

W. R. SMYSER  
with a Foreword by Paul H. Nitze

# RESTIVE PARTNERS

Washington and Bonn Diverge



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# Foreword

For a thousand years, developments in Central Europe have been at the heart of European history and thus of world history. In the latter half of that millennium the basic theme of European history has been the consolidation of powerful nation states dominating areas linked by common geographic, linguistic, and cultural factors. The Germans were the last important geographic and culturally distinctive European group to achieve nationhood. Germany became a nation in 1871 after three brilliant military campaigns that were made possible by Germany's energetic and growing population, its dedication to competence in military-industrial matters, and Otto von Bismarck's exceptional leadership. After the Franco-Prussian War, it was evident that a coalition of almost all of the rest of Europe would be required to offset German military and industrial strength. As demonstrated in the two world wars, even that was not enough. U.S. intervention was necessary in both those wars to swing the balance against Germany.

The peace following World War I was totally mishandled. President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points would have assured a nonpunitive, just, and generous peace. But he was first opposed by the U.S. Senate, then outsmarted by nationalistic and vindictive European political leaders. Wilson became ill and incompetent, leaving a peace that was so palpably unworkable as to bring on a great depression and so vengeful and unjust as to make a second world war unavoidable.

After that second war, Americans gave much study to the causes of the two wars and the errors of the peace concluding World War I. Toward the end of World War II and immediately thereafter, U.S. attention was primarily focused on getting the troops home, converting from war production to normal business pursuits, and maintaining the alliance with the Soviet Union that was forged during the war. Only after two very difficult years, 1945 and 1946, in that latter endeavor did the United States reluctantly conclude that Josef Stalin had no intention of working toward a just and constructive peace in Europe. In February 1947, President Harry Truman, backed by Secretary of State George Marshall and Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson, concluded that the United States must take a much more active political,

economic, and, if necessary, military role in containing Soviet expansionism. There quickly followed the Greek-Turkish Aid Program, the Truman Doctrine, the creation of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, the Marshall Plan, and the passage of the Defense Act of 1947, which created the Defense Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Central Intelligence Agency. The U.S. concern was global, but its focus was on Central Europe. The situation in Poland and Czechoslovakia had triggered World War II; Stalin's uncompromising positions concerning Berlin and East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia in 1946 poisoned the prospects for an acceptable peace.

For forty-two years—since 1947—the United States has attempted to create a worldwide system of order—economic, political, and military—against the persistent opposition of the Soviet Union and its satellite regimes. This confrontation has been most comprehensive and enduring in Central Europe and, in particular, in the two Germanys and Berlin.

In the years subsequent to 1947, Britain, France, and the United States unified their zones of occupation in Germany and Berlin. They then supported Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's decision, for the time being, to accept the division of Germany and Berlin and to bring peace and prosperity to the portion of Germany within each country's area of responsibility and control. The resurgence of West Germany has truly been an economic and political miracle. Blocked by the Soviet Union from concluding a peace treaty that would have established a unified Germany, the United States, backed by England and France, strove to bring West Germany into the community of nations. That objective has been fully realized. West Germany is now one of the world's most powerful and most prosperous states. As Richard Smyser emphasizes in this book, West Germany has become a new Germany, with different capabilities and needs than the Germany of Adenauer's days. In this new context, the USSR appears to be evolving into a different USSR. And the United States is a different United States.

Few people in the United States dealt intimately with postwar Germany. General Lucius Clay was originally in command of U.S. military forces. Robert Murphy was his political adviser. Then John J. McCloy became high commissioner, with a small but able staff. In Washington, General William Draper, Deputy Secretary of the Army, devoted himself to German affairs. In the State Department a series of Foreign Service officers of distinction spent much of their lives on German affairs. But with each change of administration there have been shifts in personnel. The new people taking over responsibility for U.S. policy toward Germany have not always been sensitive to what was going on below the surface: the changing attitudes, anxieties, desires, and am-

bitions of Germans and West Germany. There is, thus, a tremendous need for a book that objectively presents the extraordinary history of the relationship between the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States, the current problems in that relationship, and the opportunities and dangers for that relationship in the future.

