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Abstract

The European Defense Community (EDC) was an attempt to create a common European defense in the early 1950s. This thesis investigates two questions: how did the EDC aim to solve the European security dilemma of the early Cold War, and why did the experiment of a common European defense fail? By complementing historical analysis with international relations theory on state security, this thesis reveals that the EDC was regarded as an imperfect, yet practical solution that aimed to address the principal concerns of the relevant players. Balancing the need to counter the growing threat from the Soviet Union and deep French apprehension about German rearmament, the EDC attempted to create an acceptable path forward within the confines of a supranational institution. Furthermore, the EDC presented other participating states with a tool to advance national priorities, including deeper European integration and equal standing on the world stage. The failure to ratify the EDC represented western European states' collective inability to move beyond national interests and take unified responsibility for addressing the region's broader security challenges. This European failure to establish a common defense for the region had major consequences for Europe's subsequent integration efforts and geopolitical development. European integration advanced, but economic and political cooperation progressed without a complementary security dimension. The absence of a strong and independent security dimension in the European integration project left a significant vacuum, laying the foundation for a decades-long dependency on the United States — a reliance that continues to undermine the willingness of European states to provide for their own security.

Abstrakt

Die Europäische Verteidigungsgemeinschaft (EVG) war ein Versuch am Anfang der 1950er Jahre eine gemeinsame europäische Verteidigung zu schaffen. Diese Arbeit untersucht zwei Fragen: Wie wollte die EVG das europäische Sicherheitsdilemma zu Beginn des Kalten Krieges lösen, und warum scheiterte das Experiment einer gemeinsamen europäischen Verteidigung? Durch die Ergänzung der historischen Analyse mit der Theorie der internationalen Beziehungen zur Staatensicherheit zeigt diese Arbeit, dass die EVG als unvollkommene, aber praktische Lösung angesehen wurde, die darauf abzielte, die wichtigsten Anliegen der relevanten Akteure zu beheben. Unter Abwägung der Notwendigkeit, die wachsende Bedrohung der Sowjetunion entgegenzuwirken, und der tiefen Besorgnis Frankreichs gegenüber der deutschen Wiederbewaffnung, versuchte die EVG innerhalb der Grenzen einer supranationalen Institution einen akzeptablen und zukunftsorientierten Kompromiss zu finden. Darüber hinaus bot die EVG den anderen teilnehmenden Staaten ein Instrument, um nationale Prioritäten voranzutreiben, unter anderem eine tiefere europäische Integration und eine gleichberechtigte Stellung auf der Weltbühne. Die Nichtratifizierung der EVG war Ausdruck der kollektiven Unfähigkeit der westeuropäischen Staaten, über nationale Interessen hinauszugehen und gemeinsam Verantwortung für die Bewältigung der umfassenderen Sicherheitsherausforderungen der Region zu übernehmen. Das Scheitern Europas, eine gemeinsame Verteidigung für die Region zu etablieren, hatte erhebliche Folgen für die späteren Integrationsbemühungen und die geopolitische Entwicklung Europas. Zwar schritt die europäische Integration voran, aber die wirtschaftliche und politische Zusammenarbeit entwickelte sich ohne eine ergänzende Sicherheitsdimension. Das Fehlen einer starken und unabhängigen Sicherheitsdimension im europäischen Integrationsprojekt hinterließ eine erhebliche Lücke und legte den Grundstein für eine jahrzehntelange Abhängigkeit von den Vereinigten Staaten – eine Abhängigkeit, die weiterhin die Bereitschaft der europäischen Staaten untergräbt, für ihre eigene Sicherheit zu sorgen.

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Introduction

Recent geopolitical events have called into question the status of the European security architecture. For nearly eighty years, western European countries have benefited from a security umbrella provided and paid for by the United States of America. President Donald Trump's second administration poses an existential threat to Europe's decades-long security accommodation, as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally seeks to shift the burden of ensuring European security to European governments and recalibrate American power to the Indo-Pacific. This shift in the transatlantic accommodation comes at a time when European countries have had to confront an assertive and revisionist Russia to the east.¹ Russia's annexation of Crimea from neighboring Ukraine in 2014 sparked an evolution in the discourse over European security. This slow recalibration in European security thinking has only intensified in recent years. To many, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022 brought a seismic shift in the continent's security dilemma. European leaders including French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, among others, committed major investments to national defenses and increase collaboration between their national forces.²

Along with the war between Russia and Ukraine on Europe's eastern border is the growing geopolitical tension between the 21st century's two increasingly rivalling superpowers. Once the sole reigning superpower, the United States has in recent years been confronted with the rise of the People's Republic of China (China), and the consequences of its rise for the stability of the Indo-Pacific region. The rapid rise of this mammoth Asian power on the world stage is currently in the process of reconfiguring the world's power structure. Since the fall the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union) in the early 1990s, the world has experienced a period of unipolarity, with the

¹ Stone, 'A New Vision for the Transatlantic Alliance'.

² Ibrahim, 'Europe's New Security Unity Can Repair Damaged Relationships'.

United States holding a predominant role in global affairs. China's rise and Russia's revisionist actions, however, are bringing an end to that order.³

These geopolitical transformations have solicited a change in the foreign policy of the United States, significantly disrupting the existing European security architecture and the rules-based international order. This rules-based system that has governed global affairs is a product of the early postwar years, when political leaders negotiated and established a litany of new institutions and financial frameworks to promote international peace and stability. The NATO alliance is a core pillar of the existing international system, as it represents a nearly 80-year relationship between European states and the United States. In this nearly eight-decade transatlantic relationship, the United States proven to be an indispensable partner to the states of the European continent. As its capacity as a global superpower, the United States has projected its power onto the European continent, serving as a vital security guarantor.⁴ Serving in this role, American power has been successful in mitigating divisions between European states. Moreover, American influence also helped to foster early integration efforts between them. It is arguable that the success of the European integration project, as well as the economic and political recovery of European states after the end of the Second World War, can largely be attributed to the American presence in Europe. Until Trump, American presidents, despite qualms or significant differences with their European partners, have remained committed to the transatlantic relationship and to the existing security arrangement with Europe through the NATO alliance.⁵ As president, however, Trump has called into question the United States' commitment to the NATO alliance and rules-based international system. Promoting his 'America-First' framework, Trump has argued for a more limited American foreign policy fundamentally focused on what he determines to be the needs of the American people. Included in this shift in foreign policy is a realignment of American resources and attention from the transatlantic region toward the Indo-Pacific, eyeing the rise of China. For Trump and his supporters in the American foreign policy community,

³ Lind, 'Back to Bipolarity: How China's Rise Transformed the Balance of Power'.

⁴ Simpson, 'The Rearming of Germany 1950-1954', 82.

⁵ Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Reappraisal"', 220.

the existing relationship with European countries, through the NATO alliance and through its values-based relationship with the European Union (EU), is imbalanced, impracticable, and inadequate for the challenges of the 21st century. Rather than spend considerable resources in continuing to ensure European stability and security, the United States should reorient its resources to more pressing national needs. Despite resistance in the United States from more traditional foreign policy circles, upon winning a second term in November 2024, Trump's 'America-First' foreign policy has moved forward.⁶

In response to this transformative development in American strategic thinking, European leaders are brainstorming, debating, and promising a transformation to their own security strategies, both on the national and EU level. On an individual basis, European countries across the EU and continent are boosting military expenditure, albeit to varying degrees.⁷ There is also continuous discourse on the need to establish a more unified approach to European defense. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, European leaders have organized and attended various multilateral summits of different configurations to advance efforts for defense collaboration.⁸

As today's European security arrangement continues to unravel amid geopolitical upheavals, it is helpful to look back at the period of its establishment to glean lessons from that previous debate. This thesis takes on this challenge by offering an in-depth look at the debate on western Europe's regional security in the early years of the Cold War. While the wider question of the European security dilemma sets the narrative, the thesis's focus are the international negotiations and domestic debates on the European Defense Community (EDC) in the early 1950s. This unique multilateral initiative was an innovative approach to the question of regional defense. As a supranational entity, the EDC was a significant attempt at European integration.⁹ Its eventual death at the ratification stage was a collective failure for European countries in the early postwar period. Upon its stillbirth demise, the EDC was hastily replaced with a new security

⁶ 'Establish an America First Foreign Policy | The America First Agenda | America's Future Is America First!'

⁷ 'Unprecedented Rise in Global Military Expenditure as European and Middle East Spending Surges'.

⁸ 'European Defence & Security Summit 2025'.

⁹ Simpson, 'The Rearming of Germany 1950-1954', 81.

architecture which included the entry of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) into the NATO alliance and the creation of the Western European Union (WEU).¹⁰

To examine and pull lessons from the negotiations and debate of this period, this thesis begins by illustrating the conditions of the early Cold War, including the pivotal geopolitical developments that led to the heightened importance of European security. This thesis continues by deploying an analytical framework to evaluate the circumstances and perspectives of the western European states pivotal to the outcome of the EDC. This framework consists of a close examination of the domestic concerns and international pressures faced by the countries relevant to this debate. The states included in this analysis include the six official participants of the EDC (France, the FRG, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg), as well as the indisputable pivot player in the United Kingdom (UK). In this review, the smaller players of Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg will be reviewed collectively, as they eventually presented a common front during the EDC negotiations. To complement this primarily historical analysis, this analytical framework employs an additional lens of international relations theory on state security. This will be done in *Chapter II*, where alternative security strategies for western European states during the early Cold War era are evaluated. Next, this thesis looks closely at the multilateral negotiations and national debates on ratification during the pivotal period from 1951-1954. In this section, special attention will be paid to the rising opposition to the EDC in France and the mounting pressure from Washington on western European states to ratify the common defense initiative. These two competing dynamics were pivotal for understanding the ultimate defeat of the EDC. This thesis finishes with the French failure to ratify the EDC in late summer 1954, and the eventual alternative to settle the region's security dilemma with the admission of the FRG to the NATO alliance and the creation of the WEU.

The German admission to the NATO alliance and the establishment of the WEU represents the cementing of two security pillars of the postwar era. The importance of the NATO pillar over that of the WEU, however, effectively demonstrates the structural

¹⁰ Bebr, 'The European Defence Community and the Western European Union', 169.

power imbalance between the United States and its allies in western Europe. Members of both the NATO alliance and the WEU tended to prefer the American-led organization over the WEU, which only consisted of European members.¹¹ This European proclivity to prefer a security architecture established and maintained by Washington, over one created and sustained by fellow Europeans, remained a core component of European security thinking for the next 80 years.

The EDC's failure to ratify represents a consequential pivot point in the early postwar era, where western European states opted to delegate a core state responsibility (security) to their offshore ally in the United States. Twenty-five years into the 21st century, as European states and EU leaders debate how to resolve today's security dilemma, this thesis examines how in a previous iteration of the debate, European leaders failed to provide a European solution to a European problem.

The Postwar European Security Dilemma

From late 1950 until 1954, the EDC dominated discussions across the West, from Bonn to Paris, London to Rome, Brussels to Washington. The French proposition of a supranational defense union for western Europe originated from an attempt to find common ground between the seemingly incompatible stances of participating states. The EDC, as a *sui generis* institution, represented western Europe's response to the continent's precarious security dilemma.

The Cold War, which had crystallized between the western and eastern blocs in the latter years of the 1940s, placed European states in a bind. The continent was squeezed between the mammoth Soviet Union and the offshore yet omnipresent United States, each exploiting their newfound superpower status by influencing governments within Europe and around the world. With the USSR clamping down systematically in the eastern states where its presence was predominant, war-ravaged states in western Europe, with devastated economies, depleted military capacities, and defeated political will, became increasingly concerned with the mounting threats from the Soviet Union. Western

¹¹ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 293.

Europe's response to this security dilemma became the central question for European capitals in the early postwar period.

Several courses of action were contemplated. The first option was to cede to Soviet pressure and ride the wave of the new neighboring superpower dictating the direction of the continent. A second direction was for each state to take their own path by rebuilding their national economies and defenses. Due to the diminished postwar capacities of European states, this path would have proven difficult to implement. An alternative was to for states to accommodate themselves to US foreign policy and to take cover under the American security umbrella. By aligning themselves to the rivaling superpower, western Europe could obtain a cloak of protection vis-à-vis the Soviet threat. Situated between two dominant powers, some voices in western Europe proposed a middle route, where western European states would forge a path distinct from Moscow and Washington. In different capitals, this line of thinking took different forms and different names. Rome and Bonn spoke of neutrality, while London and Paris debated the concept of Europe serving as a 'Third Force' in global affairs.¹²

The European Defense Community represented certain form of this line of thinking. While it provided a common western European response to the early Cold War security dilemma, it was not entirely appreciated and advocated for, by all in western European capitals. In fact, a major selling point to the EDC's ratification was its complementary nature to the US-led NATO alliance. Furthermore, support from Washington throughout the EDC debate in western European parliaments was vital for the process of moving forward. Despite its limitations, however, the debate on the EDC afforded western Europeans an opportunity to forge their own trajectory in the early Cold War era, navigating more freely in complicated geopolitical waters in the years to come. Had the EDC been ratified, the more united and independent Europe would have had greater influence in geopolitical matters, carving out a space for themselves to advocate for their regional priorities between Moscow and Washington. In decades to follow, the

¹² 'German Conceptions of Europe during the Escalation of the East-West Conflict, 1945-1949', 518; Overesch, 'The Alternative Prospect', 97.

absence of a more unified and independent Europe had real consequences to Europe's geopolitical developments.

In August 1954, the dream of a more unified and independent Europe died alongside the EDC, when the French National Assembly failed to ratify the Treaty of Paris.¹³ Its death represented a collective western European resignation to the Cold War's binary choice and marked a decisive point toward a path of dependency on the American ally.

¹³ Pastor-Castro, 'The Quai d'Orsay and the European Defense Community Crisis of 1954'.

Case Study: European Defense Community

The EDC was designed as a supranational European response to the Cold War security dilemma. Signed on May 27, 1952, by representatives of France, the FRG, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg, the EDC was an imperfect proposal that aimed to address the multiple concerns originating across the capitals of western Europe and the transatlantic community.¹⁴ To respond to the concern in Paris and across other European capitals of German rearmament, the EDC would create an integrated military framework with a common leadership and arm manufacturing. Leadership of the EDC would be divided between a supranational European authority delegated with the powers to carry out operations, and individual states' defense ministers carrying out recruitment, training, management of reserve forces, among other responsibilities. The European force would be backed by an integrated administration with a common budget and would include all the land and air forces of the participating states, except for the forces necessary to defend colonial or imperial territories outside Europe.¹⁵

The structure of the EDC was a result of lengthy negotiations that began with the announcement from Paris of the Pleven Plan in October 1950, until its signing in spring of 1952. While French fears of a newly created German military were a primary barrier to an agreement between the interested parties, other national concerns strongly influenced the discussions and negotiating stances: Bonn's expectation to be regranted full sovereignty and treated as a 'normal nation', Rome's aspiration to regain its rightful status as a regional European power, the Benelux countries' fear of domination by larger partners in this endeavor for a common defense.¹⁶ Furthermore, influence and pressure from non-participating countries were also contributing to the lengthy discussions across western capitals. London and Washington both had their own interests in the EDC. Despite its self-styled status as a quasi-European state, the UK opted to not participate in the quest for a

¹⁴ Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 68.

¹⁵ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 133.

¹⁶ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)'; Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 48; Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 263.

common European defense, while still offering vocal support.¹⁷ Initially skeptical of the French-proposed EDC, the Americans publicly backed the framework, seeing it as the only realistic path to German rearmament.¹⁸ Finally, the increasingly tense relationship between the western countries and their Soviet neighbors influenced decision-making across the continent, with fear that any action could lead to a conflagration between the two cementing blocs.¹⁹

¹⁷ Large, 'Grand Illusions', 382.

¹⁸ Creswell, 'Chapter Six The Death of Stalin', 133.

¹⁹ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 41.

Chapter I: Rise of the Cold War & Europe's Missing Middle

This thesis begins with an introduction to the geopolitical panorama of the early postwar period. *Chapter I: Rise of the Cold War & Europe's Missing Middle*, provides a mostly chronological account of the key moments that spurred the Cold War rivalry between the US-led western bloc and the USSR-led eastern bloc. The North Star that will guide this chapter's trajectory will be the missing heart at the center of Europe: a splintered and occupied Germany feared by its neighbors yet needed for the region's economic revival. This section's starting point will be the devastating state of western European economies and the communist threat coming from both the Soviet Union and the domestic electorates of France and Italy. Facing this omnipresent threat, western democracies sought support from their American ally, who in return for assistance, requested that western European states suppress communist influences in their governments and make meaningful progress toward a Europe-first defense. To meet the American demands, the UK moved away from its historical tradition of 'splendid isolationism' and collaborated with continental partners on mutual defense structures. With escalatory events heightening the tensions between the quickly forming Cold War blocs, Europe's 'Missing Middle' becomes an unavoidable yet problematic sticking point. *Chapter I* concludes with perspectives of German unification from western Germany, and a look at the events that trigger the creation of two new German states at the heart of Europe.

Threats to European Stability

The Second World War concluded with a European continent devastated by war and subsequently carved between the victorious Allied powers. Having collaborated closely for years on the common effort to defeat the Axis powers, the United States, Soviet Union, and to a lesser extent, the UK and France, found themselves at the top of a new world order. Despite their collaborative effort against Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan, quasi-insurmountable differences boded harshly for a continued partnership

between the Allies. This was already, however, well understood in Washington, Moscow, London, and Paris during the war. Conflicting ideologies, diverging geopolitical priorities, and the quest for a relative power advantage in this new world order meant that the victors of the conflict would quickly find themselves at odds.

