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A ROADMAP FOR GERMAN UNIFICATION

(Updating *Backgrounder* No. 740, "What America Can Do About the German Question, Which Again Haunts Europe," November 16, 1989.)

As the two Germanies move with increasing rapidity toward unification, Washington must play an important role in ensuring that a united Germany contributes to European stability and Western interests. Understandably, a united Germany makes its future neighbors nervous. The United States can address the causes of this nervousness, as well as Germany's legitimate national aspirations, by: 1) insisting that a united Germany be allowed to join any military alliance it wishes, which is a sovereign right enjoyed by other European powers; 2) continuing to back West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, a strongly pro-American leader, in his plans for unification; and 3) encouraging Kohl to allay the fears of his neighbors concerning unification.

Since the Berlin Wall was breached last November, the U.S. actively has supported and encouraged unification, and should continue to do so. The task ahead is to follow up with a policy that has a pair of equally critical components: 1) seeing unification through to completion, and 2) establishing a framework for a new, stable European order.

As suggested in November in the Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder*, "What America Can Do About the German Question, Which Again Haunts Europe," the U.S. and its allies have adopted a "two plus four" approach to unification. At their February 13 Ottawa meeting, the foreign ministers of NATO and the Warsaw Pact decided that the two Germanies and the four post-war occupying powers — the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union — would oversee the process of German unification. Talks began this week in Bonn.

Constructive U.S. Role. The U.S. role in this "two plus four" process so far has been constructive. George Bush outlined a four-point agenda for German unity: 1) membership in NATO; 2) membership in NATO's joint military command, in which German armies are under the command of NATO's supreme allied commander, who is currently an American; 3) continued stationing of U.S. troops in what is now West Germany, and 4) German acceptance of existing German borders as permanent. These points are broadly consistent with the policies of the West German government as expressed by Kohl in his December 19 ten-point program for unification, and in statements after his February 24 and 25 meeting with Bush at Camp David. Kohl declared on March 7 that Germany's present borders should be accepted by the two German states as well as a united Germany.

Moscow so far does not accept Washington's and Bonn's positions on unification. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev said on March 7, following a meeting in Moscow with East German Prime Minister Hans Modrow, that he opposed German membership in NATO. Moscow, of course, wants Germany out of the Western alliance, a Soviet aim since West Germany joined NATO in 1955. Gorbachev also set conditions on German unification that he claims will prevent Germany from again threatening Europe. Such limits could include greater disarmament requirements for Germany

than for other European states, and perhaps the stationing of Soviet troops on what is now East German soil.

Sovereign Rights. The goal of U.S. policy should be to create an independent and united Germany that has the right to determine to which alliances it will belong and whose forces can be on its territory. These are no more than the sovereign rights enjoyed by Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Given the choice, a democratic, prosperous Germany surely will choose to remain an integral part of the West and continue to seek collective security with NATO.

West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher offered a plan on February 9 that addresses Moscow's security concerns. Under this plan, a united Germany would continue to belong to NATO but would bar foreign forces from being stationed east of the present West German border with East Germany. German acceptance of this should satisfy Soviet security concerns without impinging on Germany's sovereignty. The Heritage Foundation's November *Background* on German reunification proposed a similar plan for effectively neutralizing what is now East Germany.

Attempts to restrict Germany's sovereignty through a treaty imposed on Germany by the "four powers" or any other group of states would be a serious mistake. It understandably would create resentment among the German people, creating a "German problem" that does not now exist. Moreover, limitations on sovereignty imposed by international treaties tend not to work. The elaborate restrictions placed on Germany in the Versailles Treaty after World War I, including virtual disarmament, hardly prevented the rise of Nazi Germany's threat to Europe.

Pledges of Peace. A new united Germany should be given the opportunities to make good on its pledges of peace and security for its neighbors and to become an equal member of the community of Western democracies. The U.S. should encourage the new Germany to adhere to the 1969 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, which bars German development of nuclear weapons, promise not to deploy chemical or biological weapons, and limit its armed forces in the context of the impending Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and any follow-on treaties.

European security will be established best not by a harsh treaty grudgingly assented to by Germany, but by the establishment of a peaceful, democratic, and sovereign Germany secure in its relations with its allies and fully integrated into the West. To achieve this, the U.S. should:

- ◆ ◆ Continue to back Kohl in his efforts to achieve German reunification;
- ◆ ◆ Insist that a reunited Germany enjoy the same sovereign rights as other European states, including the right to join alliances and station foreign troops on its territory upon mutual agreement with allies, and;
- ◆ ◆ Encourage Kohl to allay the security concerns of countries that have suffered from German aggression in the past.

If Washington takes these steps, and encourages its allies to do so, it can turn the "two plus four" negotiations into "five plus one" negotiations, with Moscow on the outside looking in. Soviet military power – not German power – remains for now the major threat to European security. An American policy that seeks unduly to restrain Germany will only advance Soviet interests in Europe. An American policy of cooperation with Germany to restore German sovereignty will serve not only U.S. and German interests, but ultimately the interests of European peace and security as well.

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