

The genesis and failure of the plan for a European Defence Community

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The genesis and failure of the plan for a European Defence Community

In 1950, the Korean War and the communist threat proved how pressing the need was for a European defence organisation that would necessarily include German armed forces. Moreover, the need for German rearmament was constantly repeated by a US Administration anxious to thwart the ambitions of communism in Europe. But Europe still held vivid and painful memories of the war and of German military occupation. Keen that the establishment of a German army should be undertaken within the confines of a European structure, René Pleven, President of the French Council of Ministers, put forward to his European partners a plan proposing the constitution of a European army. But the attempt to transpose the European Coal and Steel Community model to the military field proved to be an ambitious plan.