The story is complex. Smyser looks closely at the subject of security, including extended deterrence, flexible response, the Strategic Defense Initiative, conventional forces, burden sharing, arms control, and coordination outside of NATO. He then addresses relations with the East, including the "common European home," "Genscherism," and inter-German relations. A third area is the contrasting economic philosophies, in terms of the global economy and the European community and the complementary and divisive tendencies affecting the future of U.S.-German economic relations. Finally, there is a very illuminating discussion of the German wish for reunification. Dr. Smyser deals with all these subjects from an extraordinarily well-informed background. He is one of the few Americans who has followed U.S.-German developments with intimate knowledge and understanding over the years.

If Mikhail Gorbachev's "new look" program is to be achieved, the USSR must develop a new relation of cooperation with West Germany. Significant reduction in Soviet expenditures of resources on its military depends on its success in negotiating equalizing reductions of conventional forces in Europe. Reductions in resources formerly devoted to Soviet military forces can assist *perestroika* if the resources are re-directed at modernizing factories that produce civilian goods. West German banks have already lent billions of Deutschmarks to Soviet industries for the purchase of modern plants and equipment. The process is thus even now underway.

As many West Germans see the future, they have closer relations with the USSR and the Central European regimes (including Poland, the GDR, Hungary, and perhaps Czechoslovakia) than the United States and other West European states will have. They see themselves as economically and, potentially, politically stronger than any other continental European power. They are not, therefore, susceptible to the same pressures to which they were once responsive.

Future U.S. relations with West Germany, then, must be based more on independent German judgment than on U.S. pressure on Germany to back U.S. policies. To understand how to design policies that are convergent with German interests requires an understanding of the issues so lucidly set forth in *Restive Partners*.

Paul H. Nitze

# Preface

Crashes of U.S. and other allied military jets on West German soil provoke demonstrations and parliamentary debates. Ill-tempered accusations between Washington and Bonn follow the sale of German chemical manufacturing equipment to Libya. The German government firmly promotes arms-control talks just as firmly opposed by Washington. The President of the Soviet Union is more popular in West Germany than the President of the United States. The German central bank raises interest rates and provokes a Wall Street crash. A U.S. Secretary of State is told that the German government will not deploy missiles as he asks.

German-American relations, once the carefully sheltered private province of a few devoted acolytes, whether diplomats, scholars, or soldiers, have become the stuff of headlines and disagreements. The two allies, who have loyally held together the respective ends of the Atlantic alliance through four decades of cold war and crisis, often do not sound or behave as one might expect of friends. A casual observer would have to be forgiven for wondering about the future of that alliance when most of what is heard are arguments.

Those arguments between the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America are not made of whole cloth. They are not figments of some journalist's hyperactive imagination. They are not due to personality conflicts. They originate in new and unassimilated realities. The two countries have changed. So has the world around them. So, therefore, has their relationship.

With those changes come dramatic opportunities. The United States and the Federal Republic are among the world's most powerful and most prosperous states. They are at the center of every significant international structure. They have immensely important common interests, even as they argue. If they work together, they can move the entire world in directions that should be not only to their own benefit but to the benefit of all.

If they do not, it is another story.

Recent events suggest that they may not. The two countries are now heading in directions that can at some point create a genuine rift. If

that comes, it would come not because it was sought but because it was not energetically avoided. It would come because each government acted without understanding the other's needs, perhaps on the basis of what was best for itself but not on the basis of what was best for the partnership. Each would have done what it thought was right, in dozens if not hundreds of instances. In the process, however, each might have destroyed what was important.

