

THE  
GERMAN  
PROBLEM:

A PERSONAL  
VIEW

*George F. Kennan*

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GERMAN ISSUES ■ 6

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# FOREWORD

In this, the sixth number in our series of occasional papers, we are privileged to publish an essay written exclusively for the Institute by the noted diplomat and historian, George F. Kennan. His personal view of the German problem is his first important statement on the issue since his Reith Lectures for the British Broadcasting Corporation 32 years ago.

At the Institute's request, Professor Kennan begins with recollections of his involvement with American planning for Germany's future when he was Director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff in the late 1940s and also of the reception accorded his Reith Lecture proposals for a unified, demilitarized, and neutral Germany. The bulk of the essay deals with the reemergence of the issue of German unity, as one consequence of the current softening of an East-West division in Europe that was engendered by the onset of the cold war 40 years ago.

George Kennan has been one of our country's most prescient analysts of the international conduct of states. My admiration for his work goes back to diplomatic service with him during his ambassadorship to Yugoslavia in the early 1960s. Personal friendship, therefore, compounds the intellectual pleasure with which I offer this essay to readers on behalf of the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies.

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Robert Gerald Livingston  
Director

April 1989

When the Berlin blockade was nearing an end in 1949 the Western powers were already well along in implementing plans to create what eventually became the West German government. They were, however, at the same time formally committed (this was the price of ending the blockade) to hold another meeting of the foreign ministers of the four countries whose forces were occupying what was left of Germany. It was clear, for this reason, that they would not be able to avoid confronting the Russians in a further discussion of the German problem.

The question therefore arose: What position should the Western side take at this meeting? Should we demand a return to the situation that existed before the blockade was imposed, marked as it was by the determination of the Western side to establish, in the face of Soviet opposition, a separate government in the western part of divided Germany? There was, of course, nothing in this plan for the Russians; and insistence upon a separate government clearly meant a complete break with them, at the cost of a further deepening of the division of both Germany and Berlin. Or rather, should we try to achieve an agreed settlement that would involve at least a limited withdrawal of both the Western and Soviet forces from the center of Germany and permit the establishment, in the area evacuated, of some sort of all-German authority, albeit a neutralized and demilitarized one? This approach would at least solve the problem of communications with Berlin; and it would obviate any further crisis such as the one we had just experienced.

Charged with examining these questions, the Department of State's Policy Planning Staff, of which I was then director, came up with a paper defining these alternatives and making suggestions for the way our government might wish to go. I myself favored the second of the two alternatives (which we designated as Plan A) because it seemed to me to hold greater promise for Europe's long-term future. The first alternative, I thought, in addition to offering no solution of the Berlin problem, would merely seal the Continent's division for an indefinite time. Had I then known (which I did not) that others in Washington were already thinking about rearming West Germany and bringing it into the NATO pact, my opposition to the first alternative would have been even stronger. It would certainly have occurred to me then (as it did later) that anything of this sort would be bound to preclude, for decades to come, any useful discussion of the German problem with the Soviets and would greatly heighten the military significance of the existing division.

However, I found no significant support for my view anywhere in the Western political-military establishment. The French and British were against it. So was Dr. Konrad Adenauer. So were General Lucius Clay and the Pentagon. The choice went decisively in the other direction. We settled down at once to that military division of the Continent that has endured to this day. Shortly after the choice was made I left government service and took up an academic life.

There was to be, however, a short sequel. In 1957 when it became evident that the Western powers were preparing to supplement their conventional forces in West Germany with nuclear weapons, this struck me as unfortunate to the highest degree. I felt it was bound to complicate not only the political future of Europe but also the universally significant problem of preventing an open-ended nuclear arms race, with all the apocalyptic dangers that implied. Invited that same year to deliver the annual Reith Lectures over the radio facilities of the British Broadcasting Corporation in London, I used the occasion to warn, with all the passion I could muster, against the nuclearization of the military confrontation in Central Europe. This warning, too, was not only ignored by the respective governments, but it brought down upon my head the fury of a great many people, including Adenauer and those around him. (It even had the remarkable effect of uniting John Foster Dulles and Dean Acheson in amicable agreement on the heretical quality of my views.

