exist only as to the ways and means to reach the common aim. One condition, however, is equally common as well in the public opinion (as the polls show) as among the parties: reunification must not impair the freedom that the German people have obtained in the Federal Republic. This condition obviously creates a serious problem, since the so-called German Democratic Republic is under military occupation exercised by 20 Soviet divisions and is also a part of the communist Warsaw Pact system.

I mention these factors in order to foster an understanding of one of the dilemmas of our foreign policy. Whatever course the Federal Government takes, it is always judged by the public and the political parties according to whether or not it promotes German reunification. On the other hand, the East-West conflict,

the hardening of the border between the free West and the communist East, gave our government little chance to achieve this aim without endangering our freedom.

I have dwelt on this, our basic problem, somewhat longer because I believe that it is indispensable to an understanding of our policy. The quest for reunification pushes us forward and binds our hands at the same time. A concrete consequence is the Hallstein Doctrine, which is devised to discourage other countries from recognizing the Soviet Zone as a state. It has been successful in doing this, but has made us continuously use up much of our political gunpowder. We are obliged to ask our friends to join us in exerting pressure and are forced to use the economic resources which we have, in order to convince new states that it is to their disadvantage to recognize East Germany. But we are doing this in order to keep the separation of Germany from becoming permanent. For the same reason, you will find that we ourselves stubbornly refuse to extend anything to the regime in the Soviet Zone resembling even *de facto* recognition. I regret that we have thereby caused the American government considerable headache and concern, especially during the years of crisis, beginning in 1959, when the Soviet Union tried, by exerting pressure on Berlin, to force the West to recognize the status quo.

The division of Germany and our quest for reunification are major factors in European politics, as well as in East-West relations. It is obvious that the existence of this artificial separation must be the source of constant tension. This is, I believe, recognized even by the Soviet Union. On the other hand, reunification would amount to an important change in the present balance between East and West. A united Germany would have about 73 million inhabitants; it would be by far the most populous country in Europe outside the Soviet Union. To this one must add the fact that the economy of the Federal Republic is already the strongest in Europe (again not counting the Soviet Union), whereas the economy of the Soviet Zone ranks second in the Soviet bloc. Not only would reunification create a tremendously potent economic power in Central Europe, but the Soviet bloc would at the same time suffer a substantial loss. It is not easy, for the moment, to conceive of conditions under which the Soviet Union would accept reunification except, of course, Germany's joining the Eastern bloc, which is as I mentioned before, unacceptable to us. A neutralized Germany has been proposed by some authors and politicians, but it would also mean a loss to the Soviet Union. Not only would the

economic potential of the Soviet Zone be removed from the Soviet orbit, but it would mean that for the first time a communist regime had lost the fight against capitalist reaction. Under these circumstances the status quo—the partition of Germany—is relatively the best situation from the Soviet point of view - at least until new progress towards the West appears possible. Similarly, Germany's neighbors, Poland and Czechoslovakia, for political reasons, prefer a divided Germany - even though Poland at least understands very well, from its own experience, the emotional and historical background of Germany's drive for unity. Poland may also fear that a stronger and united Germany will eventually reclaim her Eastern provinces that are now under Polish administration. It seems also that Czechoslovakia is afraid that this Germany may ask for the Sudetenland, that part of the Republic with an original German population that was ceded to Hitler under the Munich agreement and which was returned to Czechoslovakia after the war.

If we turn to our Western allies, we are told by all of them that they fully understand and back our wish to reunify Germany. This is quite a contrast with the immediate postwar period, when a divided Germany seemed to many the best way to establish a peaceful Europe. I believe it has been understood that the division of Germany creates a constant and dangerous tension in the heart of Europe. The misgivings caused by the image of a strong Germany in the center of the continent seem to have subsided, partially because of the realization of the size of the Soviet threat, and partially because of growing confidence and understanding towards Germany.