After this manuscript was completed in the fall of 1989, the East German refugee flight to West Germany accelerated. A new East German Chief of State, Egon Krenz, opened the Berlin Wall and promised political changes to try to stem the flow. These developments offered opportunities for German-American cooperation in elaborating a common plan for Central and Eastern Europe, but they also raised risks of German-American disagreement because their intense impact on West German opinion and on *Ostpolitik* could propel the Federal Republic on a separate course if no common policy could be achieved.

But I did not write this book only to list disagreements. I wrote it to analyze the basic trends in relations between the two states and their people. Although I will try to review all the many issues that have surfaced between the two states, I will try at each point to give at least my perception of *why* things have happened as they have, as crises are most treacherous when they are not understood.

General Charles de Gaulle once spoke of the passing of *l'Algérie de Papa*. We are now seeing the passing of *l'Allemagne de Papa*, of *l'Amérique de Papa*, and therefore of *l'Alliance de Papa*. But no American or German could have expected or wanted the relationship to continue as it had been.

As the title of this book suggests, Germans and Americans have become more ready to question each other than before, and both have become uncomfortable with some aspects of their collaboration. But the two countries and their people also remain partners, and even mutually essential partners. That is the basic tension that they need to resolve.

The forces that hold the two countries together are very strong. Many crises have come and gone in German-American relations, and many more have been predicted than have actually occurred. More will come. Not every new one should be seen as a harbinger of some final and irremediable split. But an accumulation cannot be taken lightly, because it may reveal something more fundamental.

It has been said that German-American scholars are either apologists or alarmists. I try to be neither. I do not apologize for either country. I have lived in both, worked in both, and have tried here to be as fair as possible in describing the views and actions of both. As for being



alarmist, I do not point with alarm, but I do occasionally point with concern.

I have also tried to be objective in the domestic politics of both countries, especially as I know and respect many persons in Bonn and Washington who grapple with the daily complexities of alliance politics, and my friends are on all sides of the political spectrum. No word or sentence of mine should be interpreted to favor or oppose any party or person in either country. I have not attempted to analyze German-American relations in terms of the domestic politics of either country, as the factors central to my concerns go beyond parties to the objective relationship between the two countries.

If I have a prejudice in writing this book, it is not for either country or for any person but for the importance of what they have done and can do together. Sophie Tucker once wrote that "I've been rich and I've been poor, and believe me rich is better." I could write that "I've experienced German-American friendship and German-American hostility, and believe me friendship is better."

The organization of the book is slightly unusual and deserves explanation. The first chapter is the setting, an analysis of the present and of current problems. The second chapter then goes back to 1945 and contains a brief chronological review since World War II. The review is not meant to tell the full story but only to underline some aspects of the post-1945 evolution that are important for an analysis of where the relationship now stands. There are excellent histories of German-American relations since World War II, which I've cited in the endnotes. This is not the place to duplicate them.

The organization after that chapter is topical, with several chapters on security and one each on *Ostpolitik*, economics, and public opinion. Those chapters analyze current issues on the basis of the setting described in the first chapter and the broad evolution shown in Chapter 2. The conclusion attempts to understand what the new relationship can mean for both countries, what the prospects might be, and some things that can be done.

Describing the many elements of such a close relationship in one slim volume demands compression. Each chapter could be a book; each subtopic could be a chapter. But the object of this work is not to describe every issue in detail. It is to present an evolution and to illuminate principal trends, while attempting to put many superficially separate elements into a coherent whole.

The book is not an historiographical essay. I will not try to resolve the many issues that have been subject to revisionist and counterrevisionist studies. Instead, I have summarized what happened based on principal sources because I had the limited objective of highlighting

trends in German-American relations and not of writing a new history of the cold war.

By the same token, scholars may note that I have footnoted many events from both German and U.S. sources but that there are moments when I write about specific incidents or in quite broad terms without such footnotes. Those passages reflect my own knowledge and interpretations, based either on personal experience or on conversations with dozens of German and American officials, scholars, or friends. I have been involved in German-American relations for much of my adult life, in Europe and the United States, and occasionally take the liberty of writing what I have seen or what I have learned directly.