In itself this episode was of minor importance. The lectures, to be sure, received great public attention, but they turned out to constitute only a minor obstacle on the path to the nuclearization of the cold war. If the episode is worth recalling today, it is because it brought out more clearly the nature of the differences that at that time divided me from even many of my good friends, including Acheson. These differences, as we shall see, are not irrelevant to the situation we are beginning to face today.

Incidentally, I have no disrespect for the views of those good friends. Many of them feared a united Germany more than the consolidation of Russian power over the eastern half of the Continent. They thought that any attempt to agree with Moscow about a mutual withdrawal of Soviet and Western military forces from the center of Germany, and about the political complexion and international relationships of the united Germany that could be expected to result from this change, might prove divisive in its effect on the Western community, thereby laying

the groundwork for new instability. They thought it safer, for the short term at least, to struggle along with the political inconveniences and uncertainties of a divided Continent, hoping that the increased Western military power would make possible some day a European settlement on the West's own terms—a settlement whereby (or so one must conclude) the Soviets would withdraw their forces from East Germany unilaterally and permit that region to join the German Federal Republic and be included in NATO.

From the short-term point of view, this argument had much to commend it. Yet aside from obviously being totally unacceptable to the Russians, there were two principal reasons among others why I could not favor it. First, it offered no solution to the problem of the ultimate status of Berlin. Second, it envisaged the indefinite maintenance of a strong American military presence in the heart of Europe; and it thus involved the risk that someday we might, in deference to domestic opinion, find ourselves pressed to withdraw our forces unilaterally from that region, getting nothing for it in the way of compensatory action from the Soviet side. This would be, as I then thought and still do, the worst of all possible outcomes.

A third reason for my doubts about the decision to settle for a military-political division of Germany and Europe was the one set forth in my memoirs, written in 1966:

...if some day there should be an insistent demand on the part of the Eastern European countries for some sort of reintegration into the European community generally, and if the nature of their relations with the Soviet Union is at that time such as to permit this to happen peacefully, then the limitations of the arrangements concluded in 1949 and 1954 will at once become apparent and people will have to occupy themselves seriously once again with the logic, if not with the detailed provision, of "Plan A"...

Anyone familiar with the world scene of 1989 will have to recognize that each one of these misgivings about the long-term implications of the decisions reached in the late 1940s and early 1950s has gained in actuality with the passage of the years. The Berlin problem has found no solution. On the contrary, its difficulty has been heightened over

the intervening period. Increasingly in recent years voices from influential quarters of American public life have urged the unilateral withdrawal of all or part of our forces in Germany. And now it is becoming increasingly evident that certain Warsaw Pact countries, encouraged by the more liberal policies of Mikhail Gorbachev, are feeling the need for a relationship with Western Europe that is inconsistent with the concept underlying the initial decision to divide Germany and Europe. The growing actuality of all these doubts about the long-term validity of the decisions taken 40 years ago suggests that the present is a suitable moment for reexamining those questions in light of the recent changes affecting the situation in Central Europe.

### **The Consolidation of West Germany**

The first and most significant of these changes is that the kind of Germany some of us had in mind in the 1950s as an alternative to a divided one has simply disappeared from the realm of immediate practical possibility. The reasons for this are so many that it is scarcely necessary to adduce them. When in those earlier years I suggested a limited unification of Germany (and did so reluctantly, viewing it as the only visible alternative to an indefinite prolongation of the division of that country and of the Continent), I had in mind a demilitarized and neutralized Germany. Something of that sort was conceivable then. Today, it is no

The rearming of Germany is today an accomplished fact. The West German conventional forces are the strongest in Central Europe outside the Soviet Union. They represent the kingpin of NATO's conventional defense posture, as it has existed for some 30 years. Without them the established concept of Western defense would collapse. They have become so deeply ingrained in NATO thinking that their removal would upset the entire prevailing system of security arrangements. Even if foreign troops were withdrawn from both parts of divided Germany, a reasonably strong West German defensive force would be required, only as a form of reassurance to West German and other West European opinion.