The end of the Second World War in September of 1945 saw the formation of two nascent blocs. In Europe, the Soviet Union had established military predominance over the eastern portions of the European continent, while newly liberated countries in the western half of the continent were heavily influenced by the offshore American power. At the heart of Europe, between these flanking superpowers, remained economically and militarily weak states with national interests at odds with the superpower partners, but forced to position themselves to the liking of the US or USSR. Newly liberated France, for example, while regaining its sovereignty and ‘great power status’ at the end of the war, accommodated itself to American geopolitical desires in the early postwar years because of its economic distress.²⁰ Despite emerging victorious from its existential conflict with Nazi Germany, the UK was battered and anemic, eager to find comfort in their historical role of splendid isolationism.²¹ The heart of Europe was ‘denazifying’ Germany, diminished and sliced by the Allies and governed by military governors. Italy, while not occupied, navigated its own normalization process after two decades under Mussolini’s fascism.²² Each European state was forced to confront the geopolitical tension between the Soviet Union and the United States. While fatigue of war, depleted economies, and the psychological barriers worked in favor of preventing further conflict, the great power rivalry and ideological competition were bubbling across Europe.

During the Second World War, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, looking beyond to the postwar world, feared Soviet domination of eastern Europe. At the war’s end, with the Red Army forcing the total and unconditional surrender of the Nazi regime with the taking of Berlin, this fear was proven justified. It was not, however, merely Soviet territorial predominance that heightened concerns across the Western capitals of

²⁰ Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*.

²¹ Judt.

²² Varsori, ‘Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955’.

Washington, London, and Paris. With the reintroduction of democracies in newly liberated European countries, communism's psychological sway rapidly became of primary concern, even within western countries. The war's total and destructive nature left European economies rebuilding from their foundations. The economic uncertainty that governed the early postwar years fueled, to varying degrees, popular and intellectual support for communist parties across western Europe. While communist parties were garnering strength in several countries on the continent, it was most significant for geopolitical developments in France and Italy.

The first postwar elections in France were held in June of 1946, and its purpose was to form a constituent assembly tasked with drafting a new constitution for a new, Fourth Republic. This thesis will focus on the subsequent parliamentary elections the following fall—the first elections of the new republic. It is important to point out, however, that in these elections of the constituent assembly, the new formations of French political were beginning to form, with a three-party competition that set the tune for the country's debates.²³

In the first legislative elections of the French Fourth Republic in November of 1946, the French Communist Party (*Parti communiste français*, PCF) obtained a plurality of the seats with over 28 percent of the vote, while the Christian Democratic Popular Republican Movement (*Mouvement Républicain Populaire*, MRP), came in second with nearly 26 percent. Completing the three-party competition that would be synonymous with the age were the French Socialists (*Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière*, SFIO), which garnered nearly 18 percent of the popular vote.²⁴ Despite coming out on top of the elections, the communists were unable to convince the other parties to place their leader, Maurice Thorez, at the top of the new government. As a compromise, former SFIO Prime Minister Léon Blum took the reins of France's new government, which would consist of the three largest parties: the PCF, the MRP, and the SFIO.²⁵ This recipe of parties

²³ Nohlen and Stöver, *Elections in Europe*.

²⁴ Nohlen and Stöver, 693–704.

²⁵ Nohlen and Stöver, 693.

consisting of communists, socialists, and Christian Democrats would be known in the early postwar years as tripartism.

Italy experienced two parliamentary elections in the second half of the 1940s after reestablishing their democracy: the first postwar election in 1946 and the subsequent election in 1948. Like in France, the main competition in the Italian political landscape was between three opposing party families: the Christian Democrats (*Democrazia Cristiana*, DC) on the Right, and the communists (*Partito Comunista Italiano*, PCI) and socialists (*Partito Socialista Italiano*, PSI), on the Left.²⁶ The parliamentary election of 1946 shared a ballot with the institutional referendum on whether to abolish the Italian monarchy. Importantly, it was also the first election in which Italian women could also vote.²⁷ In those elections, contrary to France where the PCF came in first place, the Italian Christian Democrats came out on top with more than 35 percent of the vote, followed by the socialists with nearly 21 percent, and the communists with around 19 percent.²⁸ Following that election, DC leader Alcide De Gasperi formed government leading a four-party coalition of the CD, PSI, PCI, and minor liberal party, the Italian Republican Party (*Partito Repubblicano Italiano*, PRI).²⁹

In the elections of 1948, the conservative DC dominated the results with nearly half of the popular vote, at 49 percent. As a result of inter-party disputes and ideological posturing, the Italian Left reconfigured itself for the 1948 elections into two lists; one inclusive of communists, communist-leaning socialists, and independents, and another list of non-communist socialists.³⁰ Despite the reorganization, however, collectively the Left's electoral strength diminished in comparison to the previous elections of 1946. Similarly, parties in the center also lost strength to De Gasperi's DC.³¹

Consequently, the Christian Democratic leader was able to form a more stable coalition government excluding Italian communists, while including social democrats and other forces from the center to the center-right. With this new room for political maneuver,

²⁶ Einaudi, 'The Italian Elections of 1948'.

²⁷ Einaudi.

²⁸ Einaudi, 346.

²⁹ 'Governo De Gasperi II (primo governo della Repubblica)'.

³⁰ Einaudi, 'The Italian Elections of 1948', 347.

³¹ Einaudi, 348.

De Gasperi worked to strengthen Italy's standing with western partners, and primarily its relationship with the US.³²

The French and Italian experience with the mounting communist threat on an electoral level verified the fears felt across the democratic West. In the early postwar years of 1947 and 1948, other events built on this suspicion of Soviet domination of Europe, both as stand-alone events and reactions that fueled further distrust on both sides of the continent. To be covered in this thesis, the West's strategy to deal with these threats was neither unanimous nor made in conjunction. Indeed, different countries took different approaches to their security strategies in this increasingly insecure environment. Within each country, diverse voices from varying corners of the national body politic advocated for different approaches in the rising stand-off between the West and East. While some in the debate, due to their ideological leanings, advocated aligning to the US or USSR, a pan-European argument gained ground. Intellectual leaders advocated for increasing interdependence among the states of Europe as an answer to the geopolitical predicaments engulfing the war-devastated and economically deleted continent. This idea of ever-closer collaboration was not, however, a new idea. For decades European intellectuals had mused of Europe's eventual unification, albeit under the leadership of different conflicting countries. According to some accounts, in fact, this pan-European idea found its origins on the Right of the political spectrum, to counter the completing ideologies of Bolshevism and Jewish-instigated capitalism.³³ Despite this bubbling movement, however, scars of the just-concluded world war presented seemingly insurmountable challenges in Europe to this idea of deep European cooperation, integration, or unification.

Europe's bleak economic state, previously discussed with its consequences to boosting communist parties in France and Italy, was the core threat to the military security of western Europe. As seen from Washington, at the heart of Europe and consisting of damaged but untapped industrial potential, Germany provided the necessary missing piece to the puzzle to Europe's economic reactivation.³⁴ To spark Germany's economic

³² Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955'.

³³ Judt and Snyder, *Thinking the Twentieth Century*.

³⁴ Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*.

reactivation, however, a series of hurdles still needed to be jumped. The defeated power in *Mitteleuropa* remained dismembered by the victorious powers, with the Soviet Union, US, UK and France each administering its own zone of the German territory. Among Germany's European neighbors, there was profound hostility to re-industrializing the country. In fact, in the immediate aftermath of Germany's unconditional surrender in May 1945, the initial approach to the country decided by the victors at the Potsdam Conference could be summarized in three words: de-militarization, de-Nazification, de-industrialization.³⁵ The fear of a resurgent and vengeful Germany haunted politicians, military men, and publics across countries that had dealt with a highly militaristic and expansionist German Empire in the latter decades of the 19th century.

With this concern, and aspiring to a more stable neighborhood, on March 4th, 1947, the UK and France signed the Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance, committing themselves to support in case of future German aggression.³⁶ Despite their weakened economic and military circumstances in the early postwar years, the UK and France still stood as Europe's premier democracies and —paradoxically—vast colonial empires. The signing of the treaty, colloquially known as the Treaty of Dunkirk, marked the first step toward a European defense apparatus in the postwar era. Concurrently, it was also a significant signal to the French of British commitment to the continent's security.³⁷

As with the first Franco-British defense pact with the Entente Cordiale of 1905, the subject of primary concern was Germany, who had in the last century instigated three wars of conquest against their French neighbors. As discussed previously, however, the following two years saw the concern in the West begin to gravitate toward the Soviets, with the escalating territorial and ideological friction between the two blocs, and its domestic consequences within the western democracies.

³⁵ Judt.

³⁶ Judt.

³⁷ Duke, *The Elusive Quest for European Security: From the EDC to CFSP*.

Governing Communists & American Conditions

In May 1947, communist parties in France and Italy were expelled from the ruling coalitions in both countries.³⁸ Since the first postwar elections in 1946, a dynamic of tripartism had taken hold in Paris, Rome, and some other western democracies, with Christian Democratic parties governing in conjunction with communists and socialists. Despite their strong ideological differences, the governing partnership of these three ideologically diverse and opposing political traditions manifested the remaining sentiments of national unity after the conflict.³⁹ Communist parties were still profiting from a patriotic glow from the collective efforts of resistance during the occupation, and from the appreciation for the USSR's war efforts against the Axis powers in the final years of the war.⁴⁰

By early 1947, however, the tensions became too great. The Soviets had continued to extend their influence by exerting pressure on Turkey and Iran. In Greece, communist groupings took up arms against the western-aligned government.⁴¹ In response to these perceived encroachments, the US government put into motion the Doctrine of Containment: an effort to push back against Soviet aspirations to expand their influence and support and protect US-aligned 'free' countries. On March 12, 1947, US President Harry S Truman commits to provide economic and military aid to both Greece and Turkey, seeking to solidify their positions as buttresses against communist expansion.⁴² The Truman Containment strategy carried significant implications for American allies and aligned countries in Europe. On the one hand, it implied more firm American commitment to the economic reconstruction of western Europe (this would be manifested starting the following year, with the introduction of the Marshall Plan).⁴³ On the other hand, it also entailed in deep interest in the political developments and trajectories of the recipient countries. American statesmen were critical of communist participation in Paris, Rome,

³⁸ Brogi, 'Ending Grand Alliance Politics in Western Europe'.

³⁹ Brogi, 142.

⁴⁰ Brogi, 138.

⁴¹ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 60.

⁴² Gerbet, 60.

⁴³ Serfaty, 'An International Anomaly', 145.

and even Brussels.⁴⁴ Different tactics were utilized for this objective. US Department of State official and the architect behind the Containment strategy George Kennan, for instance, advocated boosting moderate left-leaning parties in western European countries to damage communist parties.⁴⁵ This strategy was put into effect in Italy by encouraging a split between moderate socialists, and more left-wing party members more inclined to cooperate with the PCI.⁴⁶ While concocted in the halls of Foggy Bottom and Pennsylvania Avenue, however, this strategy also won support from local politicians in Paris and Rome. French politician and future Prime Minister Pierre Mendes-France saw the communist scare as providing a “great service”, because it convinced the Americans to “help us”.⁴⁷

With pressure mounting externally from Washington and domestically between different political actors, the communists’ role within the French and Italian governments became less certain. The political strife between the government coalition partners even led the communists in both countries to seek, or at least not fight, an exit from government.⁴⁸ Being outside of government would allow the more radical members of the French and Italian Left to more easily advocate their prescriptions to their respective country’s ills. American statesmen, when discussing with their counterparts in Paris and Rome, indirectly communicated that future American assistance, both financial and security related, could be jeopardized with communist participation in their governments.⁴⁹ Despite the US’s heavy hand in communicating expectations to its dependent partners in France and Italy, however, it was leading actors in both countries that led to the decision for the PCF and the PCI to leave the governing coalitions, and end the early postwar experimentation with tripartism.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Serfaty, 134.

⁴⁵ Brogi, ‘Ending Grand Alliance Politics in Western Europe’, 152.

⁴⁶ Brogi, ‘Ending Grand Alliance Politics in Western Europe’. 151.

⁴⁷ Serfaty, ‘An International Anomaly’.

⁴⁸ Serfaty, 145.

⁴⁹ Serfaty, 144.

⁵⁰ Serfaty, 146.

Marshall Plan & the Organization for European Economic Cooperation

European economies in the early postwar years were struggling to reactivate following the destructive impact of the Second World War. European peoples across the continent faced a particular difficulty during the harsh winter of 1946-1947, when agricultural and industrial production came in lower than anticipated and threatened economic growth.⁵¹ Europeans imported more because of this lower domestic production, leading to a rise in the trade deficit that strained the European reserves of the US dollar. By 1947, European states were facing a balance of payments crisis, unable to supply enough US dollars to pay for the American investment goods needed for economic recovery.⁵² For Washington, western Europe's economic revitalization was in its geopolitical and business interest, as a bulwark against communism in the approaching Cold War and as a consumer of American goods. By January 1947, US policy makers were already set on the need to assist Europe, the question was merely in what manner.⁵³ While concern over German re-industrialization remained real in Europe, American onlookers were increasingly convinced that German economic reactivation was fundamental to broader European recovery. US Secretary of State George C. Marshall began to advocate unleashing German industrial capacity and resource development at this aim, mindful of the need to persuade European partners (particularly Paris) and obtain the necessary support in the US Congress for this transatlantic American investment.⁵⁴

In a speech at Harvard Yard on June 5, 1947, Marshall announced an integrated framework for Europe's economic challenges.⁵⁵ Officially titled the European Recovery Program, the Marshall Plan, as it was dubbed, would be open to all interested countries, including the USSR and eastern bloc countries.⁵⁶ Across the Atlantic, there were differing reactions to the announcement of American financial assistance. To a large degree, European states, mostly in the west but also notably several in the east, were keen to apply

⁵¹ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 67.

⁵² Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, 155.

⁵³ Serfaty, 'An International Anomaly', 145.

⁵⁴ Hitchcock, 'The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West', 156.

⁵⁵ Hitchcock, 156.

⁵⁶ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 68.

for US funds. The UK and France, as the US's most important partners in western Europe and eventual eager recipients of Marshall Plan assistance, hoped to influence the program's implementation to serve their own geopolitical preferences.

With the recent ejections of communist parties in Paris and Rome, tensions between those aligned with one of the two flanking superpowers were running high. To prevent a congealing of two opposing and hostile blocs on their continent, the UK's Bevin and France's Georges Bidault contacted Moscow quickly following Marshall's announcement.⁵⁷ Despite their attempts to convince the Soviets of some open measures to Washington's proposal, they were unsuccessful. The Kremlin rejected the concept of German industrial revival, deeming the American proposal as counter to previous agreements between the four victorious powers.⁵⁸ After their own failed attempts to drive a wedge between London and Paris on the question of the proposed Marshall Plan, Moscow realized that any efforts would be in vain: Europeans were eager for American assistance and leadership.⁵⁹ In drawing their own redline on the topic, Moscow restricted its eastern bloc countries, including Poland and newly controlled Czechoslovakia, from participating in the American assistance program.⁶⁰ As an alternative, it launched the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties (Cominform) in October of 1947, expanding to include its own economic cooperation mechanism through the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) two years later, in 1949.⁶¹

In mid-July 1947, the Committee on European Economic Cooperation (CEEC) was formed by several European states to coordinate priorities and formulate a joint plan for the continent's economic recovery.⁶² Similar to the previous disagreements on how to handle the announcement on American aid, London and Paris brought different perspectives on how to manage this initiative. While Bevin preferred a scaled-down temporary organization, Bidault envisioned the current negotiations as a chance to jump-

⁵⁷ Gerbet, 68.

⁵⁸ Hitchcock, 'The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West', 157.

⁵⁹ Hitchcock, 157.

⁶⁰ Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948', 143.

⁶¹ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 69.

⁶² Hitchcock, 'The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West', 158.

start European integration and the broader “construction of Europe”.⁶³ After lively, months-long debates, on April 16, 1948, sixteen countries joined to create the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). While inclusive of the UK, France, and the western zones of occupied Germany, other signatories included Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey. The OEEC was formed with the objective of “developing their mutual cooperation, reducing restrictions on their monetary and commercial exchanges, establishing a multilateral system of payments, (and) researching the possibility of a monetary union or of a free trade zone”, among other priorities.⁶⁴ While an innovative institution, the OEEC came into existence as a relatively “simple intergovernmental organization” with limited capacity.⁶⁵ Concurrently on the other side of the Atlantic, as European negotiators were putting together the distributive arms of the Marshall Plan, Secretary Marshall and the rest of the Truman administration was ushering the European Recovery Program through Congress. After minor yet vocal opposition to the program from the political Left and Right, the bill received congressional approval by wide margins in March 1948, and was signed by President Truman on April 3, 1948.⁶⁶

Between its inception in 1948 till its end in 1951, the Marshall Plan sent \$12.3 billion in financial assistance to European countries, or worth about \$160 billion in 2024 dollars.⁶⁷ In its first year, assistance from the program accounted for 2.4 percent of the UK’s GNP, 2.9 percent for the western Germany, 5.3 percent for the Italians, and 6.5 percent for the French.⁶⁸ Despite this significant quantity and its support in providing dollars to European states, its real contribution to European recovery is debated. British economic historian Alan Milward cited in his groundbreaking work *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, a “conflict between development policy and trade liberalization”

⁶³ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 69.

⁶⁴ Gerbet, 71.

⁶⁵ Gerbet, 72.

⁶⁶ ‘S 2202. PASSAGE. -- Senate Vote #153 -- March 13, 1948’; ‘S 2202. PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE, NATIONAL INTEREST, AND FOREIGN ... -- House Vote #105 -- March 31, 1948’.

⁶⁷ Hitchcock, ‘The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West’, 154.

⁶⁸ Hitchcock, 160.

during the implementation of the program. He noted that while there were some measures of the trade liberalization between countries, there were also increased protective barriers as well.⁶⁹ Moreover, despite early attributions of the European recovery to the Marshall Plan, Milward and other economists have since then painted a different picture upon further review. Contrary to perceptions, upon further review of the period, it was noted that the UK and France had exceeded the industrial production of their prewar years by 1947, before even receiving Marshall Plan assistance, with Italy, Netherlands, and Belgium, doing so by 1948.⁷⁰ Alternatively, the American assistance plan might have had even greater geopolitical consequence than an economic one. Some scholars note that the Marshall Plan could have greatly contributed to the growing Cold War divisions, by slicing European countries between recipients and non-recipients of the program's assistance.⁷¹ For Washington, the European Recovery Program and the subsequent creation of the OEEC was crucially a savvy geopolitical move that unleashed western German industrial capacity in a way suitable to French and other neighboring European sensibilities, to block further Soviet influence across European capitals.⁷² As mentioned previously, by the time of the plan's implementation in 1948, European economies were already at their prewar levels, and it was rather Europe's need for dollars to purchase American industrial investment imports that gave the European Recovery Program its *raison d'être*.⁷³ As the Marshall Plan's resources were infused into the broader European economy through the OEEC framework, the increasingly re-industrialized and reactivated western German economy was able to replace the US in providing the necessary industrial investment exports to its European neighbors. With this shift, and despite the continued concerns in European capitals, the still divided and occupied western Germany was reassuming its role as the economic engine at the heart of Europe.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, 132.

