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By TV NARA Date 4/5/99

ORIGIN/ACTION

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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1966 APR 14 AM

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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FROM : Embassy BONN

DATE: April 12, 1966

SUBJECT : NIE 23-66: West German Capabilities and Intentions to Produce Nuclear Weapons and Delivery Systems

REF : Department's A-168

The following are Embassy and MAAG comments on sections II and VI of the questions posed in the terms of reference for NIE 23-66. (The Embassy has in the past submitted some information on section I; see, for example, the Embassy's A-348 of August 31, 1965 "Nuclear Energy: Germany — Annual Nuclear Energy Report for 1964-65". Information on the other sections is believed to be more readily available in Washington.) These comments are as follows:

II. Delivery Systems

A.

Army

The German Army possesses nuclear capable missile systems of the following types and quantities:

System	Nr. Weapons/Launchers	Nr. Rounds/Missiles
Pershing	36	100
Sergeant	19	100
Honest John	86	639
8" Howitzer	44 (33 more on order)	
Nike-Hercules	216	840

Group 3

Downgraded at 12-year intervals, not automatically declassified.

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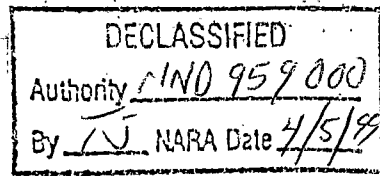
Drafted by:

POL:FNSpotts:am

Contents and Classification Approved by:

JSSutterlin

Clearances: (In Draft) Col. Manning
MAAG:Gen. Hewitt Capt. Ford Col. Schaad



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In addition to the above listed equipment, the German Army has 16 launchers and 100 missiles which are now assigned to the 2nd missile wing, currently in training in the United States. The nuclear warheads for all weapons listed above are in the hands of US custodial units, and details of numbers and availability are in the hands of USAREUR. The quantities shown above include only war reserve stocks. Germany has purchased additional ammunition and missiles which are expended in training.

Air Force

The German Air Force has procured approximately 700 F-104G's. This MACH II type aircraft is deployed in Reconnaissance, Fighter Interceptor and Strike Units of the German Air Force. The Strike Units consist of five Wings of two squadrons each. Each squadron has a UE authorization of 18 aircraft. Additional spare aircraft are added. Two of these Strike Wings are presently combat ready and on standing alert with nuclear weapons. The additional three Wings are in varied states of training but all five should be combat ready during the calendar year 1967. The nuclear weapons for these Wings are provided by the United States and are under the custody of US custodial teams. In addition to the units mentioned above, the German Air Force also has Fighter Attack Units which are devoted entirely to a conventional role. These units are presently converting to the G-91 aircraft and do not have a nuclear capability.

Navy

The German Navy presently has 72 F-104G aircraft suitable for nuclear weapons delivery. Present planning of the Defense Ministry envisions assigning QRA capability to 36 (2 Squadrons) of these aircraft. Infrastructure facilities and weapons are not yet completed and available to them, nor has JCS approval been given for weapon allocation and custodial unit assignment.

B.

Army

Germany would like to have a nuclear capability that would provide a mobile, quick reacting defense in depth against Soviet air and land forces. This would include an ADM capability and an extended range capability for the Pershing missile and the Honest John or its follow on weapon. German Army officers have expressed the need for more effective anti-tank weapons having greater range than the 8" Howitzer.

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Germany has the scientific, technical and productive capability to develop medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles. However, it would probably take about five years to develop such a system and an additional two or three years to achieve an initial capability. The most likely size force would be similar to that of the French, i.e., large enough to cause great damage to the USSR but nowhere near the capability to destroy a significant portion of USSR's military or industrial might.

There is no location in Germany suitable for a missile test range. Missiles could possibly be launched from the northwest coast into the Northern Atlantic near the Shetland Islands. Such a range would pass over heavily travelled sea lanes and would pass close to countries allied with Germany.

If Germany should domestically produce nuclear weapons they would probably first deploy them as atomic demolitions, in view of the long lead-time required to develop a missile delivery capability. This would probably give Bonn a nuclear capability at an earlier date than would otherwise be possible. However, this capability would not provide the deterrent value of a long range delivery system.