The same considerations apply, of course, to any political neutralization of a conceivably unified Germany. That a disarmed German might have safely and usefully occupied a neutral position between the two political blocs was not inconceivable in the early 1950s, as th



subsequent example of Austria shows. Particularly would this have been conceivable if a disarmed Germany had been, as I had always assumed it would be, firmly embraced in some sort of a European federation. But a united Germany lacking any such imbedding in an all-European structure, though possessing major armed forces of its own, never entered into my imagination as a desirable solution of the problem. I would consider such a situation as unacceptable today as at any time in the past. It is an alternative that would create more problems than it would solve. The conclusions to which this leads are obvious. If the disarmament of Germany is unthinkable in the absence of a general European political settlement, and if the neutralization of an armed Germany is not only politically implausible but also theoretically undesirable in present circumstances, then unification of that country is simply not an option for the foreseeable future.

Nor are these the only reasons why this is the case. The division of Germany has now lasted for a full four decades—over the passage, that is, of an entire generation. Over such a span of time people are obliged to adapt to a situation. People on both sides of the dividing line have been doing this in various ways, some fortunate, some unfortunate, and most of them surely inevitable. The Berlin Wall was among the least fortunate of these adaptive steps. But there have been others—social, cultural, spiritual, and political—that have gone far deeper and would probably be more difficult to remove, even in the best of circumstances, than the Wall. Having been under the effects of Germany's divided condition for so long, people have changed and so have regimes.

It would be an exaggeration to say that 40 years of separation from the rest of Germany and subjection to the discipline of a Leninist-communist regime have created in the people of East Germany a new sense of nationality. They remain Germans. Nonetheless, these long years of separation unquestionably have affected them in many ways—in their habits, their outlooks, and their tastes and preferences. In certain respects, to be sure, they envy their West German cousins the conditions in which the latter live; but there are other aspects of West German life that they would not find entirely congenial and where they would prefer to preserve habits, outlooks, and, in some instances, even institutions to which they have grown accustomed. Just from this populist-social standpoint alone, German unification would not be as simple today as it might have been four decades ago.

The two German regimes, as distinct from the peoples, have also evolved, each in its own way. They, too, have adapted to the situation in which they have found themselves. The severe emotional shock of the original separation has subsided. The two governing establishments are learning, slowly and hesitantly but nonetheless definitely, to live side by side. Significant signs already exist that neither the heavily fortified borderlines that separate them nor even the Berlin Wall will be there for eternity. While the East German regime has been, of all the East European ones, the most resistant to the example of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and to the other relaxations that recently have come over Soviet society and Soviet relations with the West, it is bound to be affected by them eventually. If, in other words, the changes of recent years have not made the removal of the division of Europe, particularly in the military-political sense, any easier to bring about, they at least have made the division considerably easier to live with, and they have taken some of the edge off of its dangerousness.

To all of this should be added a recognition that the demand for unification within Germany is not nearly so great as many western commentators seem to assume. It is true that most Germans on both sides of the divide would like to see the German people ultimately reunited in some way. No German politician can wholly renounce this dream. But people have understood that today's realities leave no immediate place for such a reunification and that if it ever comes about, it probably will assume forms that no one today can predict. For these reasons alone its achievement is not, and cannot be, a serious immediate aim of West German or NATO policy.