⁷⁰ Hitchcock, 'The Marshall Plan and the Creation of the West', 159.

⁷¹ Hitchcock, 154.

⁷² Hitchcock, 159.

⁷³ Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, 155.

⁷⁴ Milward, 155.

A British Nudge

The Americans had other expectations of their European partners. With the objective of assisting western European partners in getting back to economic and defensive self-sufficiency to block Soviet encroachment, American leaders expressed the desire that western European states move toward greater integration and even unification.⁷⁵ Through policy discussions between Truman, US Secretary of State George Marshall, and Under-Secretary Dean Acheson, European unification eventually became a foreign policy objective of the US, and the Americans were willing to support—and encourage—their transatlantic partners on that effort.⁷⁶ As discussed previously, intellectual circles across Europe had been advocating for interdependence and even federalization among European nations. In the early postwar years, however, politicians and statesmen were more preoccupied with the task of reconstruction than the construction of a unified Europe.⁷⁷

In the UK, not only was the governing Labour Party focused on reconstruction, but British foreign policy under Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was initially concerned with balancing its three international priorities: the Commonwealth, the ‘special’ relationship with the US, and continental Europe. As Cold War tensions rose in Europe and the British Empire’s oversea holdings were threatened by Soviet expansionist tendencies, the Foreign Office under Bevin became activated in the fight against communism. Watching communist parties be ejected from the French and Italian governments in mid-1947, Bevin grew certain that a more unified Western body was necessary to successfully reject Soviet influence on western Europe.⁷⁸ In June 1947, when US Secretary of State Marshall shared the potential opportunity for an American aid package to support Europe’s rebuilding efforts, Bevin aimed to take advantage of that opportunity.⁷⁹ The British Foreign Minister served as a fundamental crafter of the European response to American desires for Europe to integrate. In a speech to the House of Commons in January 1948, for instance, Bevin stressed his support for a

⁷⁵ Gerbet, *La construction de l’Europe*, 61.

⁷⁶ Gerbet, 61.

⁷⁷ Gerbet, 61.

⁷⁸ Weiler, ‘British Labour and the Cold War’, 71.

⁷⁹ Weiler, ‘British Labour and the Cold War’.

defense union in western Europe that would seek to strengthen Europe's democratic countries in face of the Soviet threat.⁸⁰ In doing so, European states would be able to address the American request for an integrated rebuilding project, while also solidifying their stances vis-à-vis the USSR. For Bevin and the British Foreign Office, the objective was to strengthen their relationship with their US allies, secure recovery funds through the soon-to-be-launched Marshall Plan and guarantee American involvement in European security affairs. Moreover, by providing a framework for a defense union, Bevin was hoping to prevent development toward deeper integration in the form of a federation or confederation, frameworks to which he was opposed.⁸¹ Along with the rest of the Labour Party's leadership, Bevin hoped to protect British socialism and worried that delegating powers to a supranational European entity would endanger their progress.⁸²

In this period across European capitals, the political establishment ranged in their perception of the escalating Cold War between the US and USSR. While there was a consensus from the Right to the center-left that shared democratic values with the US was preferable to the Soviet model, there was also a healthy skepticism of the dominant offshore American ally. Moreover, there was a fear of provoking the Soviets with the creation of threatening military alliances. On the democratic Left, in particular, there was a belief that "Left could speak to Left", or in other words, socialist and other Left parties in Paris, London, and other western capitals could reason with Moscow.⁸³ This Left leniency, however, would soon fade and give way to the understanding of the Soviet regime's authoritarian intentions.⁸⁴

Clarity from Prague

In February 1948, the next domino toward the full-fledged cold conflict between the west and east, fell, with the Czechoslovak communists successfully taking power through a coup d'état. Before this anti-democratic turn, Czechoslovakia had maintained its

⁸⁰ Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948', 150.

⁸¹ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*. 61.

⁸² Gerbet, 63.

⁸³ Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948', 135.

⁸⁴ Weiler, 'British Labour and the Cold War', 74.

democratic nature despite falling on the eastern half of the continent in the early postwar era. Like its counterparts in Paris and Rome, the Czechoslovakian Communist Party had engaged in the electoral process, attempting to gain power through democratic means.⁸⁵ Despite its success in entering government, the internal pressures within communist ideology, together with the external pressures coming from Moscow, brought challenges to the Czechian communists. In the summer of 1947, the Czechoslovak government, including members of the Moscow aligned Communist Party, accepted a French and British invitation to join preparatory talks for US economic assistance.⁸⁶ The acceptance of this offer from the western democracies heightened distrust in Moscow of their communist satellites in Prague. For Moscow, receiving financial assistance through what was eventually known as the Marshall Plan, was incompatible with its alliances with satellite countries in eastern Europe. Faced with Soviet pressure, Prague backtracked on its decision and declined the invitation to the conference and subsequent American economic assistance.⁸⁷ The decision to forgo economic assistance was devastating to the Czechoslovak economy. Similarly, the decision to more closely align to the USSR was unhelpful to the electoral chances of the Communist Party in the country. In the lead up to the election expected in spring of 1948, a poll from December 1947 collected by the communist Ministry of Information showed that the communists were estimated to obtain 10 to 15 percent of public support. This weak standing, in conjunction with having seen communist parties in Paris and Rome exit from the tripartism governments the previous summer, raised skepticism that the electoral route would ever allow for a communist government.⁸⁸

The communists in Prague therefore put into motion a plan to infiltrate government ministries necessary enact a coup, including the Ministries of Labour, Information, and Interior.⁸⁹ As the communists worked in the Labour Ministry to provoke trade unions against the other parties in government, and to enact power centralizing reforms within

⁸⁵ Duchacek, 'The February Coup in Czechoslovakia', 514.

⁸⁶ Duchacek, 516.

⁸⁷ Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948', 143.

⁸⁸ Duchacek, 'The February Coup in Czechoslovakia', 530.

⁸⁹ Duchacek, 522.

the security forces through the Interior Ministry, non-communist members of the government resigned in protest. Hoping that their resignation would trigger the formation of a new caretaker government without the participation of the communists or the organization of new elections, they were entrusting democratic tactics against an undemocratic adversary. Instead, on February 25, Czechoslovak President Edvard Benes, fearing civil conflict, ceded to the demands of the communists and accepted the formation of a new communist government.⁹⁰ With the aggressive overthrow of a democratically elected government in Prague, public opinion across western Europe, and that of politicians and leaders on the Right, center, and Left, reached a conclusive shift, putting into overdrive the construction of a new defense apparatus.

America Insists: Europe First

Driving this construction of a new defense apparatus was external American pressure and the diplomatic work of European statesmen such as Bevin of the UK and Georges Bidault of France.⁹¹ Understanding that American military support would only come on the condition that western European countries take the initiative themselves to organize a European defense apparatus, Bevin used the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia to muster public opinion behind the project for a western defense union.⁹² Bevin's plan of a western defense union had previously competed with other formulations advocated in London and other capitals. One proposition sent from London and Paris to the capitals of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg (Benelux) in early 1948 were bilateral defense treaties like the Treaty of Dunkirk signed the previous year between the UK and France.⁹³ In another offering, Paris had approached Benelux to propose the construction of a customs union.⁹⁴ For the Benelux countries, neither of these offerings satisfied the requirements of the moment. While the thinking in Benelux capitals was that economic integration through customs unions or other measures would eventually be integral to any

⁹⁰ Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948', 152.

⁹¹ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 76.

⁹² Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948', 135.

⁹³ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 77.

⁹⁴ Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948', 147.

meaningful progress, at this stage the Benelux countries did not find it “practicable” to “talk of such close associations as customs unions”. With respect to the bilateral defense treaties offered by the British and French, they perceived them as insufficient.⁹⁵ They offered, in return, the creation of a broader political institution that included military and economic agreements between the participating countries. Prior to the coup in Prague, London and Paris were in a delicate diplomatic balancing act with the USSR. They anticipated that the Soviets would perceive the more comprehensive multilateral arrangements, including military agreements, to be geared toward them. Only security guarantees related to a renewed German threat, were envisioned.⁹⁶ These fundamental disagreements between London and Paris, and the Benelux countries, presented real barriers to the broader proposition of economic and political integration. Still, when Bevin renewed his push for a western defense union activating against a renewed German threat, the status of a future democratic Germany continued to serve as a thorn in the talks between the British and French.⁹⁷ While the British desired to accommodate to American hopes of leaving the door open for a future German entrance into the western defense union arrangement, the French remained recalcitrant in opposition.⁹⁸

While Washington advised and London, Paris, and Benelux were engaged in negotiations, Rome looked on. Several factors, both domestic and international, kept the Italians at a distance from the negotiations on a western defense apparatus. In the domestic political context, the opposition PCI remained a strong political force that allied pressure on the government in Rome. Flirting with a military alliance with the West would have provided an opening for the communists to paint the governing parties as warmongering. Moreover, the Christian Democrats found themselves divided on whether to join the western countries in this endeavor. Externally, Italy’s relative weakness on the international stage inhibited its participation in the negotiations on its preferred terms. London and Paris still did not view Rome at equal stature. For Rome, the center of power of the proposed western defense union was too North-East in Europe for comfort. Finally,

⁹⁵ Gerbet, *La construction de l’Europe*, 77.

⁹⁶ Svik, ‘The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948’, 151.

⁹⁷ Svik, 150.

⁹⁸ Svik, 154.

there was a belief that if the western countries wanted to enlist Italy in its fight against Soviet Communism, they would have to restore Italy to its 'natural' international standing.⁹⁹ Therefore, while the other five countries found themselves in the difficult negotiations on the future of western Europe's security architecture, Italy abstained.

With the fall of democratic Czechoslovakia in late-February 1948, however, the realization of the moment's gravity took hold of the negotiations. The five participating countries quickly found an agreement, with the UK and France conceding to some of the proposals from the Benelux delegation.¹⁰⁰ Among the concessions included a regional multilateral treaty structure with an embedded system of consultation, and language symbolizing an aspiration toward an economic union.¹⁰¹ The coordinated negotiation and common front of the smaller Benelux countries had proven successful with the inclusion of economic and political cooperation measures.¹⁰² On March 17, 1948, the five partners of UK, France, and Benelux signed the Treaty of Brussels, finalizing the construction of the Western Union. A multilateral regional organization with the objective of providing stability to western Europe against the mounting Soviet threats, and to demonstrate to their American partners local commitment to continental security.¹⁰³

Europe's Missing Middle

At the heart of Europe and at the center of postwar geopolitical dynamics was the fate of splintered and occupied Germany. Before the Cold War geopolitical considerations began to crystallize in Washington, Moscow, and the European capitals in-between, there was a general understanding that the mistakes of the post Great War Treaty of Versailles, were not to be repeated. At the end of the war in April of 1945, US Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau expressed that it should be made clear to Germany and its citizens that "Germany is a defeated country". As explained previously, the initial American approach

⁹⁹ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955'.

¹⁰⁰ Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948', 153.

¹⁰¹ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 77.

¹⁰² Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 34.

¹⁰³ Svik, 'The Czechoslovak Factor in Western Alliance Building, 1945–1948', 133.

to defeated Germany was de-militarization, de-Nazification, and de-industrialization; confiscating from Germany its ability to wage war and to reeducate its population. As a result, the Allies, led by the US but supported by the USSR, the UK, and France, formally disbanded the Wehrmacht military, instituted de-Nazification programs, and placed tight caps on industrial production.¹⁰⁴ While international neighbors and onlookers believed that these policies, such as the de-Nazification programs, were necessary and well-deserved, in Germany there was skepticism and distrust. In Germany, while there was an overall desire to forget the past and move on from the war and its preceding years, the public's perception of the previous regime was not as negative as the occupying powers would have wanted. After the war in 1945 until the end of the 1940s, when asked in public opinion polling, most Germans said that "Nazism was a good idea, badly applied".¹⁰⁵ Even on the systematic extermination of the Jewish people and other non-Aryans, nearly 40 percent of respondents in November of 1946 saw it necessary for the security of the German people.¹⁰⁶ According to historian Tony Judt, this offered evidence that the de-Nazification programs most diligently imposed by the Americans in their own sector, did not have conclusive effects in changing the minds of Germans. In fact, even by May of 1946, barely over a year after the war's conclusion, Konrad Adenauer, leader of the German Christian Democrats and future Chancellor of the FRG, argued in a public speech that de-Nazification efforts had gone further than necessary and that there was a risk of a backlash from the population.¹⁰⁷ While the occupiers deemed it necessary to reeducate the population, for most Germans, these reeducation efforts were unnecessary, as Germans, whether having been members of the Nazi Party or not, had "denazified" immediately at the war's end.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, 105.

¹⁰⁵ Judt, 56.

¹⁰⁶ Judt and Snyder, *Thinking the Twentieth Century*, 60.

¹⁰⁷ Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, 56.

¹⁰⁸ Judt, 61.

German Leadership

The defeated Germans had plenty of preoccupations in the early postwar years. With its sovereignty breached and with a long journey toward economic reconstruction, what made matters worse was the geopolitical maelstrom raging both inside and outside German borders. The division in Europe between East and West divided Germany in half, and with it came the thinking behind the Bridge Theory, or *Brückentheorie*, in which Germany's unique positioning would allow it to play an intermediary role between the two conflicting blocs.¹⁰⁹ Whether or not to serve as this middle player between the US and USSR, however, would be a pointless question, considering the fact that Germany remained without its power to engage in foreign policy during occupation. For Adenauer, this was the main objective of the time. His perspective on the immediate postwar period was practical, understanding that the world's power structure had been transformed from a multi-world order to bipolarity between the US and USSR. With a primary goal of returning Germany to equal standing among other countries in the international arena, he saw the policy of western integration as the way forward.¹¹⁰

For Adenauer, the USSR's domination over eastern Europe posed a hegemonic risk to the European continent. On the US, the German party leader cast doubt on the American understanding of Europe and its commitment to European affairs. Nevertheless, he saw the Soviets as primarily an 'Asian power' whose values and traditions were different to those of the Western World.¹¹¹ To protect those western values, Adenauer saw fundamental the collaboration of the UK and France. According to Adenauer, it was in the interests of the UK to see itself as a European power, engaging itself in the affairs of the continent. France lacked the strength to play the central role in this quest toward greater collaboration and integration among the countries of western Europe.¹¹² Toward the end of the decade, when western Allies were discussing the necessity to unleash German

¹⁰⁹ Overesch, 'Senior West German Politicians and Their Perception of the German Situation in Europe 1945-1949', 119.

¹¹⁰ Overesch, 'Senior West German Politicians and Their Perception of the German Situation in Europe 1945-1949'.

¹¹¹ Overesch.

¹¹² Overesch, 126.

industrial potential for western Europe's economic reactivation, Adenauer saw western European integration and German industry as integral for the "safeguarding of a permanent peace".¹¹³

While Adenauer was filling an important leadership role on the Right of the German political scene, former resistance fighter and chairman of the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) Kurt Schumacher filled an important gap for leadership on the German Left.¹¹⁴ In the years following German's partition, Schumacher deemed from personal experience living in occupied Germany that Anglo-Saxon world was closer to the traditional German way of life than that of the Soviet zone.¹¹⁵ He positioned the SPD's foreign policy priorities by underscoring its commitment to German unity and aligning the country to the western powers, as opposed to closer association with the USSR and the eastern German socialist movement of the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED). This desire for closer association to western powers, dubbed *Weltdemokratie*, or world democracy, had a pivotal impact on western Germany's political development in the early Cold War, while the call for German unity was only deemed possible if the USSR were to allow free and democratic political processes in the eastern portion of the country.¹¹⁶ In opting the side with free and democratic societies, the SPD helped to solidify the west German political establishment against Soviet communism, and toward the West.

Filling the Gap

The Cold War dynamics, ironically, helped spur the creation of independent, yet separate, German states. As the gap between the East and West grew, so grew the advantages to seeing an aligned and independent Germany form.¹¹⁷ From Washington, there was a

¹¹³ Overesch, 127.

¹¹⁴ Staritz and Sywottek, 'The International Political Situation as Seen by the German Linksparteien (SPD, SED and KPD) between 1945 and 1949', 216.

¹¹⁵ Staritz and Sywottek, 217.

¹¹⁶ Staritz and Sywottek, 'The International Political Situation as Seen by the German Linksparteien (SPD, SED and KPD) between 1945 and 1949'.

¹¹⁷ Grosser, *Western Germany: From Defeat to Rearmament*, 39.

strong interest in seeing western Germany solidified to buttress Soviet encroachment.¹¹⁸ It was in Washington's interest that the "German economy... be integrated into the economy of (western) Europe".¹¹⁹ On June 4 of 1948, western powers, including the US, UK, France and Benelux, announced the intention to create a west German state.¹²⁰ Western military governors were directed to coordinate with German regional authorities a constituent assembly for the creation of a new governing structure for western Germany.¹²¹ In retaliation, the Soviet military government in eastern Germany launched its own reforms, aimed to wrestle control of West Berlin from the western allies, or, alternatively, to convince them to retreat from their plans to form a new west German entity.¹²² With these Soviet reforms in eastern Germany, western access was cut to West Berlin. On June 28, 1948, at urging of UK Prime Minister Bevin, American forces launched an airlift campaign to bypass the Soviet-imposed blockade, defying Moscow's plans to break their commitment to a new western German state.¹²³ The 'Berlin Crisis', as it was to be known, lasted for over a year, and provided aid to nearly two million West Berliners.¹²⁴ In his seminal work, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, historian Judt argued that the Berlin Crisis had a direct impact on three significant results. First, it contributed directly to the creation of the two German states. Secondly, it committed the US, for the first time, to a significant military presence on the European continent for the foreseeable future. Third, was the western Allies' military recalculations, which had already begun in the aftermath of the communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948.¹²⁵

The first was the extent of the commitment of the offshore (and nearshore) western powers. The US and UK, one more separated than the other from the toils of the European

¹¹⁸ 'West Germany's Strategic Position and Her Role in Defence Policy as Seen by the German Military, 1945-1949', 355.