However, the sympathy of our friends does not bring us nearer to our goal. What is needed is political, initiative aimed at a change of the present status. And here is one of our gravest problems: asking for reunification of Germany means a drive for a change in the status quo in Europe, even though it involves, from our point of view, only internal German affairs. Other countries, even if they understand the dangers arising from the situation in Central Europe, may feel that a political drive for reunification involves more risks than opportunities and would increase rather than decrease tension. In Germany, on the other hand, there exists a widespread feeling that the policy of *détente* that seems to be favored by both East and West, tends to freeze the status quo and with it the division of our country.

At first glance, the dilemma seems unsolvable. But if one takes a closer look at the concept of *détente* and the underlying political calculations, things do not look quite as hopeless. *Détente* does not mean a stabilization of the status quo; it is not necessarily a static concept. On the contrary, the present confrontation in a cold war has made any move impossible. From a *détente* we expect the unfreezing of the situation that will enable the West to conduct a more dynamic policy. A credible defensive strength on the one hand, and the readiness to enter into all kinds of relations with the countries of the Eastern bloc, will possibly create a new and different climate there. We cannot expect the communist regimes in the satellite countries to disappear overnight; but a slow development toward greater independence may sooner or later facilitate a gradual and careful extension of the Western influence towards the East. In such a development we see, as of now, the only possibility for a reunification of Germany in peace is one which would bring Eastern Europe closer to the West. And we are acting accordingly. Notwithstanding the limitations that result from the application of the Hallstein Doctrine, we have established economic missions in Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, and Hungary. Negotiations with Czechoslovakia are under way. We hope to expand these missions to the cultural field as well, and thus slowly intensify contacts with Germany's Eastern neighbors.

## II. Europe and the German-French Relationship

Having pointed to the mortgage on our 'lot,' namely, the absence of a peace treaty with the whole of Germany, I would like to turn to our role in Europe. This role, as well as our position in the Atlantic Alliance, must obviously be qualified by the existence of 'unfinished business.' To what extent can we, in a time of danger and tension such as ours, when an easement is the main political topic, expect our friends to join forces with us if our primary political aim of reunification involves a change of the status quo? Aside from this basic reservation, things look quite encouraging in Europe. It is almost unbelievable - but it is a reality - that after the last formidable outburst in the Second World War and under the threat from the East, distrust and hatred, those patterns of political behavior in Europe through the ages, have practically disappeared. The whole political climate has utterly changed. The realization of how much the peoples of Europe have in common in cultural heritage, in thinking and in history, not to mention the economic and military imperatives, has made possible developments that seemed incredible only one

generation ago. The most striking developments in this regard are, in my opinion, German-French reconciliation and the creation of the European Communities—the Coal and Steel Community, the Common Market, and Euratom. I mentioned the German-French reconciliation first because we feel that this is the cornerstone for the evolution of a new Europe.

Only a close and friendly relationship with France made the first steps toward a European concept possible. Without it, the communities which I just mentioned would not exist and the future of Europe would be dark and uncertain. To cement this basis of a sound European development, the Franco-German treaty of 1963 was concluded. This treaty was *not* meant to give either side a *carte blanche*. On the contrary, it was intended to bring about close cooperation and to create a climate in which possible misunderstandings could be eliminated, and in which it would become impossible for one side to act in a way that would eventually prove to be disadvantageous to the other.

There is no reason for me to hide the fact that a close relationship between France and Germany does not mean - as it may seem - that German and French political thinking are always identical. I must admit to the contrary. One of the most critical differences in opinion concerns the form of future political unity in Europe. You know that six of the European countries have developed a high degree of integration in certain fields of economic life, such as coal and steel, trade, and peaceful use of nuclear power. The three communities will soon merge. There will be a joint parliamentary representation and a common court of justice. The fusion of the six countries in the economic field will become almost inextricable. What is missing is a similar development in the political and the military field. The German Federal Government, and most of the other countries of the community, envisage in these fields as well, a solution of the community type - something that would lead finally toward a genuine integration or a federation of Europe. President de Gaulle, on the other hand, feels that political and military integration is in contradiction to the concept of the state that keeps a nation together.