Seen in this way, the ordering of affairs in Central Europe presents a problem fundamentally different from that of 30 to 40 years ago. No longer may one dream of restoring the integrity of Europe's life by making Germany part of a great neutral zone, unarmed and unaligned across the center of the Continent. The problem today is to find a new pattern of relations among the various parts of Germany—the Federal Republic, the Democratic Republic, and the city of Berlin—and with the remainder of the Continent as well as with the two superpowers. The task is to find a pattern that would permit the gradual removal of the great artificialities of Europe's life flowing from the outcome of World War II—artificialities that have done so much to prevent this great region from recovering its full potential for civilization.

## The Gorbachev Factor

The second great change affecting Germany in recent years comes from the nature and objectives of the regime prevailing in Germany's great neighbor to the east—the Soviet Union. This change has not been entirely Gorbachev's doing. Some of its outlines were beginning to become apparent even before his time. But it is evident that he has given a mighty and decisive push to the whole process; and the dimensions of the change are such that in the respects just mentioned—the nature and objectives of the regime—what we have before us now bears scarcely any resemblance to the Stalinist model of 40 years ago, the image and reality of which served as the foundation for the assumptions and attitudes of the cold war.

There are many ways in which this change affects German interests, but two of them stand out. There is first the effect on the three Warsaw Pact countries—Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland—that lie between West Germany and the Soviet Union. The Gorbachev policies have allowed these countries to enjoy a much greater degree of autonomy in designing both their own economies and the relationships of those economies to the rest of Europe. This autonomy is still, to be sure, subject to two restraints: they must not challenge or neglect their obligations under the Warsaw Pact and they must not discard the designation "socialist" as the official description of their social and political systems. But these restraints are not onerous. The respective countries are at liberty within this framework to design and adopt new patterns of relations with Western Europe in all but the military field. And this opens up new possibilities for their interaction with West Germany, their leading western commercial partner—possibilities that were not visible earlier and that may, with time, assume considerable importance.

To some small extent West Germany's ability to take advantage of these emerging opportunities will be limited by the security restrictions placed upon it by its membership in NATO. Another limitation on West Germany's freedom of action in this respect may soon arise through its membership in the European Community. It may well fall to this Community, rather than any of its individual members, to assume the main responsibility for designing the response to East European demands for a closer relationship with Western Europe. But even in this case, it is West Germany that will, by force of circumstances, be the

leading edge of Community policy. This may not be a bad thing; for it may well turn out that the Community, acting as a whole, will be able to move more boldly, and to go further, in bridging East-West differences in the economic field than would be any of its members acting individually.

Some of the foregoing also applies to East Germany, but not all of it. Such is the sense of political insecurity of that country's leaders, and such is the extent of their radical socialist ideological commitment, that different rules prevail in their case than in those of the other Warsaw Pact countries. In a number of respects they will have greater inhibitions against conforming to West European practices. On the other hand, they already are being admitted, by their virtual inclusion in the West German customs zone, to a closer relationship with the European Community than are the other East European countries.

Altogether, these changes in economic relations between the Warsaw Pact countries and the European Community would seem to offer a way of bypassing, in this particular field, the restraints heretofore imposed upon individual members of the EC by the political hesitations of the major NATO partners. If so, this can be only to the good.

### **The Future of Berlin**

Since mention has just been made of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), this is a good point to note the recent development of relations between the two Germanies. On the purely political level there has been no great change; and none should be anticipated in the immediate future. The East German leadership's extreme political insecurity and defensiveness and its deep ideological commitments, together with the two Germanies' clear conflict of aims over Berlin, would suffice to place limits on overcoming the basic political barrier any time soon. Yet at what might be called the "working level," as distinct from the political one, important changes are in progress. The mere fact that in the last year over 3 million East Germans were permitted to travel to, and within, West Germany stands as a sign of the extent of this change. One cannot avoid having the impression that even in the absence of any governmental agreement about the future arrangements of German society, the ultimate German-German relationship will be formed gradually by a long series of practical measures, each defining one or another

aspect of the lives of people on both sides. Out of this pragmatic process a relationship will be formed that probably will conform to nothing that can be envisaged or intended today, but that nevertheless will come to constitute a new and relatively solid basis for coexistence. Even if this final relationship may be something less than a complete political union, it probably will be something more than a total disunion—some sort of unique *modus vivendi* without precedent in modern state practice but conformable to the many peculiarities of Germany's geographical and political tradition. There, too, such an adjustment plainly will be eased to the extent that the European Community can become a reality in the lives of both segments of the German people.