¹¹⁹ Grosser, *Western Germany: From Defeat to Rearmament*, 40.

¹²⁰ Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, 145.

¹²¹ Grosser, *Western Germany: From Defeat to Rearmament*, 41.

¹²² Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, 146.

¹²³ Grosser, *Western Germany: From Defeat to Rearmament*, 41; Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, 147.

¹²⁴ 'The Berlin Airlift'.

¹²⁵ Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, 147.

mainland, both had natural inclinations to maintain a healthy distance from European political and military entanglements. The escalating nature of the Cold War in 1947 and 1948, however, both inched closer to providing more commitments to their eager partners, particular the French. The signing of the Treaty of Dunkirk in 1947 and the establishment of the Western Union in the spring of 1948, were two concrete steps that London took to assuage French fears that they would not be abandoned. Through the Marshall Plan's generous and desperately needed economic assistance, the US demonstrated its own commitment to the stability of Europe. It took, however, until the Prague coup and the Berlin Crisis for the US to reevaluate its military commitment to the continent.¹²⁶ Feeling that the Europeans had taken a sufficient step in providing for their own defense with the creation of the Western Union in 1948, Washington opened discussions for the establishment of a military pact for the Atlantic community. In spring of 1948, secret negotiations between the US, the UK, and Canada, began, with the France and Benelux joining in the summer.¹²⁷ On June 11, the US Senate voted to authorize formal negotiations on military alliances with countries outside of the Western Hemisphere, marking a significant development in American foreign policy.¹²⁸ It was not until after the reelection of US President Truman in early November of 1948 that the negotiations became official. After around a year of negotiations, the Atlantic alliance was signed by twelve states on April 4, 1949, in Washington.¹²⁹ Joining the US and the other five countries of the Western Union as signatories to this new alliance were Canada, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, and Iceland.¹³⁰ With the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the US officially became a part of the European security apparatus, a major milestone in the country's foreign policy which had had a long history of isolation tendencies toward Europe.¹³¹

On May 8, 1949, the German constituent assembly charged with writing a governing framework for the new western German state, passed the basic law, or

¹²⁶ Judt, 147.

¹²⁷ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 79.

¹²⁸ Gerbet, 79.

¹²⁹ Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, 149.

¹³⁰ Kershaw, *Roller-Coaster: Europe, 1950-2017*, 6.

¹³¹ Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, 147.

Grundgesetz (GG) establishing the German Federal Republic (FRG).¹³² The GG officially entered into force on May 24, 1949, after being approved by the occupying military governors and nearly all of the eleven *Länder* legislatures.¹³³ On August 14, the first federal elections of the FRG were held. In these elections, Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) narrowly edged past Schumacher's SPD for first place, with the liberal Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei*, FDP) coming in third.¹³⁴ Despite only amassing 31 percent of the vote (to the SPD's 29 percent), Adenauer, as leader of the largest party and supported by a coalition of parties ranging from the Right to the center, was elected the first Chancellor of the FRG.¹³⁵ With a new government headed by Adenauer and FDP leader Theodor Heuss as Federal President, the western occupying allies concocted the Occupation Statute in September 1949. Through the new agreement, the occupying military governors were replaced by an Allied High Commission which would be designated with certain powers over the newly established FRG, which itself was afforded autonomy over internal matters.¹³⁶ Meticulously and patiently working toward his overarching political objective of regaining for the FRG an equal standing among its partners, Adenauer negotiated the Petersburg Agreement with the western partners in November of 1949. Through this agreement, Adenauer successfully secured caps on the de-industrialization of the FRG, permission to establish certain diplomatic relations internationally, such as establishing consular offices and joining the new institutions of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, among other items. In exchange, Bonn, the capital of the FRG, ceded to American, British, and French demands and agreed to the stalemate on the Ruhr Authority.¹³⁷ While the FRG had not yet achieved entire equal standing with its western partners, Adenauer had indeed succeeded in his goal of rejoining the international community.

¹³² Grosser, *Western Germany: From Defeat to Rearmament*, 43.

¹³³ Nohlen and Stöver, *Elections in Europe*, 734.

¹³⁴ Nohlen and Stöver, *Elections in Europe*.

¹³⁵ Nohlen and Stöver; Grosser, *Western Germany: From Defeat to Rearmament*, 44.

¹³⁶ Simpson III., 'The Rearming of Germany 1950-1954: A Linchpin in the Political Evolution of Europe', 78.

¹³⁷ Simpson III., 78.

As the FRG was enjoying its first months with certain regained sovereignty, to the east, in October of 1949, the Democratic Republic of Germany (GDR) was established. The governing Soviet military government was supplanted by a new control commission, and the elections of SED Chairmen Wilhelm Pieck as president and Otto Grotewohl as prime minister marked a significant moment in the postwar era, with autonomy, albeit to certain degrees, being granted to Germans.¹³⁸

The Question of German Rearmament

A significant undercurrent of the conversation around the creation of new German states was the central question of German rearmament. Less than five years after the end of the Second World War, the idea of a rearmed Germany at the heart of Europe continued to spook Europeans, both within and outside of Germany. In early 1948, Christian Democratic association *Nouvelles Equipes Internationales* had shared that “all possibility of rearmament must be prevented”.¹³⁹ In 1950, former Supreme Commander of Allied forces in Europe and future US President Dwight D. Eisenhower viewed a rearmed Germany as “political dynamite”.¹⁴⁰ Due to the hesitancy across European capitals of a renewed German menace, the occupying powers retained substantial prerogatives over the newly created German states. From mid-1949 until May 1951, external affairs of the FRG remained under the supervision and direction of the Allied High Commissioners.¹⁴¹ The new western German state was also restricted of its own security forces.¹⁴² As previously recounted, a number of events escalated the geopolitical friction between the two postwar blocs. The influence of communist parties across western European countries and the overthrow of the democratically elected government in Czechoslovakia, both contributed to increasing the chatter across western capitals on the eventual need for German contribution to the western security effort, in first economic, then military nature.

¹³⁸ Grosser, *Western Germany: From Defeat to Rearmament*, 44.

¹³⁹ Grosser, 45.

¹⁴⁰ Grosser, 46.

¹⁴¹ Grosser, 44.

¹⁴² Simpson, ‘The Rearming of Germany 1950-1954’, 79.

The launch of the Korean war was the conclusive event that reset perceptions of the European security landscape.¹⁴³ Since Japan's defeat in the Second World War, the Korean peninsula had been divided at the 38th parallel after an agreement between the US and USSR. This arrangement had led to the creation of a communist state in the north aligned with the USSR, and the anti-communist south aligned with the Americans.¹⁴⁴ In 1949, the victory of Mao's Chinese Communists over the Nationalist in neighboring China, added pressure to the divided Korean arrangement. On June 25, 1950, with Chinese support and Moscow's blessing, communist forces from North Korea invaded its southern neighbor, providing a new, indirect confrontation between the US and USSR.¹⁴⁵

The war in Korea introduced renewed impetus on discussions on German rearmament across the West. Prior to the outbreak of the conflict, there was an overall assumption across the Atlantic that direct engagement with the Soviets was not expected until at least 1952. The communist invasion of southern Korea, however, changed that calculation and compelled conversations on western European defenses.¹⁴⁶ While prior to the Korean conflict American, British, and French political establishments believed that moves to rearm Germany would needlessly heighten tensions with the USSR, their respective defense establishments stressed the importance of Germany's military capacity in a potential war.¹⁴⁷ In war's wake, officials and strategic planners across the West began to debate to what extent and in what format the FRG's contribution would be made in this effort. The French, on their end, had not stopped in expressing their strong opposition to the idea of German rearmament.¹⁴⁸ In an attempt to bridge the gap between Paris's opposition to German rearmament and the realization that FRG's military capacity would be needed, officials across the West began to propose an integrated approach. In Bonn, as a solution to this predicament, Chancellor Adenauer offer the FRG's support to a broader western European defense force, rather than working toward a German-only military force, to which the German elite remained opposed. This proposal from the West German

¹⁴³ Simpson, 79.

¹⁴⁴ Kershaw, *Roller-Coaster: Europe, 1950-2017*, 2.

¹⁴⁵ Kershaw, 3.

¹⁴⁶ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 42.

¹⁴⁷ Pastor-Castro, 'The Quai d'Orsay and the European Defense Community Crisis of 1954', 388.

¹⁴⁸ Simpson, 'The Rearming of Germany 1950-1954', 80.

leader was also geared toward a parallel concern: a scenario similar to Korea's across divided Germany. Given the FRG's reliance on western countries' security forces and the threat posed by the GDR's East German People's Police force, the West German leader believed that his country was put under precarious circumstances without increased capacity or support.¹⁴⁹ Across the Channel in August 1950, former and future British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called for a European army closely affiliated with the Atlantic alliance.¹⁵⁰ In Washington, US Secretary of State Acheson had privately grown more adamant on the need for western Germany's contribution in face of the communist bloc.¹⁵¹ To find a breakthrough in the negotiations, a conference was organized in New York City starting on September 12, 1950 for the Foreign Ministers of the US, UK, and France, along with the Council of the Atlantic Treaty. At the end of the conference, Washington committed itself to providing more military presence on the European continent. This commitment was in exchange for the FRG's rearmament and its contribution to western Europe's defense.¹⁵² While in New York the participants recognized, "sentiments recently expressed in Germany and elsewhere in favour of German participation in an integrated force for the defence of European freedom", they added that the, "questions raised by the problem of the participation of the (FRG) in the common defense of Europe are at present the subject and exchange of views."¹⁵³ Overall, the US's call for a joint European defense effort was backed by the UK, Italy, Netherlands, and Norway, while the French were the most starkly opposed to the principle of German rearmament.¹⁵⁴

Pleven Plan

Sensing that they were at risk of losing the argument on German rearmament, the French worked to regain the initiative by launching a counterproposal. To bridge the gap between

¹⁴⁹ Simpson, 80.

¹⁵⁰ Simpson, 83.

¹⁵¹ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates'.

¹⁵² Pastor-Castro, 'The Quai d'Orsay and the European Defense Community Crisis of 1954', 388.

¹⁵³ Grosser, *Western Germany: From Defeat to Rearmament*, 46.

¹⁵⁴ Duke, *The Elusive Quest for European Security: From the EDC to CFSP*, 17.

Paris and their western partners, on October 24, 1950, the Pleven Plan proposing a European Defense Community was introduced in the National Assembly.¹⁵⁵ Named after the French Prime Minister, René Pleven, the plan proposed to expand the parameters of the Schumann Plan beyond its original scope of sharing the war-time materials of coal and steel.¹⁵⁶ Pleven's plan would by-pass the issue of German national rearmament by funneling reinvigorated German military potential through a Europe-wide common defense. This European Defense Community would be integrated and centralized, with a single defense budget, arms procurement process, and a single defense minister. Participating states, except for the FRG, would retain national defense forces beyond those supplied through the common European taskforce, however the plan envisioned participating states to commit to defending Europe under a Supreme Allied Commander during conflicts, while retaining control of their national forces during peacetime.¹⁵⁷ As expected, French political landscape was complex in response to the Pleven Plan of a European Defense Community. Skepticism is the highest at both ends of the political spectrum. To the Left, the PCF were unconvinced of this work-around of German rearmament and remained opposed to the very principle of Germans remilitarizing. Socialists, with their internationalist leanings, preferred to prioritize economic and social European integration over defense integration. On the Right, followers of De Gaulle fretted the loss of French sovereignty in defense matters through the proposal. It was in the center where Pleven's government found the most support for the initiative. The Christian Democratic MRP favored the Pleven Plan, seeing it as a contribution to Schumann's initiative for European integration under the coal and steel initiative proposed just months before.¹⁵⁸ On October 24, to find an agreeable solution to the predicament of German rearmament within the confines of a European-run security architecture, the French National Assembly voted to approve the proposed Pleven Plan for a European Defense Community.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 129.

¹⁵⁶ Duke, *The Elusive Quest for European Security: From the EDC to CFSP*, 18.

¹⁵⁷ Duke, 18.

¹⁵⁸ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 130.

¹⁵⁹ Duke, *The Elusive Quest for European Security: From the EDC to CFSP*, 18.

The proposal from the intransigent French was met with initial skepticism across western capitals. In London, the Pleven Plan was seen as too big to be viewed credibly, with several preliminary steps, such as a common European budget and rearmament program, not yet having been taken. According to British ambassador Oliver Harvey, without these steps, the plan would be, “impracticable” and result in a “delay” to German rearmament.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, the British worried about Soviet and American reactions to the French proposal. London was concerned that Moscow might interpret the initiative as a hostile move against them directly, while also fearing estrangement from Washington due to this Eurocentric security plan.¹⁶¹ At the onset, the Truman administration saw the Pleven Plan as “hopeless” and deemed it difficult that the Germans would accept this “obvious” role as a junior partner in the program with the restrictions it would be placed under.¹⁶² In representing Bonn, Adenauer continued to be against the idea of German remilitarization, and was therefore more open to the plan. Across the western capitals, the initial skepticism evolved to openness, as the proposal from Paris became the most viable path forward for French cooperation, which was seen as fundamental to the defense of the West.¹⁶³ Bonn was amenable to German units being put under a Supreme Allied Commander, while Washington saw the Pleven Plan was the only avenue available for German contribution to Europe’s defense. London, in continuing to walk the fine line between the continent and the Anglo-American ‘special relationship’, supported the discussions on a European defense community, for continental Europeans. For the British, the focus on a European framework made it impossible for the UK to participate.¹⁶⁴ It was in this context that the Paris negotiations on the Pleven Plan began in February of 1951.

¹⁶⁰ Pastor-Castro, ‘The Quai d’Orsay and the European Defense Community Crisis of 1954’, 390.

¹⁶¹ Duke, *The Elusive Quest for European Security: From the EDC to CFSP*, 19.

¹⁶² Duke, 19.

¹⁶³ Creswell, ‘Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates’, 43.

¹⁶⁴ Pastor-Castro, ‘The Quai d’Orsay and the European Defense Community Crisis of 1954’, 390.

Chapter II: Pursuing the EDC

Prospective Security Strategies

The conclusion of the Second World War brought significant change to the international system. European states that had dominated global affairs in the previous century were faced with a new geopolitical reality of the ascendant US and Soviet Union. Amid the depletion of European strength and in a treacherous security environment, European statesmen and political actors debated national responses to this postwar security dilemma. The Pleven Plan was just one of several responses to this question on European security. Other prospective security strategies were discussed in western European capitals in the early postwar years, including the concepts of a European ‘Third Force’ on the international stage, neutrality, or alignment with one the newly emerging superpowers.

These debates sparked action on a variety of fronts. The rising Cold War tensions led to innovative experiments in diplomacy, statecraft, and institution building. Alternatives were promoted, alliances created, and institutions built upon the ashes left by the Second World War. This work provides a helpful overview of three major alternatives that were debated across western European capitals in this early postwar period. The concept of a ‘Third Force’ had more sway in the halls of London and Paris, where national pride was bruised with the loss of prestige during the war. Neutrality, by contrast, was more influential among the defeated Italians and Germans.¹⁶⁵ Finally, the question of alignment with one of the two ascendant superpowers became necessary, when geopolitical realities became impossible to ignore. This guide provides important insights to the discussions and preferences of each country in responding to the European security dilemma and contributes to the overall focus on the work on the EDC.

¹⁶⁵ Wendt, ‘Europe between Power and Powerlessness’, 539.

Third Force

Promoted in the early postwar years, the 'Third Force' concept advocated for European states to become an alternative power to the growing Soviet American duopoly. In the immediate postwar years, sectors of the British and French body politic believed in a potential role as a 'third force' in international politics between the US and USSR.¹⁶⁶ In both countries, national pride centered the concept on a Third Force firstly on each country individually, and each adopted the concept in different ways depending on different national concerns and constraints.

For the British, their role at the war conferences alongside the US and USSR provided it with an advantageous perch from which to stay atop global affairs. Their relative weakness vis-à-vis their homologues in Washington and Moscow, however, encouraged London to pursue different avenues to present a Third Force between the two superpowers. Their leadership in the expansive Commonwealth of Nations, for example, provided it with a potential outlet for global influence. A deeper relationship with western European partners was an alternative option. In 1945, the Foreign Office proposed stronger collaboration with the Commonwealth and western European capitals, particularly Paris, to retain their equal standing in diplomatic talks with the giant postwar superpowers.¹⁶⁷ Despite their historical proclivity to a 'healthy' degree of isolation from continental European affairs, officials in London entertained the idea of concrete steps toward economic integration to western Europe, including a British-led customs union.¹⁶⁸ Despite some minoritarian voices in the British Labour Party who contemplated the idea of a neutral position, however, a British-led Third Force would most likely be aligned with the US.¹⁶⁹ Its important contribution to the international power structure would be one of balancing and leveraging the American partner. The idea of a British-led Third Force in the Cold War era faded, however, given the perceived difficulty in corralling western

¹⁶⁶ Wendt, 545.

¹⁶⁷ Adamthwaite, 'Britain and the World, 1945-1949: The View from the Foreign Office"', 13.

¹⁶⁸ Sharp and Stone, *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century*.

¹⁶⁹ Ceadel, 'British Political Parties and the European Crisis of the Late 1940s', 156; Sharp and Stone, *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century*.