Air Force

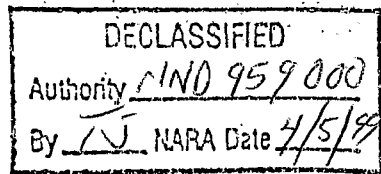
The Air Force has displayed no interest in bombers as such; however, it should be noted that the range of the more modern fighters is approaching the range of some of the older bombers. In addition, air-to-air refueling gives a further range potential to fighter type aircraft. The present F-104G has the capability to carry a nuclear weapon at sea level a range of approximately 750 miles and deliver it on a one-way mission. Further, if it would be possible to penetrate at an optimum altitude in the F-104, it has the capability of carrying a nuclear weapon on a one-way mission for over 1400 miles at these altitudes.

The Air Force is investigating short take-off and landing systems, and zero range launch capabilities for the present fighter fleet. It is also interested in vertical take-off and landing capabilities for future aircraft. All of these systems would be compatible with nuclear carrying aircraft of the future.

Navy

Although some types of US nuclear weapons systems could eventually appear attractive to the German Navy, its ability unilaterally to develop such systems is seriously questioned, with the

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exception of a nuclear depth bomb. From the standpoint of tactical attractiveness the following might be proposed:

- 1) Aircraft dropped weapons.
- 2) Submarine launched, short range ship-to-shore missiles, - similar to bombardment type of SUBROC.
- 3) Nuclear depth bomb.

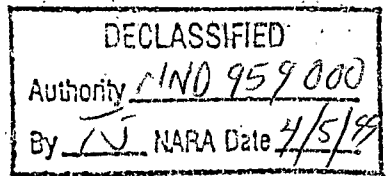
A nuclear depth bomb should not provide a great number of difficulties in development, following weapon production, since system testing could be accomplished using exclusively non-nuclear components. An adequate submarine missile system development would be extremely difficult in terms of propulsion, guidance, and testing capabilities. In terms of force size, few predictions can be made as to the quantity of weapons which might be desired. However, at the present time tactical weapons would probably be emphasized for aircraft and ASW purposes.

VI. Political Considerations

A. The Embassy feels that the judgement expressed in NIE 4-66 -- that West Germany will almost certainly not embark on a program to develop or acquire her own nuclear weapons during the next several years, whatever the possibility of her doing so -- continues to be valid.

B. Barring a fundamental alteration in the present nature of East-West relations, the Embassy considers it highly unlikely that there will be any change during the foreseeable future in the above general judgement. With respect to the public at large there is no perceptible pressure for the Federal Republic to develop her own nuclear forces. The discussions in the press and Bundestag of a joint NATO nuclear force have clearly indicated a distinct lack of public interest in Germany's having even a greater nuclear role within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance. The idea of Germany's possessing her own weapons has never been a matter of serious public discussion. There would be vehement opposition to the idea among important sectors of the public. Consequently before any government could embark on such a course, there would either have to have been a drastic change in public opinion or the German people would have to be forced somehow to accept an unpopular course of action. The Government of course forced rearmament on a reluctant German populace in the 1950's, but probably only succeeded in doing so because rearmament was what the Western Allies wished. Under anything like the existing political circumstances, the German Government would have difficulty in establishing a nuclear force against popular will if this were contrary to the wishes of the Western Alliance.

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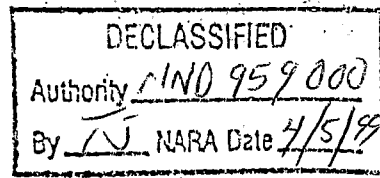
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Up to the present time no German politician has advocated a German nuclear force, though a few politicians (such as Strauss) are strongly in favor of a European nuclear force. Politicians and public alike are aware of the vehement opposition which the development of a German national nuclear potential would have abroad, particularly in Europe and North America. The cornerstone of German foreign policy since the Federal Republic was established has been the desire for international respectability and for acceptance in the Atlantic Community. There is no indication that anyone of any significance in German public life desires or is willing to reverse this policy. In an interview with the New York Times published on October 14 Dr. Adenauer said that he had been assured by John Foster Dulles that Germany's WEU undertakings not to develop nuclear weapons on her soil are subject to the principle of clausa rebus sic stantibus. Adenauer added, however, that he was opposed to any move by West Germany "at this time" to acquire nuclear weapons though he could not commit himself on this point "forever". Adenauer's statement had no public echo in Germany and no one has ever repeated his points.