To a narrowly limited extent, and only to that extent, the process of minor relaxations that ease the two Germanies' coexistence generally may serve the same purpose for Berlin. So long as that city is viewed by both German governments as an object of their respective aims—so long as the East German leadership maintains its outrageous claim to East Berlin as the capital of the GDR, and so long as Bonn remains reluctant to view the western sectors of the city as anything else than a *Land* of the Federal Republic—it is hard to envisage any normalization of conditions in this, Germany's greatest city.

Certainly, the trend of events both in and around Berlin is steadily undermining the validity of the original rationale for erecting the Berlin Wall. One can conceive of the Wall's dismantlement in the not-too-distant future without serious consequences for the East German side, provided this change was not exploited on the Western side, governmental or journalistic, to humiliate the East German authorities. But this would not solve the problem of the location of the GDR government in the eastern sector of the city. Indeed, turning the clock back to the situation preceding the erection of the Wall in 1961 would merely raise once more, in an even more acute form, the question of the city's ultimate fate. Since neither side is prepared as of today to face this problem in any very imaginative or hopeful way, one is constrained, regretfully, to suppose that this singularly ugly and offensive edifice may just as well remain in place for the time being.

The only hopeful resolution of the Berlin problem that this writer can see is the eventual Europeanization of the city—that is, the abandonment by both German governments of their ambitions to absorb their respective sectors into their political systems and the transfer of their

responsibilities to some all-European institution acceptable to both side and the four "occupying" powers. But anything of this sort would, of course, be at best a possibility for the distant future. Meanwhile, both German governments should be aware that the further the relaxation and normalization of conditions proceed in the regions surrounding Berlin, the more the abnormal situation of that city will stand out as a disturbing anomaly of European life and an impediment to the final overcoming of the dislocations flowing from World War II. Both sides should begin to prepare themselves for the concessions each will have to make if this anomaly is eventually to be overcome.

### **The West German View of NATO**

Remaining to be mentioned is the most serious and recalcitrant of the difficulties in finding an acceptable and hopeful place for a divided Germany in a still partially divided Europe. This is the membership of each of the Germanies in one of the two great rival military alliances and the demands placed upon each by its participation in the face-to-face confrontation of those alliances on German soil. That the present situation is onerous and essentially unstable is obvious, especially in the case of West Germany. NATO policy (let us for the moment leave aside that of the Warsaw Pact) has been based over many years on three assumptions: (1) the Soviet Union, as the leading Warsaw Pact power posed, in both capabilities and intentions, so serious a military threat to Western Europe as to require maintenance of a massive military deterrent capacity on the Western side; (2) West Germany was the theater of operations on which any Soviet attack could, with overwhelming probability, be expected to be launched; and (3) it was therefore on West German territory that the great bulk—indeed almost the entirety—of NATO's deterrent capacity had to be deployed, maintained, provisioned and, in part, trained and exercised.

This great Western deployment on West German territory, composed partly of West German forces and partly of those of its NATO allies, has imposed various strains and discomforts on the people and government of West Germany. There is a densely populated and crowded country. It accommodates today, on a territory comprising no more than 53 percent of the united Germany of 1937, a population greater than that of all Germany in that earlier day. This naturally involves

high level of industrialization and urbanization. It constrains to the limit the amount of arable land available for agricultural purposes. Thus to ask West Germany to accommodate an armed force of more than one million men, with all the special needs for housing, subsidiary facilities, and training terrain that such an establishment requires, is to ask it to accept a much greater burden than would be the case in a less densely populated country with a greater fund of land available for military purposes. The training and servicing activities of this establishment, with its air and noise pollution and burdening of highways and airways, adds materially to the strains placed on a natural environment already heavily taxed by the normal demands of a highly developed modern economy. And when added to all of this are the American nuclear weapons deployed in West Germany—weapons that, if used, would not only wreak their immense destruction on territory populated by Germans but would also invite upon West Germany the comparable devastation of nuclear retaliation—one can see that this military presence imposes severe psychic as well as material stresses on the area's civilian population.