European countries in a joint direction. Relative economic weakness and dependency on the US, also contributed.¹⁷⁰

The French approach to a Third Force had important distinctions from that of the British. Firstly, as a country with recent history under occupation by Nazi Germany, France's political actors aspired to regain international stature despite obvious weaknesses.¹⁷¹ While the British saw avenues toward an independent Third Force between the Americans and Soviets through their global Commonwealth, the French looked primarily at more unified western Europe as the most probable recipe for international influence. For the French, it was important to provide a counterweight between Washington and Moscow. A union or confederation of western European states (naturally led by France) would be the most realistic avenue. Despite a stronger inclination than the British to present a Third Force less aligned to the US, France's weaknesses and its dependency on American resources and support became increasingly obvious by the late 1940s.¹⁷² Muses of a Third Force also permeated postwar debate in Rome in the mid-1940s. Arising primarily among far right political factions, this Third Force was envisioned as Europe's return to its rightful place in global affairs, in equal standing to the Americans and Soviets. As with the French and British, however, geopolitical constraints brought the Italians in more alignment with the US.¹⁷³

Although the idea of a European 'Third Force' on the world stage was prevalent in certain European capitals shortly after the end of the Second World War, geopolitical realities and resource constraints made the vision increasingly unattainable. During this early period, statesmen and policy makers in western Europe contemplated other alternative security strategies.

¹⁷⁰ Adamthwaite, 'Britain and the World, 1945-1949: The View from the Foreign Office"', 17.

¹⁷¹ Berstein, 'French Power as Seen by the Political Parties after World War II', 182.

¹⁷² Berstein, 181.

¹⁷³ Colarizi, 'The Italian Political Parties and Foreign Policy in the 1950s', 404.

Neutrality

The bipolar paradigm governing the postwar world forced states within the international system to accommodate themselves to the new dynamic. Rather than siding with one of the two ascendant superpowers, some states contemplated the status of neutrality in the new bipolar world. States pursued strategies of neutrality for various reasons and under different geopolitical circumstances. For some states, neutrality facilitated a certain maneuverability on the international stage between the larger powers. Using their alignment (or lack thereof) as leverage, states could bargain on individual issues with their more powerful neighbors who desired their alignment vis-à-vis the competing superpower.¹⁷⁴ Facilitating a flexible posture on global affairs, neutrality could help to address domestic and international issues.

In the early years after the end of the war, as the new bipolar Cold War had not yet congealed, political actors in several European states debated and promoted the merits of neutrality. As tensions escalated between Washington and Moscow, Italian and German statesmen, among others, advocated for a neutral stance for their countries. Through these debates, neutrality could take different configurations, optimized for the specific circumstances in each country.

Policy makers in Rome saw many advantages to neutrality or ‘neutralism’ as they sought to rebuild Italy after the war’s conclusion. As a defeated power, Italy was left in economic turmoil and a damaged reputation. As a neutral power, Italy could focus on industrial investments needed for its economic revival, rather than military build-ups requested by western countries to balance the communist bloc.¹⁷⁵ In the early postwar years, moreover, aligning with Washington and fulfilling western rearmament requests would be politically damaging to the Christian Democratic DC, as they could be labeled by the Italian Left as “warmongering”.¹⁷⁶ Regaining lost international stature was a top priority to Italian leaders during these years. Neutrality, or at least the threat of neutrality,

¹⁷⁴ Palm and Erlandsson, ‘Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)’, 169.

¹⁷⁵ Varsori, ‘Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955’, 269.

¹⁷⁶ Varsori, 262.

was one bargaining chip used to gain concessions from the West on issues important to Rome such as Trieste and broader relations with Yugoslavia.¹⁷⁷

The Italian body politic held different positions on neutralism during these early postwar debates. In general, the prevailing mood among the Italian public was in favor of a policy of neutrality in face of the escalating Cold War tensions. As already discussed, the bleak economic outlook and crushed morale following the defeat in the war led to a strong anti-war sentiment.¹⁷⁸ On the left side of the political spectrum the support for neutralism was the highest. The PCI preferred a neutralist stance outside of the two geopolitical blocs, with a particular preference for distance from the US.¹⁷⁹ During the debate on the EDC, Italian communists were the strongest opponents of the proposal due to their concerns for the threat on the country's national sovereignty.¹⁸⁰ Rather, Italian communists favored a neutral and disarmed Europe separate from both superpowers. The position of the Italian socialists was similar to that of the communists. For the socialists, securing peace in Europe was paramount. They saw neutrality as a way for Italy to navigate the new international system and prevent future conflicts. The PSI viewed neutrality was a way to regain the lost stature on the world stage that Rome had lost after defeat, and with the subsequent 'subordination' to Washington.¹⁸¹ Italian Christian Democrats, with their belief of regaining stature through the integration of a Christian Europe, were among those least in favor of the policy of neutrality.¹⁸² In fact, throughout the national debate on the EDC, De Gasperi's DC was the party most forcefully advocating for the proposal as a way to integrate Europe politically and align it with the US.

The years 1947 and 1948 offered some evolutions on the debate on neutrality in Italy. As previously discussed, Italy's weak economic situation and its reliance on American aid shifted geopolitical realities. In the summer of 1948, statesmen in Rome

¹⁷⁷ Colarizi, 'The Italian Political Parties and Foreign Policy in the 1950s', 392.

¹⁷⁸ Warner, 'Britain and Europe in 1948', 33.

¹⁷⁹ Rainero, 'Italian Public Opinion and European Politics (1950–1956)', 209.

¹⁸⁰ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950–55', 18.

¹⁸¹ Colarizi, 'The Italian Political Parties and Foreign Policy in the 1950s', 392.

¹⁸² Colarizi, 385.

began to formulate the concept of ‘armed neutrality’, which reoriented the debate toward the West. This new conceptualization promoted a closer relationship with Washington and partial rearmament through American assistance, but remaining officially unaligned without treaties or alliances. A strategy of ‘armed neutrality’ would respond to the existing challenges Italy was facing, including the potential external security threat from Yugoslavia and the domestic barrier to rearmament in public opinion.¹⁸³

The undercurrent of neutrality in Italian public discourse had substantial influence in policy making in Rome in the early postwar years. Domestic political preferences, aversion to the escalating geopolitical tension, and weakness of Italy’s economic and geopolitical standing led to decisions that postponed Italy’s eventual embrace of the western alliance. At the creation of the Western Union in early 1948, for instance, Rome remained outside of the western camp, allowing other western nations to create the first postwar military alliance.¹⁸⁴

Italy was not alone, however, through the discussions on neutrality in these early postwar years. West German statesmen also debated the merits of neutrality. Throughout the occupied country, the German public was in a strong anti-war and neutral mood. The traumatism of the total war had left the public opposed to the concept of rearmament.¹⁸⁵ Within this debate, west German political leaders were offering countering solutions. The competing visions of *Westpolitik* and *Ostpolitik* represented the two rivaling paths forward. The former, championed by CDU leader Adenauer, advocated for western alignment as an avenue for a free and sovereign German state.¹⁸⁶ For Adenauer, securing a democratic system was to precede unification with the communist east. In *Ostpolitik* advocated by the SPD’s Schumacher, the prioritization was reversed, with German reunification taking precedence. German neutrality was Schumacher’s route to a united Germany, arguing that the divisions would be widened with Adenauer’s preference for western alignment and integration.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Varsori, ‘Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955’, 263.

¹⁸⁴ Warner, ‘Britain and Europe in 1948’, 31.

¹⁸⁵ Weber and Kowert, ‘Language, Rules, and Order: The Westpolitik Debate of Adenauer and Schumacher’, 198.

¹⁸⁶ Weber and Kowert, 203.

¹⁸⁷ Kaplan, ‘NATO and Adenauer’s Germany’, 621.

This internal debate on the merits of German neutrality were complemented and influenced by the opinions for the four occupying powers. Moscow, Washington, London, and Paris each had a stake in the question of German neutrality. The Soviets actively advocated for a neutral and united German state. This is largely viewed in a desire to keep the western portion of the country from integrating with the US-led West.¹⁸⁸ While there were nuanced differences to American, British, and French views on German neutrality, the western partners were generally opposed to the concept of a neutral and united German state.¹⁸⁹

In the early postwar years, the concept of neutrality was popular among certain political factions across Europe. Besides the key examples of the Italian and German debates, the specter of neutrality also held sway in other states, including Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, and Finland, to different degrees. Due to the focus of this current work on western European states involved with the EDC negotiations and debate, however, they will not be covered. Despite calls for neutrality by some political actors, however, the constraints caused by the growing geopolitical tensions in 1947 and 1948 began to make the route increasingly unrealistic for western European states. Rather than sitting on the sidelines, countries found themselves having to align between the US-led western bloc and the Soviet-led eastern bloc. The question was now posed: to which one to align?

Superpower Alignment

Europe's security dilemma in the early postwar period could be characterized by a menacing military threat to the east compounded by a vulnerable economic standing at home. As recently noted, the deteriorated condition of European economies and societies in the early war years complicated efforts for a 'Third' European force on the world stage. It also inhibited countries from pursuing a strategy of neutrality in the new bipolar world

¹⁸⁸ Larres, 'British Attitudes to German Rearmament and Reunification in the 1950s'.

¹⁸⁹ Warner, 'Britain and Europe in 1948', 42; Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 42; Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Reappraisal"', 208.

order. When faced with these geopolitical constraints, western European states were pressured to accommodate the ascendant superpowers.

External pressures ultimately forced western European states to decide between the US-led West, and the USSR-led communist bloc. Ultimately, most western European states opted to orient with the western bloc given those two alternatives. When faced with the choice between aligning with Washington and Moscow, several factors are at play. In the first decade of the postwar world, the European continent found itself in orbit between the superpowers, each with its own strengths: the Soviet Union as a dominant military actor, and the US as the dominant economic actor.¹⁹⁰ These dynamics translated to a precarious predicament for European states, as the predominance of the Soviet military on the European continent highlighted the vulnerability of western Europe. At the same time, European states were still in the processes of economic recovery given the destruction of the war.

For western Europeans, alignment with the Americans was the more favorable option for a variety of factors. First, Washington was able to support western European states with financial assistance amid the difficult cash crunch.¹⁹¹ Secondly, the US was able to provide western European states with a certain security umbrella, providing them a sense of protection from Soviet invasion. While it was concretized with the creation of NATO in 1949, an informal security framework was assumed in the years before, as an American response to a Soviet invasion would have been anticipated.¹⁹² Lastly, there were other tertiary factors that contributed to western European states favoring alignment with the US. The American version of an international rules-based system led by western democracies was viewed more favorably than the Soviet Union's communist system.¹⁹³ Therefore, a potent combination of economics, security threats, and, albeit to a lesser extent, shared values, led western European states to align with the US.

When discussing the alignment of western European states to the US, certain theories in international relations can help to explain the decisions made by state actors in

¹⁹⁰ Aga-Rossi, 'Italy at the Outbreak of the Cold War', 503.

¹⁹¹ Wendt, 'Europe between Power and Powerlessness', 546.

¹⁹² Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 52.

¹⁹³ Wendt, 'Europe between Power and Powerlessness', 546.

that period. International relations theorist Kenneth Waltz's defensive realism provides a good explanation. In his theory, Waltz argues that state actors within the anarchical international system are primarily concerned with their survival.¹⁹⁴ If states sense an existential threat, they will take action to defend themselves. Two paths are available to states in the international system when encountering a threat from a more powerful actor are bandwagoning and balancing. In short, bandwagoning is when the threatened state joins forces with the more dominant actor to protect their survival. Balancing, by contrast, is when threatened states join forces to beat back, or 'balance', the more dominant actor.¹⁹⁵ This theory provides a clear explanation to what occurred in western Europe in the early postwar period. Confronted with the Soviet Union, the predominant power in continental Europe, the countries on the western edge of the European landmass opted to align with the offshore power of the US to secure their survival.

Defensive realism also takes the factor of distance into consideration when explaining the decisions made by state actors in the international system. States will find potential threats more menacing when in closer proximity.¹⁹⁶ Through this, it is easier to understand why when presented with two superpowers in the early Cold War era, the state actors of western Europe deemed the Soviet Union as more threatening to their survival. The Soviet Union's geographic proximity and the US's role as an offshore power led western European states to balance the USSR by aligning with the US.

The early postwar years were formative for the structure of the international system for the remainder of the 20th century. Between two victorious superpowers lay a divided and war-torn continent containing states that had long influencing global affairs. As they were rebuilding from the destruction of the Second World War, the states of western Europe had to navigate a new international system for which they were secondary actors. During these early formative years of the new international system, statesmen and political actors in western Europe contemplated and promoted a variety of strategies. While the UK and France debated the merits of a European 'Third Force' to balance the

¹⁹⁴ Waltz, *Theory of International Relations*, 91.

¹⁹⁵ Waltz, 126.

¹⁹⁶ Waltz, 182.

US and Soviet Union, policy makers in Italy and western German conceptualized and promoted a path of neutrality, in different forms. By the late 1940s, however, geopolitical realities made these routes unfeasible for the formerly dominant European powers. Economically weak and militarily vulnerable, the states of western Europe were forced to accommodate themselves into the new bipolar power structure for their national and regional security. When given the choice between the two superpowers, however, the states of western Europe opted for the offshore American power to balance against the closer and more threatening Soviet power to the east. Political scientist Kenneth Waltz' theory of defensive realism provides an explanation for their preference for aligning with Washington over Moscow.

The Players

Having debated the merits and feasibility of other security strategies, western European states opted to align with the US. As already discussed, by the beginning of the 1950s, the West had already erected two institutional pillars of collective defense: the European-led Western Union, and the Atlantic alliance of NATO. By 1950, the escalating Cold War tensions had led the French to introduce the Pleven Plan, an innovative approach of an integrated European defense community. In the following section, this work provides an overview of each participating country's domestic concerns, international pressures, and position on the quest to create a common European defense.

France

France played a central role in the debate on European security in the postwar era. Despite its defeat and occupation in the Second World War, France's historical status as a great global power and centrality to the developments in continental Europe made it an indispensable pillar in the debates on a common European defense. These discussions were heavily influenced by French domestic concerns, such as its acute economic frailty, the unstable nature of its Fourth Republic, and concerns on military and imperial power, and national sovereignty. They were also influenced by a variety of international

pressures, including a strong apprehension to German rearmament, mounting pressures from the Americans and British, and a real sense of threat from the Soviet Union. These factors contributed to France's challenging position on the question of a common European defense in the early Cold War period.

Domestic Concerns

Following its liberation, France had real constraints that weakened its international standing. At the end of the war, France's industrial base was devastated, and leadership in Paris was convinced that rampant economic growth was needed to regain its lost international stature.¹⁹⁷ To achieve this, French policy makers viewed state-led intervention as the path toward modernization and economic expansion.¹⁹⁸ Through government initiatives such as a Monnet Plan, the French embodied the experimental nature of government action of the postwar years.

As contrast to these far-reaching government projects, however, the early postwar years were a time of significant political instability in France.¹⁹⁹ Governed by the wobbly framework of the parliamentary Fourth Republic, governments lacked solid majorities and were prone to cabinet instability.²⁰⁰ Critics of the parliamentary system argued that a strong executive was needed for France to regain its international prestige, or *grandeur*, and that the regime of the political parties resulted in a government that was too divided on the challenges of the day to take efficient action.²⁰¹ The stark division between parties on the question of national security and a common European defense was a prime example of the challenge in governing France in this period.

The choppy geopolitical waters of the early Cold War crystallized the need for a stronger defense in western Europe. The French-crafted proposal of a common European defense arose diverse reactions across the country's political spectrum, with French left-wing communists and right-wing nationalists taking similar stances against the project,

¹⁹⁷ Bernstein, 'French Power as Seen by the Political Parties after World War II', 164.

¹⁹⁸ Frank, 'The French Alternative: Economic Power through the Empire or through Europe', 161.

¹⁹⁹ Rieker, 'French Status Seeking in a Changing World', 425.

²⁰⁰ Bernstein, 'French Power as Seen by the Political Parties after World War II', 174.

²⁰¹ Frank, 'The French Alternative: Economic Power through the Empire or through Europe', 160.

citing the loss of national sovereignty as a prime concern.²⁰² Moreover, the draining conflict in Indochina continued to drain France of precious resources. In the broader context of the time, the French were attempting to reclaim lost national prestige by fighting to retain their overseas empire.²⁰³ To this end, France was spending considerable resources, of which it had few. Moreover, these resources, both economic and in manpower, were to compete with the security needs France had in Europe.²⁰⁴ This was a major factor in the negotiations on the EDC and the subsequent debates on ratification: the push and pull between imperial *grandeur* and domestic and European security.

International Pressures

Alongside the considerable domestic factors, French mindset on the question of national and regional security was heavily influenced by international pressures. The start of the Korean war in summer of 1950 led Washington and London to conclude of the strategic necessity for west German rearmament.²⁰⁵ Despite this shift in Anglo-American thinking, Paris lagged on this realization due to historical fears of German militarism.²⁰⁶ Unwilling to accept a creation of a German national army to confront the Soviet threat, French leadership proposed the Pleven Plan as a response: a supranational European military that would galvanize German military potential under European (preferably French) direction.²⁰⁷ The consistent French apprehension on German rearmament was a constant focal point in the negotiations over the architecture of a common European defense, and on the subsequent debates on ratification. Strong opposition to this point remained a challenge until the debate's conclusion.

Throughout the negotiations and debate, France received consistent pressure from American partners to agree to German rearmament and approving the European defense

²⁰² Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950-55', 19.

²⁰³ Frank, 'The French Alternative: Economic Power through the Empire or through Europe', 160.

²⁰⁴ Bebr, 'The European Defence Community and the Western European Union', 169.

²⁰⁵ Ruane, 'Anthony Eden, the Foreign Office and Anglo-French Relations, 1951-1954'.

²⁰⁶ Kanter, 'The European Defense Community in the French National Assembly: A Roll Call Analysis', 205.

²⁰⁷ Bebr, 'The European Defence Community and the Western European Union', 233.

community. There were incentives and concessions for both countries. The French depended on Americans for financial support in the early postwar years, and militarily for their national security.²⁰⁸ The Americans viewed the French, through a strong relationship with the Germans, as the starting bloc to European integration and a stronger bulwark in western Europe against the Soviet influence and expansion.²⁰⁹ To pursue its foreign policy goal of a more self-reliable yet US-aligned Europe, the Americans set expectations when providing assistance to Europeans, often translating to significant pressure on the French to ratify the EDC. In exchange, the French solicited guarantees from the Americans and British on a long-term committed military presence.