In President de Gaulle's view, it is inconsistent with the concept of a sovereign state to give up the right to decide by itself, and alone, on matters concerning political survival. This would lead, in fact, to a union and thereby to the end of the original state. The General, I believe, feels that all forms of integration or federation lead to a loss of the personality of the states concerned. This will, he thinks, finally entail a

degeneration of the political will of the nations involved. Not being able to make final decisions on one's own destiny, political interest must decline. It will become harder and harder to mobilize all the active energies in the country that are needed, as for instance, the recovery of France. De Gaulle's idea of a future European unity is based on the acceptance of the national state as the indispensable ground element. The way towards Europe that France is therefore suggesting now is that a process of osmosis should be started among the states of the future union that would eventually lead not only to a high degree of mutual understanding, but also to a closeness in thinking and political planning. This would be brought about by a system of regular consultation on all levels of administration, conducted with a will to work out commonly acceptable views and plans for action on all types of day-to-day and long-term problems. Even though this system might not work - at least at the beginning - in many cases, it is hoped that it will widen slowly, over the years, the field of common interest, understanding and action. This is the way the German-French treaty is supposed to function, and this is, as I see it, also General de Gaulle's idea of a slow but solid growing together of Europe in the political domain.

In the military field, General de Gaulle's starting point is similar: he feels that integration not only takes the fighting spirit—the feeling of mission to serve one's country—out of the Army, but also deprives the nation of its freedom of decision in matters of life and death. The De Gaulle formula for military co-operation in peacetime, therefore, comes much closer to the classical type of alliance than to the present partly integrated NATO concept.

It may look somehow like a deviation from my subject if I have ventured to analyze the attitude of our French friends. But the reason is, of course, that I cannot point out the differences between French and German thinking, if I fail to show how we see the position of our French ally. Now, let me turn to the German views.

For us the idea of a federated, or even a highly integrated, Europe does not cause the same misgivings as it does to President de Gaulle. And we have some good reasons for this, which are essentially, and naturally, quite different from the motives of the French. For us the idea of the individual national state has lost much of its appeal in the last 30 years. We believe that the closer Europe can be molded together, the firmer it will



be. The idea of a Federal State does not sound negative to our ears, since our Federal system has proven that there is enough political power and jurisdiction left under this system for the 'länder' (states) to maintain and develop their own individual personality. Moreover, we have learned in our history, (for instance in the years of the expanding Empire from 1648 to 1803, and during the time of the German Federation from 1815 to 1866) that the hope for an osmosis between relatively independent states has, at least in our case, never worked out. The 'perpetual imperial diet' in Regensburg, as well as the 'Federal Diet' in Frankfurt, simply did not succeed in bringing Germany closer together. On the contrary, in spite of identity in language, culture, history, and in many other respects, the political effect was not positive. The perpetual diet became the scene of political strife inside Germany into which foreign powers interfered indirectly or directly. The history of the German Federation, in particular, shows that the struggle between the two strongest powers in the Federation, Austria and Prussia, resulted in the final collapse of the system.

We have one further reason for our reluctance to follow the line of President de Gaulle. In the military field, we are strong supporters of integration. We believe that the integration of the staff structure of the Alliance is a prerequisite for well-balanced common planning. What is of advantage to the Alliance as a whole, can more easily be worked out by an integrated body, than by a number of individual national general staffs. Such an integrated staff, as we know, for example, from SACEUR, has a tendency to develop a thinking of its own. The close cooperation of staff officers from all the allied countries results, as has been shown, in a meeting of minds that represents the thinking of the Alliance much better than an endeavor to coordinate a number of different national war plans.

Germany has a special interest in integration and for a very obvious reason. The German army contingent under NATO is already the strongest ground force in Europe outside the Soviet Union. It is equipped with the most modern weapons, with the exception, of course, of the American forces. Nineteen years after the end of the last world war this is a most astonishing and, in some respects, a disturbing fact. Demilitarization and total disarmament of Germany belonged to the proclaimed war aims of the Allied Powers during and immediately after the war. The 'reeducation' of the German people after 1945 was particularly strict in its denunciation of everything relating to national

defense. It went so far as to abolish military pensions for the wounded and crippled. Participation in this war—in any war—was looked upon as immoral, if not criminal. Public opinion in Germany, worn out and tired by an endless and hopeless war against almost the entire world, was ready to accept this proposition. A soldier became a kind of symbol and the scapegoat for Germany's political and military catastrophe. No wonder that the sudden change to rearmament in the years after 1951 was highly unpopular. With bravery and farsightedness, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer accepted the Allied wish, and fought it through against the opposition party in the parliament as well as in the constitutional court. Remember that the reestablishment of German sovereignty was directly linked with our acceptance of the European Defense Community, an organization devised for the use and integration of the German military potential in a European organization.