If the German Federal Republic has accepted these burdens relatively cheerfully for many years, it has done so in the light of a number of special considerations, among them: a consciousness of its own defense needs; its debt of loyalty to the NATO alliance; and its acceptance of the established NATO view of the seriousness of the Soviet threat. To these considerations has been added the understanding that West Germany's NATO partners were sincere in their desire, and in their professed efforts, to bring about by negotiations significant reductions in the Soviet and Western deployments in Germany.

But plainly, such strains as these could not reasonably be expected to be borne indefinitely by any country, as a permanent encumbrance of its life, without protest. Even if nothing like the Gorbachev era had intervened, a time presumably would have come when new ways would have had to be sought to ease this burden. Now, however, the whole question has achieved new urgency due to the extent of the changes in Soviet outlook and policy wrought by Gorbachev. The successful removal of the intermediate-range nuclear weapons from the Continent; the more forthcoming Soviet positions in arms control negotiations; the greater Soviet readiness to accept far-reaching arrangements for verification of arms accords; and the unilateral tank and troop reductions

recently announced by Gorbachev: all these could not fail to raise West German minds the question of whether the Soviet "threat" was still so serious as to warrant the indefinite continuation of the military burdens West Germany has been asked to bear.

The need for an agreed NATO answer to this question has come to present a problem of great seriousness. While West Germans themselves are divided in their views on the matter, it is evident that one very large body of West German opinion believes that there is at least *some* area in which the changes just mentioned deserve consideration in determining both the dimensions of NATO deployments in West Germany and the stance to be taken by NATO negotiators in the ongoing arms control exchanges with the Soviet government. The very size of this body of West German opinion is important, for the burdens described above are ones a country could reasonably be asked to sustain indefinitely only if the justification for them were perceived and accepted not just by fragile electoral or parliamentary majorities but by a wide consensus of the population.

One looks in vain, however, for any evidence that this view—of the need for adjusting NATO policies in light of recent changes in the Soviet Union—is generally accepted by official circles in any of the other three major NATO capitals—London, Paris, or Washington. No appreciable changes have been made or planned in the actual disposition of NATO forces, nor do there seem to have been any significant changes in the Western stance on arms control problems recently under negotiation. On the contrary, the implementation of plans for the further development of U.S. strategic nuclear weaponry is proceeding much as before. And so far as negotiations for the reduction of conventional forces in Europe are concerned, the prospects for reaching any significant early agreements are decidedly dimmer than ever before. These talks, after being long delayed by virtue of Western insistence that human rights issues take precedence over arms control, are now being shifted from the so-called Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction forum to that of the Atlantic-to-Urals framework, where even more countries are involved. Finally, the various Soviet initiatives that look to the creation of a better climate and better prospects for arms control negotiations have met for the most part only with hesitant and unenthusiastic responses from the West—responses that suggest that the Western capitals see more danger than opportunities in such initiatives.



For many years NATO leaders have followed consistently a policy of placing the need for preserving alliance unity ahead of the possibilities for negotiation with Moscow. These priorities have no doubt had much to do with their evident unhappiness over Gorbachev's advances. For in inviting NATO to make new decisions, Gorbachev is calling in effect for a new NATO consensus to replace the one that has prevailed for so long; and this may easily be seen by some as placing unwelcome strains on NATO's unity.