The backdrop to these discussions was the threat posed by the Soviet Union. As the predominant military power in Europe, the Soviet Union presented a stark security challenge to the feeble and war-wary French.²¹⁰ The security threat went beyond mere military presence, however. The challenge posed by the encroaching ideology of communism through French society in the early postwar years troubled the French political establishment.²¹¹ As previously noted, the PCF had considerable popular support in the early postwar years which allowed them to participate in governments until mid-1947. Despite becoming political pariahs after their ejection from the French government, the French communists retained significant political support in subsequent elections.²¹² The security threat from both international sources (the Soviet Union) and domestic sources (the PCF), was a powerful incentive to bolster western Europe's standing through integration and a common defense.

As in each country, domestic concerns and international pressures set the parameters for the French position on a common European defense apparatus. Deeply rooted French apprehension to German rearmament was a principal barrier to the EDC at the negotiation and ratification stages. The French government proposed the Plevin Plan to bypass the creation of a German national army, while nonetheless unleashing German

²⁰⁸ Melandri and Vaïsse, 'France', 461.

²⁰⁹ Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Reappraisal"', 210.

²¹⁰ Young, 'The Failure of the New Entente Cordiale 1947-1950'.

²¹¹ Wendt, 'Europe between Power and Powerlessness', 545.

²¹² Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950-55', 13.

military potential for the defense of western Europe. In exchange, Paris hoped to secure concrete commitments from their partners in Washington and London on long-term European security, which proved difficult to obtain. Paris's domestic challenges and constraints in financial and colonial matters, also proved to be persistent predicaments. France's failure to address these problems, and compromise where necessary, was a determinative factor in the collective European failure to establish a common defense.

Federal Republic of Germany

As a result of the geopolitical pressures of the early Cold War, former Allied powers allowed for the establishment of the FRG in 1949. Despite their renewed status as a state, the FRG retained a special status as a recently defeated power with Allied-imposed restrictions.²¹³ Moreover, the shell-shocked public was still recovering from the effects of the totalitarian regime that led the nation to total war. As Western Europe's security structure was debated and negotiated in the face of the looming threat from the Soviet Union, the FRG's bilateral relationships, and its role and position at the center of Europe, played pivotal roles the discussions.

Domestic Concerns

Konrad Adenauer was among the first to develop a clear and determined vision of power dynamics within a Europe that included the western part of Germany. Recognizing the limitations imposed on Germany in the aftermath of the Second World War, Adenauer understood that, for the time being, German foreign policy could only operate within narrow confines. Yet, his ultimate goal was clear: for Germany to regain equal status through peaceful cooperation among nations, contributing as a full partner in the unification of Europe.²¹⁴ However, this ambition depended on addressing the pressing security concerns of the victorious Allied powers. Before the FRG could be readmitted to the international stage as an equal, the Allies sought guarantees against the resurgence of

²¹³ Kaplan, 'NATO and Adenauer's Germany', 618.

²¹⁴ Simpson, 'The Rearming of Germany 1950-1954', 84.

German militarism. Only once the question of security from Germany was resolved could broader political ambitions be pursued.

In the shifting postwar landscape, other German leaders adjusted their positions. By 1948, Theodor Heuss abandoned the *Brückentheorie* ("Bridge Theory"), which had posited Germany as a neutral link between East and West, situated between competing spheres of influence.²¹⁵ As the Cold War deepened, Heuss, like Adenauer from the outset, accepted the necessity of a partial, West German solution embedded within the wider project of European integration.²¹⁶ Adenauer viewed the Soviet Union as the negative pole of the postwar European order—a hegemonic power driven by both communist ideology and what he perceived as "Asian" characteristics. For Adenauer, the Soviet Union was not only the global center of communism but also an "Asian power," embodying what he saw as a threat to European civilization. He believed that only a revitalized western Europe, under British and French leadership, could resist the advance of this so-called "Asian spirit and power," with western Germany playing a vital role in this effort.²¹⁷

While committed to transatlantic cooperation, Adenauer harbored persistent doubts about the United States' understanding and long-term commitment to Europe. As early as 1946, he observed that American officials were not familiar with Europe; a view that never fully left him. Similarly, he often criticized British policy as shortsighted, believing that Britain failed to recognize the strategic importance of supporting European integration. In his view, Britain, with its internal stability and liberal traditions, was essential to balancing world power, especially since France alone lacked the demographic and economic strength to lead Europe.²¹⁸

Adenauer argued that true European stability required close cooperation among Britain, France, and Germany. He stressed that British participation in Europe was in everyone's interest, including Britain's own. To this end, he advocated for the integration of the economic interests of these three countries as a foundation for peace and prosperity.

²¹⁵ Wendt, 'Europe between Power and Powerlessness', 549.

²¹⁶ Messerschmidt, Greiner, and Wiggershaus, 'West Germany's Strategic Position and Her Role in Defence Policy as Seen by the German Military, 1945-1949', 355.

²¹⁷ Weber and Kowert, 'Language, Rules, and Order: The Westpolitik Debate of Adenauer and Schumacher', 201.

²¹⁸ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 46.

By the time Adenauer called for an end to the historic *Erbfeindschaft*, or hereditary enmity, between Germany and France in *Die Zeit* in November 1949, western Germany's place in Europe was already taking shape. True to this vision, he saw the "organic integration" of Western European and German industries as essential to securing lasting peace on the continent.²¹⁹

International Pressures

Through the negotiations on the EDC, Adenauer's FRG attempted to address his country's domestic aspirations for equal standing and national sovereignty, with his western partners' concerns for German rearmament. In supporting the French proposal of a supranational EDC, Adenauer aimed to mitigate French fears of German military superiority. At the same time, Bonn also had important points it wished to press during the negotiations and ratification period.

Under Adenauer's leadership, Bonn strongly desired entry in the NATO alliance. For the west German Chancellor, it was another representation of the FRG's rightful place as a 'normal' and equal country. Moreover, the Germans wanted a permanent reconciliation to the question of the Saarland issue that had festered disagreement between Bonn and Paris for years. Throughout the negotiations, the Americans were applying diplomatic pressure on the west Germans. Eager to shift the burden on European security to their European partners, the Americans pressed Bonn and the other EDC participating members for quick ratification. Mindful of their dependence on the Americans and their growing impatience, and eager to obtain their sovereignty, the Germans ratified the EDC in May 1953.²²⁰

Eventually, after Paris failed to ratify the treaty, the alternative solution publicly led by British Foreign Minister Eden provided the only feasible route left for the participating states. The FRG's entry into the NATO alliance, as well as the transformation of the Western Union into the WEU with the inclusion of the FRG and

²¹⁹ Gavin, 'Power through Europe?', 71.

²²⁰ J., 'The European Defence Community', 325.

Italy, led to the final outcome on the construction of the western European defense apparatus in the early Cold War.

Italy

When compared to the other powers negotiating the EDC and in the broader discussions on European security architecture, Italy had some distance from its European partners. This too could be said, however, with how the other negotiating parties of the EDC viewed the Rome. Italy's role in the Second World War affected power dynamics both domestically and on the European stage. There was naturally a broad disagreement across the Italian political establishment on how to handle the rising tensions between the western and eastern blocs in the second half of the 1940s. For some, the idea of neutrality, held sway, as it would give Italy room for maneuver in navigating the negotiations over Trieste with Yugoslavia and the international community, while keeping a safe distance from the escalating confrontation between the US and USSR.²²¹ In contrast, different political movements in the country were advocating for alignment with their bloc of choice. Italy's primary domestic concerns focused on a divided body politic hesitant for war and alignment politics, a feeble economic position, and a fear of losing national sovereignty. The international pressures felt in Rome centered around the desire to regain lost international status, national interests in the Trieste negotiations, and an aim to use the EDC as a tool for broader political integration.

Domestic Concerns

Leading a relatively strong Christian Democrat-led coalition amid the geopolitical developments of 1947 and 1948, including the removal of the Moscow-aligned PCI in May of 1947, De Gasperi moved to align Italy with the western democracies. For Rome, the objective of this shift was to advance its own priorities. One of these priorities was for Italy to regain its status as a 'Great Power' on the world stage, at least on par to that of

²²¹ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 263.

Rome's European neighbors in Paris and London.²²² On this front, Rome ran into a cold reality. London and Paris were, and would remain, the focal points of the US's European policy, leaving Rome perpetually in the near periphery.²²³ A second priority was to benefit from the advantageous financial assistance the Americans were providing to their partners, albeit with certain strings attached. Naturally, Italy's political and military establishments were favorable to this decisive policy shift. Washington's financial support put the Italian military and economy on the path toward reconstruction.²²⁴

In late 1948, as negotiations were finalizing, Italy decided to join the Atlantic alliance. Despite internal debates on the most strategic way to approach the West, and to which extent, Rome joins as an attempt to escape the second-tier partnership with Washington, London, and Paris. From Paris's perspective, Italy's addition to the NATO alliance was an effort to counterbalance the Anglo-American tilt that was expected and broadening the organization's geographic area of concern to the Mediterranean and northern Africa.²²⁵ Italy's position as a founding member of the NATO alliance, however, was seemingly full of disappointments— for both Italians and their new allies. As anticipated, Italy held a marginal role in guiding the direction of the organization. NATO's Standing Committee had representation from the US, the UK, and France, leaving Rome cast aside with the minor members of Benelux. In dealing bilaterally with the US and France, Italy was noticeably treated as a junior partner.²²⁶ Italy's disappointment was also complemented with skepticism on the geographic center of the Alliance, which they deemed as too far in north-eastern Europe, and too far from Italy's Po Valley.²²⁷

Concurrently, Rome's allies had their own reasons to complain about their Italian counterparts. Admitting this large partner in the Mediterranean, there was an expectation that Rome would pull its weight in providing the resources for the effort of collective defense. On June 25, 1950, American calls for increased national contributions to rearmament reached a new critical point. With the start of the Korean War, NATO's

²²² Rainiero, 'Italian Public Opinion and European Politics (1950–1956)', 492.

²²³ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 263.

²²⁴ Varsori, 264.

²²⁵ Varsori, 265.

²²⁶ Colarizi, 'The Italian Political Parties and Foreign Policy in the 1950s', 406.

²²⁷ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 265.

security importance increased. Washington called on its allies to ramp up their own rearmament efforts to share the burden of military expenditures.²²⁸ The response from Rome, however, was lackluster, replying that their economic standing was too weak to provide meaningful boosts to military spending.²²⁹ Nevertheless, Rome committed an additional 50 billion lira (€1.1 billion in 2025 current value) to its rearmament in 1950, with 150 billion lira (€3.3 billion) more over a three-year timeframe.²³⁰ Despite, or perhaps because of this, admittedly, tepid increase, the NATO allies continued to doubt Italy's ability to solidly contribute to the organization's security.

A much greater obstacle to the Italian Prime Minister's efforts to the passage of the EDC, however, were the mounting domestic tensions. In the June 1953 elections, De Gasperi's governing coalition attempted to win using the Scam law but came to just a few thousand votes from an absolute majority, which would've given it a 2/3 majority. Despite winning, the lack of achieving a majority caused tensions within the coalition, leading to De Gasperi resigning in August. He died 12 months later.

International Pressures

When the French Pleven plan was released in late October of 1950, Rome's reaction was cautious, yet open. Contrary to Rome's absence from the Brussels talks that led to the formation of the Western Union in 1947, Italy participated in the discussions on this supranational European apparatus from the beginning.²³¹ From Rome's perspective, this effort to unify European defense forces melded well with Italy's support for general European integration. Moreover, Italian leaders hoped that early participation would mitigate the fallout from their subpar military contributions in the early years of the NATO alliance.²³²

Throughout the debate of the EDC, Italian concerns clustered around a number of points. First, while being supportive of European integration efforts, Rome still favored

²²⁸ Melissen and Zeeman, 'Britain and Western Europe, 1945–51', 91.

²²⁹ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 269.

²³⁰ Varsori, 279.

²³¹ Varsori, 273.

²³² Aga-Rossi, 'Italy at the Outbreak of the Cold War', 503.

the NATO alliance, with its clear and direct relation to the US, over a separate European entity whose relationship with the Atlantic alliance was not yet clear.²³³ Moreover, the concerns that Rome had with the NATO alliance, were not necessarily being addressed with this new European constellation. The central geographic point of the European defense union being negotiated was still too far away from the Mediterranean for Rome's liking. A second primary concern for the Italians was one shared by other actors involved, including notably the French. With this proposed supranational defense structure, Rome was concerned for the loss of sovereignty in security matters. Delegating its armed forces to a supranational European body would also diminish Rome's say over its levels of military spending, adding even more strain on Italy's already problematic budgetary concerns.²³⁴ Lastly, in Rome there were concerns on public opinion in case of the foreign deployment of Italian troops.

By spring of 1951, Washington expressed its support for a supranational European defense union, seeing it as its best hope to have Europeans do more for their own defense. Eventually, with American backing, the negotiations in Paris concluded. On May of 1952, the European Defense Community was signed by France, the FRG, Italy, and Benelux.²³⁵ To sign the treaty, the Italians had framed the EDC as another effort in the broader project of European integration. Ratification, however, remained a massive hurdle. While the US pressured the signatories for quick ratification, Rome held off. Throughout the negotiations, Rome's political leadership continued to use concerns over the peace treaty, particular with the question of Trieste, as the primary reason for the delayed in ratification.²³⁶ In truth, De Gasperi, skeptical of the French, wanted to wait for Paris's ratification before proceeding to (a likely favorable) vote in his legislature.²³⁷

In the end, the divide between Italy's political parties on the issue of the EDC, its feeble economic state, and fear of losing decision making authority on financial military matters, were a significant domestic consideration that kept Italy from ratifying the treaty.

²³³ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 274.

²³⁴ Varsori, 282.

²³⁵ Kershaw, *Roller-Coaster: Europe, 1950-2017*, 7.

²³⁶ Nolfo, "'Power Politics'", 535.

²³⁷ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 282; Nolfo, "'Power Politics'", 535.

Despite heavy international pressure from the American allies, and the aspiration to regain status among western countries and use the EDC as a tool for European political integration, Rome decided to wait for Paris to put forward a vote on EDC ratification. Italy's refusal to move the EDC forward represents an important failure on the question of a common European defense.

Benelux

As a collection of small powers, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, or Benelux, had minimal influence during the negotiations on a common European defense. Despite their notable differences in priorities and stances, the three countries decided to present a common front during the negotiations, relatively early in the process.²³⁸ For this reason, this work provides an overview of the collective Benelux experience during the discussions of the EDC. Through these multi-state talks, Benelux domestic considerations and international pressures were important in the development of the EDC. In some notable experiences, this resulted in meaning concessions to the small powers.

Domestic considerations for Benelux countries largely centered around economic recovery efforts and securing equal standing vis-à-vis larger powers. In a broader sense, European integration efforts were largely supported by the Benelux states. Located between France and the FRG, the Benelux powers were amenable to the project of European integration, seeing it as a route to economic revival. The EDC, for example, was seen as a way to share the costs of defense, opening up more fiscal space for economic reconstruction.²³⁹

Before presenting a common front in the EDC negotiations, however, the Benelux countries were separated on a couple of important points. As the concept of a European common defense was originally being debated in the first negotiations in 1951, a major divide could be seen. Belgium and Luxembourg joined the negotiations, while the

²³⁸ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 38.

²³⁹ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950-55', 18.

Netherlands opted instead for observer status.²⁴⁰ From the onset, Belgium and Luxembourg were closer to French policy preferences. In supporting the French proposal of a common European defense, the two relatively small countries were attempting to act as “good neighbours” to Paris.²⁴¹ By contrast, the Netherlands was taking a different approach. Due to their historical ties as an overseas power, the Dutch saw themselves as less of a continental force. In fact, the Dutch preferred to seek alignment with Nordic powers such as Norway and Denmark, rather than their immediate neighbors in Belgium and Luxembourg. After Norway and Denmark declined Dutch advances and Americans pressured the Netherlands to move forward with the EDC, the Dutch joined their Benelux partners in 1951.²⁴²

As smaller states in close cooperation with larger neighbors, the Benelux states were acutely sensitive to the loss influence through the supranational European defense. Through the negotiations, the Benelux partners presented a common front to include certain provisions to safeguard their interests. Some concessions obtained by the Benelux countries included opting for a College of Commissioners rather than a single defense minister at the head of the EDC. This proposal, accepted by the French and in line with German preferences, was seen by the smaller countries in protecting the interest of the smaller states. Another important Benelux contribution was the compromise that required unanimity in the Council of Ministers on budgetary decisions during a transitional period.²⁴³ Finally, to strengthen their hand in multilateral discussions, the Benelux countries hoped to solidify the connection between the NATO alliance, to which they all belonged, and the proposed EDC. After applying pressure, Benelux obtained that recognition in the final communiqué of the Lisbon North Atlantic Council (NAC) meeting in early 1952, which recognized the EDC’s place “within the framework of and reinforcing NATO”.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ Palm and Erlandsson, ‘Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)’, 34.

²⁴¹ Palm and Erlandsson, 35.

²⁴² Palm and Erlandsson, 42.

²⁴³ Palm and Erlandsson, 40.

²⁴⁴ Palm and Erlandsson, 42.