Soon after 1945, it became quite evident to the minds of policy-makers in the United States that the Soviet Union, a wartime ally, quickly supplanted Hitler's Germany as the enemy in Europe. A German contribution to the defense of Europe all of a sudden appeared to be the natural thing; we could not expect to be defended by our American allies without lifting a hand ourselves. The way chosen to avoid the resurgence of the vitally strong German defense force with its own command and general staff - a nightmare for the European countries, and anything but a welcome Christmas present to the Germans themselves - was to give those forces a European mission and to integrate them with other European forces. To our disappointment, the EDC treaty did not come into force. It had to be replaced by some other sort of arrangement:

- (a) Control of the German armament through a refurbished Brussels treaty, the so-called Western European Union, comprising the Six Common Market countries, plus Great Britain;
- (b) Assignment of all German combat forces to NATO; and
- (c) A relatively high degree of integration in NATO on the staff level.

This system made unnecessary the establishment of a German high command with a new German general staff.

In summary, these are the reasons why we so enthusiastically favor the principle of integration in NATO concerning internal German requirements as well as respect for the feelings of our European allies. Needless to say, in addition, the possible difficulties inside and outside the Alliance make us very reluctant to consider a return to a concept along the lines of the classical alliance. This would not only raise the question of a German general staff, but would also change the mission of the German armed forces primarily into a national one.

The next point of divergence between us and France is Britain's role in Europe. It is the declared will of five of the member states of the Common Market that Great Britain should join the organization. The British Government was ready to accede, under specified conditions, which however, France felt unable to accept. The plans for European political unity have always included England, as far as the five were concerned. France's reluctance to accept initial British participation has caused a slowing down of the pace of political unity. Recent events may have changed the situation. The new Labor Government will probably wish to reconsider the European policy of the Tories. It is therefore quite likely that the six will now go on and try to find a limited solution on the basis of the Common Market members, which would be acceptable to France's ideas of sovereignty and would still not exclude further steps toward a closer political organization.

Both the Federal Republic and Italy have since proposed plans for strengthening and developing the political integration of the member states in the European communities. Both plans do not envisage British participation at the outset, and both conceive of a step-by-step concept, recognizing that it is better to take a small step forward towards Europe with French participation, than to wait indefinitely for a more ideal solution. In the first phase of the German plan, the governments will establish and use a system of consultation in order to achieve a conformity of attitude in all matters of common interest in spheres of foreign policy, defense, and cultural affairs, including education. It can easily be seen that our proposal follows the pattern of the Franco-German treaty. But there are two additions: the Governments should be assisted by an advisory committee appointed by them and serving—as an independent entity—solely common interests. This group would be something like a modest but steady motor pulling in the direction of integration. Also, the European Parliamentary Assembly is supposed to function from the outset

as an instrument of political cooperation and integration. What the future of these proposals will be, is hard to say. Lately (in his Strasbourg speech) President de Gaulle has also stressed the necessity of an organization of Europe in the military as well as in the political field. It may well be that the new year will bring new moves toward European integration; moves, that to a certain degree at least are prompted by the developments inside the Atlantic Alliance.

### III. The Atlantic Alliance

There has been, and still is, much talk about the desperate state of the Alliance, of its weakness, and its lack of cohesion, and all too many people are inclined to blame France for this deplorable decline. I submit that this is quite a superficial judgment and that there is a basic similarity between the French and the American concepts that should not be overlooked.

There are two main reasons for the weakening of the Atlantic Alliance. One is the diminishing Soviet threat toward Europe that affects the *raison d'être* of the Alliance as such; on this factor we have no influence; we can only try to develop cohesive forces which serve as a substitute for the former, more immediate threat.