The key to the issue of Germany's possible development of a national nuclear force is the matter of German security. Under the present power relationships in the world the Germans feel that their security is dependent upon nuclear weapons. They are fully aware that only the United States possesses a credible nuclear force to defend them from the Soviet Union. Germans therefore recognize that they are totally dependent upon American power. As long as the United States has committed itself to defend Europe, has forces physically stationed in Germany as an earnest of this commitment, and appears prepared to use nuclear weapons if necessary to defend West Germany, it is not likely that Germans will have any temptation to develop a national nuclear force. Being dependent upon the United States, it is highly unlikely, for both military and political reasons, that Germany would take a decision to produce or acquire nuclear weapons against American wishes. This lack of desire among the public and politicians for nuclear weapons, reenforced by the military situation, is likely to continue at least as long as the existing power balance continues. A failure to achieve an alliance nuclear force should not affect this attitude.

A radical change in the basic structure of the political relationships in the postwar world could permit--or force--a change in the German attitude on this issue. Thus a fundamental reversal in Soviet policy toward Germany might permit Germany to feel no longer dependent upon the United States for her security and therefore free from the restraints of an American policy against possession of nuclear weapons. Alternatively a fundamental reversal in American relations with Germany, causing Germany to feel abandoned by the United but still subject to external threats, could make a national German nuclear force

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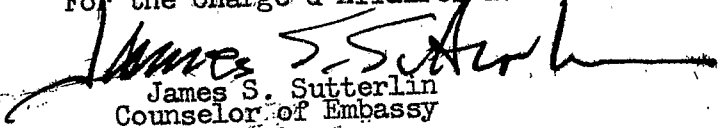
appear necessary for German security. This could occur if the U. S. were: (1) to withdraw its commitment to defend Western Europe from Soviet aggression; (2) to withdraw American forces from Europe; (3) to alter its policy toward the Soviet Union in a fundamental way; (4) to agree with the Soviet Union not to use weapons against one another or (5) to agree to a denuclearization of Europe prior to reunification. To a large extent, therefore, a German decision on this question may be influenced by American policy.

Another consideration that might enter into a decision on whether or not to develop a national nuclear force is the matter of German prestige in international politics. This factor, however, argues both for and against a decision to do so. On the one hand, a German decision to develop a nuclear force would seriously undermine Germany's foreign relations even with its closest allies and could destroy any hope of eventual reunification. On the other hand, during the past few years the Federal Republic has increasingly felt that its political role in world affairs and particularly in Alliance affairs is substantially less than is justifiable given her military and economic importance. Moreover the idea exists that in order to achieve German national goals the FRG must be "of interest" to the Soviet Union. This means, in essence, that it would be useful to have something such as at least the freedom to become a nuclear power to renounce in return for Soviet concessions on the German question. The French decision to develop a force de frappe and the arguments used by French Governments to defend it are continuous and forceful reminders to the German Government of the status that goes with being even a minor nuclear power. Were countries such as Sweden, India, and Israel to develop their own nuclear force, pressure would probably develop within a German Government to join the nuclear club for prestige reasons.

Given the current state of relations between Bonn and Paris, a situation that shows little prospect for change in the next few years, it is virtually out of the question that sufficient confidence could exist between the two governments to permit cooperation in a joint nuclear weapons program.

C. Since the factor of prestige would probably be at best a minor element in a German decision to develop her own nuclear weapons, the size and type of actual program would probably not be determined by prestige factors. Rather, a national nuclear force, as previously observed, would probably result from a fear for German security and would therefore be developed in the hope of making it a credible nuclear striking force.

For the Charge d'Affaires, a.i.:


James S. Sutterlin
Counselor of Embassy

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