At issue here, in the first instance, are judgments about such questions as the reality of the Soviet "threat" in present conditions; the balance of conventional forces, eastern and western, in and around Germany; and the perceived interests, motivations, and commitments that determine the reactions of the present Soviet leadership. In part, particularly with regard to estimates of the military balance, differences can be thrashed out on the basis of statistical information now readily available to all parties. In another part, the determination will have to rest largely on the judgment of those in the West who know the Soviet Union from long study and experience and whose capacities for such judgment have been widely recognized. Then, too, we all live today, most fortunately, in an age when very little that one needs to know about the Soviet Union is being concealed, and when the remaining obscurities can often be dispelled by talking with responsible Soviets themselves. In these circumstances, there is no reason why a NATO community seriously concerned about arriving at a unity of outlook on the questions at hand should find it difficult to do just that. Once this has been achieved, the remaining spectrum of problems arising for West Germany and for the rest of us from the need for adapting to the new situation in the East should not present insuperable difficulties.

However, when differences of opinion emerge between much of West German opinion and that of the three other major Western capitals, another factor enters in—the suspicion, prevalent in a portion of opinion in each of those other countries, that Germans have strong tendencies to look to the recovery of an independent role in world affairs, possibly by means of a deal whereby Moscow would concede them their unification in return for some sort of subservience to Soviet policies. (There are several other versions of this supposedly menacing scenario, one of the most common being that the West Germans would like to leave NATO, adopt a neutral stance, and enter into a

policy of playing off East against West, allegedly a traditional German proclivity.)

I am bound to say that I find these suspicions devoid of serious substance and regrettable in the extreme. They do less than justice to the record of the Federal Republic over some four decades. They involve a grotesque underestimation of the intelligence and sense of realism that generally have marked the leadership of West Germany's major parties and political movements since the Federal Republic's beginning. The historical examples cited to support these anxieties, such as the Rapallo Treaty of 1922, betray a very poor understanding of German diplomatic history on the part of those who entertain them.

Yet it is true that if the differences of opinion over the significance of changes in the Soviet Union and the appropriate Western policy do not overcome, and if a great part of German opinion gains the impression that an historic opportunity, and one that may not come again, is being allowed to go unused, with Germany being asked to face the main consequences of this neglect, then right-wing, and possibly even neutralist, tendencies in that country could be strengthened. If and when that happens, the very suspicions just referred to will be inflamed; and there will be no lack of voices to charge that Europe is being faced with a rise of German neo-nazism.

This would be another serious misimpression. Those Germans who would like a return to Adolf Hitler's "Third Reich" are in my opinion (as one who has seen a good deal of Germany in recent years and much more of it in the years before nazism) a tiny and insignificant part of West German opinion. What is apt to be encouraged by differences between many West Germans and their major NATO allies might, to be sure, be some sort of right-wing movement, but not a neo-nazi one. Rather, it might be something along the lines of recent movements in neighboring countries, including some in Scandinavia and in France that while indeed nationalistic, center more on such issues as overly liberal immigration policies, an inundation by foreign labor, laxness in the fight against drugs and crime, and lack of authority and discipline in the schools. Even this tendency would have to go very far, much further than anything threatened by developments observable to date, before it could seriously affect attitudes toward West Germany's position in NATO. It can be said that if the present differences are not pursued in depth in public discussion—and to the point where a general consensus

developed within NATO—the tendency will be to encourage extremist political opinions in West Germany that could play into the hands of those who would make the least comfortable of partners for the rest of the NATO community.

Undoubtedly the most hopeful fact is that things are now on the move with the unification of the Continent under the aegis of the European Community. To be sure, what has been accomplished to date has related almost exclusively to the western part of Europe. But there are signs that the movement towards greater European unity will not stop at an arbitrary line of geographic division that is already losing so much of its reality in the hopes and the hearts of those who live to the east of it. To the extent that the movement towards European unification comes to embrace the east as well as the west of the Continent, it can scarcely fail to provide a climate and a framework of possibility for the overcoming of Germany's problems such as the compulsions of the cold war have never been able, and never will be able, to provide.