The smaller three countries of Benelux brought to the negotiations different domestic concerns and preferences. They were also dealing with similar international constraints within the environment of the early postwar era. After an initial period in which the countries of Benelux were divided, there were able to present a common front in the negotiations of the EDC. Through these negotiations, the Benelux countries were able to obtain limited but meaningful concessions on the common European defense effort.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom, contrary to France's preferences, was not a signatory of nor participated in the negotiations for the EDC. Despite its role as an outside player, the UK was a vital actor in the debate for a common European defense. For several reasons, the UK held considerable influence in the early postwar years. During the Second World War, the British Prime Minister was a principal actor in the great wartime conferences, alongside his American and Soviet counterparts: President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin. After the war, London still led a global Commonwealth of Nations, which accentuated its influence around the world. Despite this prestigious standing, in the postwar world, the UK was confronted with the reality its relative decline in power vis-à-vis its great power rivals in the US and Soviet Union. In the early Cold War period, London found itself balancing three relationships that defined its postwar foreign policy: the Commonwealth, the US, and continental Europe. During the latter half of the 1940s, the Labour government of Prime Minister Attlee pursued security agreements with western European partners. These steps toward collaboration, however, had limits. In the 1950s, London declined proposals to take part in western European integration measures.²⁴⁵

As continental western European countries debated the merits of a common European defense within the EDC, London remained a pivotal and influential actor, despite its role as an outside player throughout the talks. Several domestic and

²⁴⁵ Melissen and Zeeman, 'Britain and Western Europe, 1945–51', 92.

international factors influenced British posture toward the EDC throughout negotiations and ratification debate, greatly influencing the ultimate outcome.

Domestic Concerns

During the early postwar years, British statesmen were vocal in their support for efforts of European integration. Figures including Churchill and Bevin were known for advocating for a “United States of Europe” and for coordinating the creation of institutions such as the Western Union alliance.²⁴⁶ This British vision of a more integrated Europe, however, was not inclusive of the UK. For London, the UK had a special role to play as a global power, rather than a continental one. In this capacity as a global power, Britain preferred to prioritize its political and economic relationships to the Commonwealth and the US, over its relationship with continental Europe.²⁴⁷ Public sentiment valued stronger ties to the Commonwealth and a retreat to the isolationist posture concerning Europe the UK had practiced in the 19th century.²⁴⁸

This foreign policy led to a series of decisions from London that governed the way the British would interact and collaborate with their western partners. First, despite London’s preference for its global commitments to the Commonwealth and its relationship to the US, in the latter half of the 1940s, the UK endeavoured to construct a western European security apparatus. In 1947, 1948, and 1949, British statemen like Attlee and Bevin played a leading role in the establishment of an Anglo-French Mutual Defense Treaty, the creation of the Western Union, and the signing of the NATO alliance.²⁴⁹ These three concrete steps demonstrated the UK’s willingness to engage in traditional alliance structures. It also manifested London’s balancing act vis-à-vis their commitment to strengthening their transatlantic relationship with the US, and their commitments to European security.

²⁴⁶ Adamthwaite, ‘Britain and the World, 1945-1949: The View from the Foreign Office’”, 15; Ceadel, ‘British Political Parties and the European Crisis of the Late 1940s’, 155.

²⁴⁷ Peden, ‘Economic Aspects of British Perceptions of Power on the Eve of the Cold War’, 238.

²⁴⁸ Parker, ‘British Perceptions of Power. Europe between the Superpowers’, 456.

²⁴⁹ Adamthwaite, ‘Britain and the World, 1945-1949: The View from the Foreign Office’”, 15.

When the French presented the Pleven Plan, the British reaction was negative. London viewed the plan for a supranational and common European defense as impractical and unfeasible. They doubted its chances of success, while stating their opposition to joining as participants. Preferring a traditional alliance model where London would retain control over British military forces and a strong Atlantic security framework, the UK sent observers to the EDC negotiations in early 1951.²⁵⁰ Active official observers, the position of the UK was a vital factor in the negotiations. London's aversion to closer collaboration with western Europe and their preference for their relationships with the Commonwealth and the US was a persistent challenge in the negotiations. London's position was crucial to the French, in particular, who sought British guarantees throughout the EDC talks and the subsequent ratification debate.

International Pressures

Because of their importance to western European security, Britain faced pressure from international partners to compromise on the efforts to create a common European defense. Like Washington, London saw the importance of German rearmament to the region's security framework. The British also favored efforts to sooth the historically problematic Franco-German relationship by admitting the FRG into the western European orbit. This would have the added value of fostering a more stable environment in the region.²⁵¹ As the negotiating parties developed the framework for the EDC, London's position shifted. American support for the project of a common European defense helped alter the British view of the project. The British provided verbal support to the effort of a common European defense, but the nature of the EDC's supranational institutions kept London firmly outside of the endeavor.²⁵²

For the French, the supranational nature of the EDC was non-negotiable. As previously discussed, the EDC's integrated structure was created as a response to French fears of German national rearmament. Having experienced three aggressive assaults to

²⁵⁰ Pastor-Castro, 'The Quai d'Orsay and the European Defense Community Crisis of 1954', 390.

²⁵¹ Fogarty, 'Britain and Europe Since 1945', 90.

²⁵² Parker, 'British Perceptions of Power. Europe between the Superpowers', 448.

their national sovereignty from their German neighbors since the latter half of the 19th century, the French had developed a strong inclination against allowing the Germans to rearm.²⁵³ The Pleven Plan was an avenue to channel west German security contributions without creating a German national military. This supranational structure, however, was anathema to the British, who were unwilling to lose control of their national defense for what they perceived as a common continental defense initiative.²⁵⁴ The French were also mindful of their predicament as the only ‘great’ western power sharing a continent with the Germans. In the first half of the 20th century, Paris had found itself requesting security commitments from their partners in London, while the British remained averse to significant long-term concrete commitments.

Throughout much of the EDC talks and ratification process, the French continuously requested a closer partnership between the EDC and the UK, as well as guarantees to keep a significant military presence on the continent from the British and Americans.²⁵⁵ Through these persistent requests and their tactic of stalling the EDC ratification, the French succeeded in moving the British position. In May 1952, the British agreed to the Anglo-EDC treaty, providing a guarantee of military assistance in case of attack. In April 1954, the British also yielded to the French in signing an association agreement that committed to keeping a military presence in continental Europe.²⁵⁶

Despite these commitments, Paris was not convinced. When the French failed to ratify the EDC treaty at the end of the 1954, it fell on British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden to navigate the way out of the crisis by proposing the expansion of the Western Union and facilitating the FRG’s entry into NATO.²⁵⁷ Despite their roles as unofficial outside actors, the UK played a pivotal role in the negotiations of the EDC, its defeat at ratification, and the creation of the final security architecture for western Europe in the Cold War era.

²⁵³ Wendt, ‘Europe between Power and Powerlessness’, 547.

²⁵⁴ Bebr, ‘The European Defence Community and the Western European Union’, 169.

²⁵⁵ Creswell, ‘Chapter Seven The End of the Affair’, 144.

²⁵⁶ J., ‘The European Defence Community’, 329.

²⁵⁷ Ruane, ‘Anthony Eden, the Foreign Office and Anglo-French Relations, 1951–1954’.

EDC Negotiations

First Negotiations

The introduction of the Pleven Plan in October 1950 unleashed a flurry of debate on solutions to Europe's Cold War security dilemma. Specifically, the French plan helped in orienting the discussion around two separate questions: the first being how to muster the FRG's military potential, and the second was how to coordinate defense matters among western partners.²⁵⁸

To address the first question, on January 9, 1951, representatives from the US, UK, France, and the FRG met at the Petersberg Hotel, near Bonn. During these 'Petersberg' talks, Adenauer's representatives pushed the Chancellor's political agenda of *Gleichberechtigung*, or equality and sovereignty, vis-à-vis the other western powers.²⁵⁹ Understanding that German rearmament was a fundamental component to Washington's European security policy to counter the Soviets in Europe, Adenauer held a strong negotiating hand. The Germans, therefore, demanded to be released from the position of second-status state that it had held since the end of Third Reich, as a precondition for rearmament and remilitarization. Concurrently being discussed was what the potential quantitative contribution the FRG could provide to western military defense, and whether these forces would be organized under German command or set in alternative pan-European arrangements.²⁶⁰ In Petersberg, the talks moved slowly, with the different parties failing to make headway leading into the summer of 1951.²⁶¹

On February 15, 1951, the Paris Conference opened to discuss the second question on how to coordinate defense among western European partners. While the collaboration and potential integration of European defense forces was front and center in the discussions, an important factor was the political proximity and overlapping priorities with the existing Atlantic alliance within NATO. The French hosted representatives from the

²⁵⁸ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 47.

²⁵⁹ Large, 'Grand Illusions', 379.

²⁶⁰ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 47.

²⁶¹ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950-55', 12.

FRG, Italy, Belgium, and Luxembourg, while the Netherlands, the UK, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, and the US, sent official observers. For many of the states participating in the discussions, the NATO alliance was the backbone of their security framework. Italians, despite engaging in the Paris talks as full participants, preferred their bilateral relationship with the Americans, and through them with NATO, to the EDC.²⁶² The British and Dutch were also demonstrating their own preferences in a trans-Atlantic rooted security arrangement by joining the negotiations as observing states, rather than full members. This decision was made by varying factors, but both states' perception of themselves as global powers, rather than purely continental European powers, and their closeness with the US, were fundamental reasons.²⁶³ While it was common across European states to value, and in some cases prefer, the Atlantic alliance arrangement to that of Europe-based security agreement, the Americans continued to request their European powers to do more for their own security.²⁶⁴ Previous advancements at European integration through the Council of Europe and Schuman Plan served as encouraging models to the discussions in Paris, while the Pleven Plan provided the direction of the discussions.²⁶⁵ French Foreign Minister and chief architect of the European Coal and Steel Community, Robert Schuman, began the conference by presenting this vision of the EDC.²⁶⁶ Similar to the parallel talks in Petersberg, however, the stark disagreements between the French and Germans on the specific aspects of the FRG's rearmament led to difficulties. The French were only able to stomach a remilitarized German neighbor with a supranational defense structure that kept power and influence away from Bonn, and closer, presumably, to Paris. Confronted with this, however, the Germans stood firm of their request for *Gleichberechtigung* vis-à-vis the Paris and the other participating states.²⁶⁷

²⁶² Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 297.

²⁶³ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 36.

²⁶⁴ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 269.

²⁶⁵ Pastor-Castro, 'The Quai d'Orsay and the European Defense Community Crisis of 1954', 390.

²⁶⁶ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 53.

²⁶⁷ McAllister, *No Exit*, 202.

By the summer of 1951, the parallel conferences had mixed results. The Petersberg talks had failed by June, with the opposing sides unable to find sufficient common ground on the degree to which Bonn would have sovereignty over its yet-to-be-determined military forces.²⁶⁸ Progress had been made, however, at the Paris Conference. At the end of this first round of negotiations on the Pleven Plan, negotiators had found common ground on the question of a western European defense coordination and integration. The resulting Interim Report, released in late July by representatives of France, the FRG, Italy, Belgium, and Luxembourg, concretized important aspects of the original Pleven Plan after its fluid and undefined state since its announcement in October 1950.²⁶⁹ While still arising points of contention from different actors, institutional and financial structures and military frameworks became to be worked out.

The release of the Interim Report was accompanied several other developments over the course of the summer 1951. In June 1951, after conversing with the French statesman and proponent of European integration, Jean Monnet, NATO Commander Eisenhower provided important backing to the project of the EDC.²⁷⁰ American support for the plan grew the following month, when US President Truman approved of a National Security Council report making support for the EDC the official policy of the US, seeing it as the more feasible avenue for greater European-lead security.²⁷¹ With signing on to the Interim Report, Rome's position also shifted. Originally, in keeping with its measured skepticism of the French Pleven Plan and its preference for prioritizing its bilateral relationship with the US, De Gasperi's government had taken a hesitant stance toward the proposal. With support (and pressure) for the plan arriving from Washington, however, this Italian position began to evolve.²⁷² To justify a shift in the government's tone in favor of the EDC, De Gasperi began to emphasize the EDC's importance to Europe's broader integration, a core pillar of Italian Christian Democracy in the early postwar period.²⁷³

²⁶⁸ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 64.

²⁶⁹ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 275.

²⁷⁰ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 37.

²⁷¹ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 63.

²⁷² Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 275.

²⁷³ Colarizi, 'The Italian Political Parties and Foreign Policy in the 1950s', 385.

The Netherlands, still in its role as an observer state at the Paris Conference, did not sign the Interim Report. The pivotal momentum provided to the proposal in the summer of 1951, however, began to make its presence felt with the Dutch, whose positions began to change in the following months. By October, the Dutch would officially join the second round of negotiations as a full participant.²⁷⁴

Among the French, the conversation on the EDC saw several shifts in the summer of 1951. In June, elections to the National Assembly took place for the first time since 1946. In the lead up to the elections, the diverse ‘Third Force’ coalition governing France, including the SFIO (socialists), MRP (Christian Democrats), and other smaller parties, faced opposition from the PCF on the Left and Charles de Gaulle’s Rally of the French People party (*Rassemblement du peuple français*, RPF) on the Right.²⁷⁵ While recent alterations to the electoral system allowed the Third Force to keep the ascendant RPF and PCF out of government, both opposition parties saw their representation in the National Assembly jump. While the EDC project had some support among parties of the Third Force, the PCF and the RPF were both hostile to the project. The communists were consistent in their opposition to German rearmament, while seeing the project of a supranational European defense as an infringement of France’s sovereignty and as an American-influenced tool of confrontation toward the USSR.²⁷⁶ For their part, de Gaulle’s sovereigntists in the RPF were also adamant in safeguarding French sovereignty, positioning themselves against the project.²⁷⁷ Together, these two political groupings in the National Assembly hostile to the EDC project held more than a third of the seats, charting a difficult path for the EDC in France’s legislature.²⁷⁸ While unable to obtain an outright majority of the seats, the Third Force was able to remain in government, with René Pleven returning to the position of Premier (Prime Minister) that summer.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁴ Palm and Erlandsson, ‘Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)’, 34.

²⁷⁵ Creswell, ‘Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates’, 60.

²⁷⁶ Risso, ‘Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF’s Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950–55’, 15.

²⁷⁷ J., ‘The European Defence Community’, 333.

²⁷⁸ Creswell, ‘Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates’, 60.

²⁷⁹ Creswell, 60.

Pleven's government continued to push along the multilateral negotiations for an integrated European defense force, however political attention began to be diverted toward the larger question of France's war in Indochina, and its increasingly difficult financial predicament.²⁸⁰ Another notable shift from the French on the debate of the EDC was with the release of Hevré Alphand's report on the previously concluded negotiations. As a French representative to the NAC, Alphand promoted the advantages for France in pursuing the vision of an integrated European military, while admitted the drawbacks. He saw the project as an attempt to muster the FRG's military potential, while also guaranteeing multilateral control and French influence over its usage.²⁸¹ By the end of summer 1950, the two beginning twin negotiations of the EDC had concluded with momentum manifested with vocal transatlantic support and increased willingness to negotiate specific parameters on behalf of Rome, Paris, and Bonn.

Second Negotiations

In September 1951, the second negotiations were launched between the five official players, with Netherlands officially joining the fray in October 1951.²⁸²

Upon the Dutch officially joining the negotiations, they began to collaborate more closely with their Belgian and Luxembourgian peers to develop a common front against the larger actors. At the onset of the negotiations in early 1951, the three relatively small countries sandwiched between France and the FRG reacted differently to the Pleven Plan. Belgium and Luxembourg took a more favorable disposition to the French proposal, wanting to be deemed as 'good neighbors'. Netherlands, as was already discussed, kept the negotiations at an arm's distance, valuing its self-perception as a more global and Atlantic actor.²⁸³ With the release of the Interim Report in July 1951, however, Netherlands began to calculate fewer benefits to being outside of the direct negotiations,

²⁸⁰ Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 78.

²⁸¹ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 62.

²⁸² Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 34.

²⁸³ Palm and Erlandsson, 35.

and increased cooperation with Belgium and Luxembourg.²⁸⁴ The question on whether to participate was also being asked of other observing states. At the end of October, the UK held its second general election in two years. Conservative Winston Churchill led his party to victory against the incumbent Labour Party led by Prime Minister Clement Attlee, which had governed Britain since 1945.²⁸⁵ Upon capturing the keys to Number 10 six years after his first term as Prime Minister of the UK, many European onlookers hoped that as an outspoken champion of European integration, Churchill would include the UK in European integration efforts, such as the ECSC, or the EDC. They were disappointed, however, when Churchill declined to join the EDC's negotiations.

Through the fall and early winter of 1951, the talks between the negotiating actors centered around key issues related to what an integrated European defense would look like, and how much of a contribution would be expected from each actor. Several key concerns shaped the course of the negotiations: ensuring fairer representation for the smaller Benelux countries, balancing financial contributions to the integrated defense force, resolving the Saar territorial dispute between Paris and Bonn, and clarifying the possibility of the FRG's entry in the NATO Alliance.²⁸⁶ Benelux's strategy of presenting a common front vis-à-vis their larger negotiating partners began to yield tangible results in December 1951. To address their concerns that in an integrated military body, the interests of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg would be crowded out by their larger neighbors, the united Benelux negotiators succeeded in obtaining two concessions from their 'Big Three' partners of France, the FRG, and Italy. These concessions included the inclusion of a College of Commissioners and a common budget that would, at least for a transitional period, be determined based on unanimous approval of a council of ministers and national legislatures.²⁸⁷ These achievements for the Benelux negotiators did not translate to all their political priorities. Their desire to see the EDC embedded within the Atlantic apparatus of NATO, for example, was not accepted to by the other partners.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ Palm and Erlandsson, 37.

²⁸⁵ Jenkin, 'The British General Election of 1951', 52.

²⁸⁶ McAllister, *No Exit*, 218; Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 73.

²⁸⁷ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 41.

²⁸⁸ Palm and Erlandsson, 42.