Although I wrote this work on my own initiative because I thought it was now necessary, portions of it were researched separately and earlier under grants or other forms of support from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, or the Institute for International Economics. None of these institutions bear any responsibility for the opinions in this book, which are my own, but I want to thank them for their support.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung for providing me with miscellaneous materials that I used in the research.

I especially want to express my appreciation to the library at the U.S. Department of State for making many books and newspapers in both languages available, to the German Information Service in New York for the German official *Bulletin* as well as the publications "Statements and Speeches," the "Deutschland-Nachrichten," and "The Week in Germany," to the German *Presse-und Informationsamt* for "Aktuelle Beitrage zur Wirtschafts-und Finanzpolitik," and to the *Bundesbank* for its monthly and annual reports.

Finally, I would like to thank the many American and German friends who became swept up in this work, willingly or unwillingly, as I talked to them about it, and I especially want to thank my family for being infinitely patient and supportive.

W. R. Smyser

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# 1

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## The Setting

### The New Germany

When I wrote my first book on German-American relations almost ten years ago, I observed that the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States were in a position of "equivalence." That equivalence, I wrote, did not constitute full equality, but meant nonetheless that they both bore responsibility for maintaining the international strategic, political, and economic system that protected them and that they had helped to build.

Several of my German friends questioned the term "equivalence." They were uneasy about any word that suggested parity between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany. They were relieved that I had not written of "equality." One, a good friend for many years, stressed that the Germans had limited ambitions, carefully circumscribed goals, and a distinct wish to avoid giving the impression that they might have achieved, or were even seeking, any kind of international power or influence.

My friends cited the primary American role in defending Western Europe, in maintaining global political and strategic stability, and in managing the global economic system. They saw a much more modest role for West Germany, a role played in the sheltering shadow of the United States, and they insisted that the Germans were satisfied to have precisely such a role and no greater one. They said that German history had shown their country to be better off when it did not assert itself, and that they preferred to keep it this way. They welcomed peace and tranquility, and they did not wish to place either at risk.

As I now turn again to the subject of German-American relations, my German interlocutors are less reticent about the word "equivalence." The same friends who then objected to the word or to the concept now accept it, although they still demur at the notion of equal responsibility. Some of them even accept the idea that there may be broad German-American equality, although with the important reservation

that the Federal Republic does not have either nuclear weapons or global security commitments. They feel more comfortable than ten years ago with a greater German role, but they still talk of it in terms of a junior rather than a full partnership.

This modesty departs further and further from reality. From the time ten years ago that the Federal Republic had merely gained some responsibility for global events, it has now arrived at the point where it often has as much capacity as Washington to exercise influence in a number of areas. The Federal Republic's diplomacy with Moscow, its policy in international economic affairs, or its role in the European Community, help set the course for the world as a whole. Its attitudes toward European defense can shape the NATO agenda and determine NATO readiness. The one area where equality does not exist, strategic nuclear power, has become neutralized by the global balance and is often only a muted factor in current events. It must be kept in mind, but it is not now at the center of the world stage.

German modesty may also be disingenuous, at least for some. Many West Germans are quite conscious of their influence and are confident about many aspects of the Federal Republic's new role. West Germany not only has power and authority, but it is often prepared to exercise them with much more independence from the United States than ten years ago. It is also ready to distance itself from the United States and to question and oppose American policies that it regards as wrong. It functions more than before on its own, or in a different framework from the American connection.

This evolution represents an immense achievement. It attests to American readiness to nourish an alliance relationship that tolerates diversity and a higher degree of independence than great powers traditionally allow. It also attests to German readiness to emerge as a more autonomous partner, to put an end to the suspicion that Germans could not manage a truly democratic system, and to make its own contribution to the alliance.

Commentators in the 1960s and 1970s often liked to observe that Germany and Japan were economic giants but political pygmies, a description that was not accurate then and which nobody would dream of using today.

### **The New Europe and the New World**

German-American relations do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of a structure of global affairs and they reflect as well as shape the setting in which they exist. As it shifts, so does the relationship.