The other reason, however, is the inequality of the partners; and in this respect something can be done in order to remove the source of evil. An alliance consisting of one superpower protecting a number of smaller countries can only last for a short period. To be protected corrupts the character of a nation, weakens the will and the ability for self-defense, promotes within public opinion a feeling of not being responsible, and creates at the same time distrust and ingratitude towards the protecting power.

Having realized that this inequality of the parties is the most divisive factor, the U.S. Government has for many years followed a policy of encouraging the unification of Europe in order to have some day an equal partner on the other side of the Atlantic. This idea of the two columns on which the Atlantic Alliance should rest is fully shared by President de Gaulle. He believes in the necessity of having two equal partners in the Alliance, able to conduct a meaningful and productive discussion across the ocean. We do not know exactly what the French ideas are for the structure of the future Alliance based on the two pillars. It may well be that France thinks of a lesser degree of integration than the rest of us may have in mind. But this is a question to be solved when we have a European Union.

The problem now is to agree on what the Atlantic relationship should be, pending an organization of Europe. Here we find that France, although it adheres to the concept of equality of all the members of the Alliance, is opposed to individual transatlantic ties of European countries. The reasons given are that this would endanger future European union and create instead a solar system of unhealthy, vulnerable, bilateral relationships between the United States and other members of the Alliance. In my opinion, the French position neither solves the problem of the cohesion of the Alliance nor that of the inequality of the partners. It merely preserves the status quo which, as everybody including France knows, is unsatisfactory. We do not see any harm in strengthening the links across the Atlantic, and have difficulty in understanding how this could be detrimental to future European developments.

At this point, of course, the nuclear problem comes into the picture and this is where we might find the key to at least part of the story. The French opposition against participation of individual European states in a closer Atlantic organization became, as I see it, evident for the first time, when Great Britain concluded with the United States the Nassau agreement on the creation of a multilateral, nuclear fleet open to the other parties of the Alliance. It is obvious to me that a concept of Atlantic nuclear sharing is incompatible with the French idea of Europe as an equal partner which would also involve a nuclear deterrent independent of, if not as large as, that of the United States.

Logical as the French attitude undoubtedly is, it causes two serious questions. First, there *is* no European nuclear deterrent. The only continental nuclear power is France, and President de Gaulle has made it very clear that in his opinion a sharing of nuclear responsibility would be in contradiction to the notion of national sovereignty. A united Europe, however, one which would have to depend upon French nuclear capability, would simply trade American leadership for French hegemony. Secondly, a nuclear self-sufficient Europe would run the risk of losing American support because of a growing isolationism, or rather a go-it-alone course, unless very close ties in the nuclear field are maintained. These reasons, among others, have caused the German Federal Government, as well as the Italian Government, to attach great value to the MLF proposal. The same reasons make France its adversary.

The first of the two questions which I have just mentioned shows that the more critical problem is what should be the

future structure of Europe; what should its military and, above all, its nuclear organization be? By inserting a European clause in the MLF draft, we hope to keep the way open for a closer European organization within MLF. The multilateral nuclear force would thus become an incentive rather than an obstacle to European unity, and still remain a strong link between Europe and the United States.

My talk may have created the impression that Germany and France hold differing views in all the critical issues. This, of course, was not my intention. I wanted to stress the necessity of a close Franco-German relationship in order to overcome the existing differences of opinion concerning the future construction of Europe and the Atlantic Alliance. I am sure this will not be an easy task, but feel convinced that we are moving in a forward direction. Germany and France are talking about ways to unite Europe and after hundreds of years of antagonism both have a common aim. This is basically what matters. The problems that we have to face are quite different from those of the old days of Europe. The nuclear issue has added a new dimension to our way of thinking. I believe that under the present circumstances a nuclear sharing by the European nations is not only the way to unite the continent on a basis of equality, but also the way to create a sound balance inside the Atlantic Alliance. The key to this solution lies in the hands of the United States, and the Administration is well aware of this responsibility. As far as we are concerned, we are willing and ready to continue on our way forward in building a strong Europe as an inseparable partner of the Atlantic Alliance.

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