

Military integration of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Western Alliance

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[Konrad Adenauer] The idea that Germany can lead an existence in political and economic isolation, untroubled by the tensions and conflicts present in the world, is inconceivable. This is a pipe dream; it is illusory. Those who hold such an illusory belief and seek to put it to political effect do not distance Germany from world events. They do something else entirely: they plunge Germany into these world events as a victim of others' designs.

[Commentary] There was grave danger of the Federal Republic of Germany becoming embroiled in world politics. In June 1950, Communist North Korea invaded South Korea. Only a US army under the command of the United Nations could liberate South Korea once more. The Korean War caused a worldwide shock. It was evidence of Communist expansionist tendencies. Adenauer therefore sought to secure the freedom of the Federal Republic through ties with the Western democracies. Further milestones on the path to security, equality and sovereignty were the *Deutschlandvertrag*, or Germany Treaty, and the Treaty establishing the European Defence Community signed in May 1952 in Bonn.

[Konrad Adenauer] This Treaty will secure freedom for our country, for Germany.

[Commentary] The *Deutschlandvertrag* was to bring the period of occupation to an end. The Treaty establishing the European Defence Community provided for the integration of the national armed forces under a common High Command. The aim was to speed up the process of European integration and also to promote the sovereignty of the Federal Republic. In early 1953, John Foster Dulles visited Bonn.

[John Foster Dulles] We know Chancellor Adenauer as one of the eminent statesmen of the post-war period. He has the imagination to see the great possibilities which lie ahead and the realism to move forward to turn these possibilities into realities.

[Commentary] However, a bitter defeat resulted in the failure of the European Defence Community. The die was cast in Paris: after three days fraught with drama and tension, a decision was made by vote in the National Assembly that had attracted the keen interest of the French population. In total, 319 MPs voted against the EDC, 264 voted in favour. Adenauer was profoundly dejected.

[Lothar Rühl] One month after this event, I saw Konrad Adenauer again in London, at Claridge's Hotel. He was overwhelmed by bleak images and scenarios and said at that time: 'My God, what will become of Germany when I am gone? While I am still alive, use the time to anchor the Federal Republic of Germany firmly in Western Europe' so that it could not subsequently engage, once more, in seesaw politics, as he called it, between East and West. He spoke very forcefully of this scenario in which German politics would find itself, once again, caught between East and West at the heart of Europe and in which a movement towards the Soviet Union would establish Soviet rule over Germany and the whole of Europe.

[Commentary] Barely one month later, the Federal Republic of Germany became a member of NATO. The accession ceremony was held in Paris. The Foreign Ministers of the 14 Atlantic Pact countries met in the Palais de Chaillot. With their signatures, they approved the accession of Germany to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

[Lothar Rühl] After Konrad Adenauer had signed what he referred to as a major agreement, he returned to his hotel, the Hotel Bristol, where he held a press conference during which he told us that: 'We are now part of the world's most powerful military alliance. It will bring us reunification.'

[Commentary] Rearmament was, from the outset, a major bone of contention.

[Konrad Adenauer] The Paris Agreements are capable of achieving even more: they are capable of opening a new chapter in European history. There was a time when a few people dreamed of European unity. It has since become the hope of many, and today it is a necessity for all.

[Erich Ollenhauer] Today, the decision is still in our hands. Tomorrow, it could be too late.

[Commentary] Adenauer was successful. The Paris Agreements came into force in 1955. On 1 January 1956, the first soldiers of the Federal German Army moved into the garrison town of Andernach. The signing of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community in 1957 in Rome was the highlight of Adenauer's successful European policy. The Federal Chancellor and the Christian Democratic Union could look to the 1957 parliamentary elections with confidence. These elections were a strong reaffirmation of the policies adopted so far. The CDU/CSU secured the absolute majority.