The situation in Europe and in the world at large has evolved enormously from the time when the German-American tie was forged after World War II. Moreover, it is continuing to evolve ever further from the early post-war years of the cold war and from the detente period of the 1970s.

In contemplating Europe and the world, one can now look back on the twentieth century almost from the vantage point of the twenty-first. From that vantage, the twentieth century in Europe had two main phases. The first was the great European civil war, which lasted thirty years from 1914 to 1945, drew in two great semi-European powers, and destroyed much of the continent. The second was the absolute division of Europe between East and West. This has lasted for more than forty years, but the division is easing. It may not last into the twenty-first century in its present form, as the tensions and conflicts of this century pass from center stage.

The future European setting, therefore, will in some ways reflect an older setting. It will be reminiscent of the times before the world wars, when Europe was at least partly united as a cosmopolitan, economic, social and cultural entity even as its states remained independent and its peoples fiercely ethnocentric and nationalistic. Europe and the world as a whole were then more fluid than in the cold war. Alliances were less fixed. Global structures were less rigid. Balances shifted as nations adjusted their views and their positions, or as they rose and sank in power and influence.

The sense of a return to pan-European existence stirs the imagination of many Europeans, especially Germans. They see the resumption of travel across the crumbling Iron Curtain. They see the fence between Hungary and Austria removed. They see the new business contracts and the floods of tourists. They see the diplomats jetting back and forth, and the reviving flow of ideas and influence. They see political concepts moving from West to East, as in the past. Industrial goods, commercial credits, investment capital, and entrepreneurs, moved from West to East. From the East came raw materials and, before socialism, agricultural goods and a dynamic culture.

The Germans see the slow knitting together of a torn continental fabric that represented the center of their history and culture. Most of all, they see that they might no longer sit at the perilous edge of one world but in the middle of another one. They see the return of something older, larger, and in some ways better even if very far from perfect.

As one examines the evolution of European and Western history, the two world wars and the cold war appear increasingly as an interruption, an implosion and perhaps an aberration. Now, with European



states recovering and the lines that were drawn in the cold war softening, the shape of the continent is returning in many ways to an earlier day.

The similarities between many of the elements of the present and of past European systems should not obscure or conceal the differences nor the long way yet to be traveled. Europe before 1945 did not know nuclear weapons. Even though it was fascinated by progress, it could not conceive the impact of technical developments on economics, strategy, and the totality of existence, nor could it conceive of the continent ever having to face the many common problems that it faces today because of technology. No single European power was then as militarily dominant as the Soviet Union still is today, and the center of the continent had not experienced the division that still today marks it in many ways. Yet the direction of the flow toward a reunited continent represents a powerful force, and Germans sense it more than others. Certainly more than Americans.

In a broader sense, the end of the twentieth century is witnessing the relative decline of the superpowers, as such new stars as Japan, West Germany, and others begin more and more to assert themselves. That decline is more pronounced for the Soviet Union, which is suffering an ideological, an economic, and an imperial crisis. But neither the United States nor the Soviet Union is as dominant now as it was forty or even twenty years ago.

### **The New Security**

In the new Europe and the new world, as in the one that preceded 1914, both the term and the concept of "security" can be defined very differently from the way they were defined during much of the twentieth century. From the early 1900s well into the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of security was largely defined in military terms. The term "security studies" after 1945 came to mean military studies, and the only security experts were military experts. Such traditional instruments of international relations as diplomacy or commerce seemed irrelevant. The dominating experiences of the twentieth century, whether at Versailles, Munich, Yalta, or Potsdam, had left a clear impression that diplomacy could not guarantee safety. Moreover, although all states sought prosperity, few if any perceived it as the decisive instrument of power during the violent struggles that ravaged first Europe and then other parts of the globe. What mattered was force, and the ability to use it quickly, massively, and decisively.

But security is a broader and more fundamental concept than military might. In the new world, nations can seek security in that broader