In these winter months of 1951-1952, Paris and Bonn found themselves in a heated discussion on the levels of financial and troop contributions to the proposed joint defense effort. During the negotiations, the French wanted the Germans to contribute substantially to the EDC, while ensuring that they would not contribute more, and thus gain greater influence in decision making, than France itself. Keeping the FRG's financial contribution below that of France's, however, was to be made increasingly difficult over the several years. The west German economy was expanding rapidly, outpacing the French economic growth. Moreover, the ongoing and significant French war effort in Indochina was draining Paris's ability to finance to the determined levels a European defense effort on par with the FRG.²⁸⁹ France's top military brass saw the writing on the wall. While an imperfect solution to the problem of French and broader European security, the rearming the Germans through this supranational European structure was increasingly France's most viable option. Consumed with its massive military effort to retain its oversea possessions in Indochina, France was unable to finance its own national European rearmament. In the view of French military leadership, including notably Chief of Defense Staff Marshal Alphonse Juin, these circumstances merited French flexibility and concessions on the question of financing to ensure the FRG's rearmament and greater security for western Europe.²⁹⁰ Politicians in the French legislature provided counterweight to this line of practical thinking coming from the top military brass. Trapped between the need to boost its European defenses, fighting the expensive conflict in Indochina, and managing its limited fiscal space, the French governments stumbled into political instability in early 1952 with the fall of Pleven's government on January 7. Radical socialist politician Edgar Faure took over as Prime Minister shortly after, keeping Robert Schuman and George Bidault as Foreign and Defense Ministers, respectively.²⁹¹ Paris's tumultuous political shifts provided unhelpful distraction during the ongoing negotiations, and France's preoccupation with Indochina was proving to be factor of major consequence that would linger until the end of end of discussions.

²⁸⁹ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 65.

²⁹⁰ Creswell, 66.

²⁹¹ Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 80.

Another focal point of the discussions during the second negotiations was the sore point of the Saarland. Following the Second World War, the historically German territory had been stripped from the occupied German state and fused economically to France. The Saarland's wealth of coal resources was seen by the French as partial compensation for Germany's war of conquest, as well as insurance on future aggressive proclivities.²⁹² After receiving the right to administer the newly acquired territory in 1947, the French state invested considerable financial resources, increasing its importance in the eyes of officials in Paris.²⁹³ The view in Bonn, however, was considerably different. For Germans, the Saarland was historically and culturally tied to Germany and claimed that the decisions relating to the territory by the victorious Allies should have been decided through a peace treaty, rather than unilateral action. The FRG sought to find a resolution to the Saar dispute that contributed to the Chancellor Adenauer's agenda to resecure sovereignty and equal status vis-à-vis its western partners. With western partners wishing to secure west German rearmament for a broader western European defense effort, Adenauer aimed to use the leverage to his advantage. Consequently, the Saarland represented a pillar of the German Chancellor's broader quest for *Gleichberechtigung*, which slowed talks in December 1951 and January 1952 with Paris.²⁹⁴ By late January 1952, the French added fuel to the fire by elevating its official representation in the Saarland to the status of ambassador, angering Germans who saw it as an unproductive provocation in the heat of the EDC negotiations.²⁹⁵ The Franco-German dispute on the Saarland would remain a contentious issue without resolution until the end of the negotiations in late 1954.

The role of the NATO Alliance remained a constant feature in the discussions over the EDC. The debates across European capitals on how to pursue a European response to the security question was consistently balanced with a strong inclination to prefer the more established transatlantic relationship with the powerful US. By February 1952, Turkey and Greece had become the newest members of the Atlantic Alliance, joining the original

²⁹² Creswell, 74.

²⁹³ Creswell, 'Chapter Five New Faces, Similar Policies', 118.

²⁹⁴ Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 73.

²⁹⁵ Creswell, 74.

twelve members from the organization's creation in 1949.²⁹⁶ Through Adenauer's political priorities of *Gleichberechtigung* and *Westbindung* (the FRG's close alignment with western partners in Europe and North America) there was a strong desire and expectation, of entry into the NATO alliance. In fact, Bonn viewed the EDC as its entry ticket into the US-led Atlantic alliance.²⁹⁷ American officials were generally not against German accession into NATO. At a NAC meeting in September 1950, in fact, the US had come out in support of rearming Germany under NATO command as a solution to European rearmament.²⁹⁸ A prevailing view in Washington during this time was that the FRG's accession into NATO would happen eventually, after opposition in European capitals subsided. As previously referenced, however, since the summer of 1951 Washington had viewed as the present EDC negotiations as the most viable path to a reliable European independence with a rearmed FRG.²⁹⁹ Noting the lackluster reception to the EDC in Paris and other European capitals and wanting to avoid additional barriers to progress, American officials encouraged patience to their partners in Bonn.³⁰⁰ The French, unsurprisingly, provided the most resistance to the question of the FRG's entry into the NATO alliance. As in the question of German financial contribution to the EDC, there was a prevailing fear that German financial and demographic advantages would lead to an imbalance that would threaten long term European stability.³⁰¹ Paris continued to advocate for their scheme that would reactivate German military potential through a supranational scheme, and resisted additional efforts that would provide an alternative path.

The second negotiations on the EDC between the participating western European seemed to be stalled on a multitude of issues. Disagreements between the small and big states had yielded to structural changes to the proposed EDC. Financial difficulties in Paris

²⁹⁶ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 33.

²⁹⁷ Large, 'Grand Illusions', 387.

²⁹⁸ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 35.

²⁹⁹ Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 75.

³⁰⁰ Large, 'Grand Illusions', 387.

³⁰¹ Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 77.

and Rome led to tough discussions on the capacities to contribute to the joint defense structure. The Saarland territorial dispute compounded to the already problematic relationship between Paris and Bonn, while the question of American and British commitment to continental Europe's long-term security caused tension between the Atlantic allies. The lassitude of the negotiations heightened concerns in Washington, who continued to increase pressure on its transatlantic partners to find an agreement on the EDC.³⁰²

By February 1952, the pressure from the US was slowly pushing the conversation forward across western capitals. Starting on February 20, the NAC met in Lisbon, Portugal where discussions were held on the ideal relationship between the EDC and NATO. Pressure from the Benelux faction helped to nudge the EDC closer within the framework of the NATO alliance, as expressed in the final communiqué on February 25.³⁰³ Similarly the British, in an effort to assuage the FRG's unmet desires for entry into the NATO alliance, proposed a mechanism where members of either the EDC or NATO could trigger consultations between the two security architectures.³⁰⁴ The Lisbon NAC meeting marked a significant moment in which the existing Atlantic alliance publicly endorsed the EDC and the concept of German rearmament, and in which the Americans pushed its western European partners to set a final deadline for an EDC Treaty and agreement to the question of German sovereignty.³⁰⁵

Racing Against the Clock

As pressure from the American allies to find an agreement on the final structure of the EDC was mounting, the French hoped to address lingering concerns on the paths forward for the European security framework. As arguably the greatest continental power involved in the negotiations, the responsibility seemingly fell on the French to find a solution to the European security dilemma, while compromising on its real concerns. In response to this

³⁰² Creswell, 83.

³⁰³ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 41.

³⁰⁴ Large, 'Grand Illusions', 387.

³⁰⁵ Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 83.

sentiment, the French believed that their offshore partners in London and Washington should do more to ensure Europe's security, in particular when it was requesting France swallow a number of difficult measures, such as the rearmament of a more sovereign German state on its eastern border. Through the negotiations, the states had found rough agreement on the durations of the EDC and NATO treaties, with the EDC in place for 50 years, while the NATO treaty specified 20 years. The French were worried about the time discrepancy between the two treaties. In exchange for Paris's final approval of the EDC, the French asked that the British provide a concrete commitment to its military presence on the continent, and that there would be "organic cooperation" between British and European forces.³⁰⁶ Responding on March 2, however, the British were unwilling to provide that commitment due to their continued preference for ambiguous commitments and a global outlook focused on the Commonwealth and bilateral relationship with the Americans.³⁰⁷ When asked of similar reassurances from the French, however, the Americans were also unable to offer a more comforting response. From Washington's point of view, heavily American military presence was to be a temporary measure, viewing the project for a more integrated western European defense force as the primary device to counter the Soviet threat.³⁰⁸

On March 10, the Soviets threw themselves into the conversation with the release of a note on the status of the divided Germanies. In the brief note directed to the citizenry of the FRG, Moscow communicated the USSR's openness to the unification of the GDR and FRG in exchange for a strict neutrality between the two Cold War blocs.³⁰⁹ Across western capitals, the 'Stalin note' was received with skepticism. Leaders such as American Secretary of State Acheson, French Defense Minister Bidault, and German Chancellor Adenauer doubted the sincerity of the Soviet offer, rather seeing it as a well-planned political maneuver to derail the EDC negotiations. Instead of achieving this aim, the note from Stalin arguably provided important momentum in the final months of the

³⁰⁶ J., 'The European Defence Community', 326; Creswell, 'Chapter Five New Faces, Similar Policies', 108.

³⁰⁷ Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Reappraisal"', 219.

³⁰⁸ Duchin, 205.

³⁰⁹ Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 86.

negotiations.³¹⁰ Nevertheless in Bonn and Paris, the note did succeed in applying some domestic pressure to the FRG and French governments, as citizenry would expect efforts to engage the Soviets in peaceful talks, however insincere the motives from Moscow. Consequently, after consultations with Acheson, Adenauer offered high-level talks to engage in discussions on German unification.³¹¹

As discussions on high-level talks between Moscow and the western powers drew on, the western community continued to inch closer toward a resolution on the EDC and the broader question of western European security. Through April and May, negotiators were attempting to find agreeable compromises to the most poignant disagreements that had dominated discussions for nearly a year and a half. With Washington applying pressure for the European partners to reach the imposed May deadline, the negotiators reached deals the level of the FRG's financial contribution to the common European defense. UK Foreign Minister Eden feared that were the EDC negotiations to fail, London would receive the blame for its inability to address French concerns on its commitment to the continent's long-term security. To tackle this point, Eden announced on April 15 that despite its status as a non-member, the UK would establish relations with the EDC and would be open to a mutual assistance treaty with the new organization. The movement from London was complemented by Paris's own concessions. Paris dropped its opposition to the formation of German ground divisions, a breakthrough that had previously evaded negotiators.³¹² Another piece of the West's integration process and security framework was concluded on April 18, with the signing of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). In a sign of important progress, the ECSC was signed by each actor fully engaged in EDC talks: France, the FRG, Italy, and the Benelux countries.³¹³ With momentum strengthening for the objective of a common western European defense force, the negotiations also made way for Adenauer's central concern of *Gleichberechtigung* for the FRG.

³¹⁰ McAllister, *No Exit*, 219.

³¹¹ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 137.

³¹² Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 88.

³¹³ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 56.

In May 1952, two rivaling concerns of western Europe's defense and the west German sovereignty were to be linked. In a series of agreements between the US, UK, France, and the FRG, the west German state was to regain sovereignty with minor yet notable limitations. In doing so, Adenauer's aspiration for the FRG to be officially readmitted as a 'normal' country into the family of nations was addressed.³¹⁴ These agreements establishing international sovereignty for the FRG were known as the Bonn Conventions. Along with the Bonn Conventions, concurrent action was to be taken on the question of western European defense, with the creation of the EDC. In Paris, representatives of the participating countries gathered to conclude the negotiation on the common European defense. On May 26 and 27, the Bonn Convention and Treaty of Paris (EDC Treaty) were signed, respectively, granting the FRG its sovereignty and establishing the EDC.³¹⁵ The final signing of the agreements marked a monumental milestone for postwar Europe, and a significant step in western European integration efforts. Despite this achievement, major hurdles remained unresolved. Before the EDC could be established or the FRG could be permitted its sovereignty, however, both treaties had to be ratified by all signatory countries.³¹⁶ Despite the last-minute agreements prior to the signing, French concerns persisted on their relative strength vis-à-vis the Germans, and British and American commitments to the long-term security arrangement.³¹⁷ Moreover, in the closing weeks of the negotiations in early May, Paris and Bonn had failed to reach an agreement on the questions of Saarland. Across the signatory countries, as the ratification process for the Treaty of Paris was launching, skepticism of the supranational European defense community was rising. The statesmen and political movements advocating for the EDC would have to navigate the complicated waters ahead, if their dream of a European Defense Community were to come to life.

³¹⁴ Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 90.

³¹⁵ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 281.

³¹⁶ Ruane, 'Anthony Eden, the Foreign Office and Anglo-French Relations, 1951–1954', 217.

³¹⁷ McAllister, *No Exit*, 217.

Ratification Process

The six signatory countries of the Paris Treaty and Bonn Convention entered the summer of 1952 in what would be remembered as a difficult ratification period. Despite the momentum that concluded with the signing of the Treaty and Convention in May, no signatory state rushed to ratify the treaties in the months following ratification.³¹⁸ The remaining points of contention between the participating states loomed over political actors in the national legislatures responsible for ratifying the agreements. In capitals such as Rome and Paris, ratification was delayed for different reasons.

De Gasperi's government supported the EDC primarily as a mechanism for European political integration, represented by the inclusion of Article 38 of the Treaty of Paris. In this article, the EDC assembly was called to explore the possibilities of creating a European Political Community.³¹⁹ Despite seemingly having enough support in the legislature to ratify the EDC, however, political considerations led De Gasperi to stall the vote. Domestic disputes with opposition parties over the government's reform to the electoral system, as well as a preference to wait for the French before ratifying the EDC, were two of the primary factors.³²⁰

In Paris, the debate on ratification intensified, with voices opposing the EDC growing. As previously discussed, opposition to the EDC in the National Assembly had grown since the previous elections in June 1951, when representation for the communists in the PCF and Gaullists in the RPF, had spiked. The unstable Third Force coalitions in the center of the French political spectrum were still governing, however their support for the Treaty of Paris was not as solid as the opposition coming from the French Left and Right. In mid-1952, onlookers were skeptical that a majority for the EDC existed in the NA.³²¹ The fear of German rearmament continued to dictate French thinking on this plan for a common European defense. In late September 1952, this fear was triggered with the public release of a secret note linking a fictitious 'secret treaty' that would facilitate

³¹⁸ J., 'The European Defence Community', 325.

³¹⁹ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 279.

³²⁰ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950–55', 27.

³²¹ McAllister, *No Exit*, 222.

German military superiority over the French with the ratification of the EDC. While substantially false, the note dominating discussions and agitated fears and opposition to the EDC across the French public and among political figures.³²² Financial struggles regarding the war in Indochina also continued to weigh heavily on French leaders during this debate. Despite expressing support for the EDC before its signing in the spring of 1952, by October, French Marshall Juin was casting concern in the project. According to Juin, France would be unable to continue to wage its war effort in Indochina and meet the expectations of the Atlantic partners for Europe's defense.³²³ Moreover, he worried of the negative consequences to the French military's capacity to protect within the integrated structure of the EDC.³²⁴

In November 1952, the Americans elected former NATO Commander Dwight Eisenhower to succeed Harry Truman as US President. Like the thinking coming from Truman and Acheson, Eisenhower and his new Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, saw the EDC was the only solution to the continuing predicament of Europe's security.³²⁵ In a shift from the previous administration, however, Eisenhower envisioned the EDC as being the US's avenue to substantially withdrawing its conventional military forces from Europe. Upon entering the White House in January 1953, the Eisenhower administration heightened pressure on its western partners to ratify the treaty, eager to shift European security responsibilities to the Europeans.³²⁶

March 1953 was an important milestone for the ratification discussions. Uncertainty spread with the news of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's death on the fifth of March. The new Soviet leadership was quick to signal an openness for dialogue with western countries.³²⁷ The reception to these attempts varied in across the West. While there was broad skepticism of the Soviet overtures in both Washington and Bonn, in London, Churchill jumped at the opportunity presented by the Soviets and called for high-

³²² Creswell, 'Chapter Four Progress, Promises, and Problems', 94.

³²³ Creswell, 96.

³²⁴ Creswell, 'Chapter Five New Faces, Similar Policies', 113.

³²⁵ McAllister, *No Exit*, 223.

³²⁶ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 143.

³²⁷ Creswell, 'Chapter Six The Death of Stalin', 122.

level talks between London, Moscow, Washington, and Paris.³²⁸ This development worried supporters of the EDC who believed that dangling an improbable chance for peace with the Soviets would take momentum away from EDC ratification, which was already slow and running into domestic political difficulties in the signatory countries. For opponents of the project, ratification of the EDC would needlessly be putting possible peace negotiations in jeopardy. In fact, the opportunity to engage in deescalating talks with the Soviets became a primary reason for the French to continue to delay the vote on EDC ratification.³²⁹ In Bonn, Adenauer was concerned by the calls for Four-Power talks, fearing that the four victors of the Second World War would make agreements at the expense of the Germans.³³⁰ Despite his own skepticism on the genuine nature of Moscow's outreach, domestic pressure from the SPD-led opposition led Adenauer to accept the call for a high-level discussions.³³¹ Concurrent to this discussion on deescalating talks, the Germans moved forward on the debate over the Treaty of Paris. On March 19, 1953, the FRG became the first signatory country to ratify the EDC. With a final vote of 224 to 165, Adenauer's Christian Democrats voted with the FDP to win the vote against the SPD, who remained opposed to the project of a western defense on the concerns that it would inhibit German reunification.³³² Despite German social democratic concerns, however, the EDC gained its first of six necessary ratifications.

The progress made in Bonn, however, was not yet to be replicated in the remaining five countries. By late March, Rome's political calendar was being consumed by a debate over De Gasperi's electoral reform bill, pushing back discussions on the EDC ratification.³³³ The quickly approaching parliamentary elections scheduled for the summer of 1953 also introduced additional domestic political hurdles for the DC Prime Minister. Despite supporting the EDC as a vehicle for wider European integration, De Gasperi used Italy's yet-to-be-held ratification vote as leverage over other points important to the Italian

³²⁸ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 283.

³²⁹ McAllister, *No Exit*, 226.

³³⁰ Creswell, 'Chapter Six The Death of Stalin', 122.

³³¹ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 138.

³³² Large, 'Grand Illusions', 389.

³³³ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950-55', 28.

public, such as the unresolved issue of the territory of Trieste.³³⁴ On June 7, Italians went to the polls to elect a new parliament for the first time since April 1948. Despite the DC bloc winning the elections, De Gasperi and his 'majority vote' electoral reform underperformed expectations, introducing new uncertainty and political instability to the country. Following the elections, De Gasperi failed to form a new governing coalition, leading to his resignation and exit from politics. The loss of De Gasperi's leadership was problematic for the EDC's future ratification in Rome. In August 1953, he was replaced at the head of the Italian government by another Christian Democrat, Giuseppe Pella, who formed a government consisting solely of his DC party. Italian communists and socialists, who remained in opposition, continued to mount a strong opposition to the EDC.³³⁵ Pella's new government continued Rome's policy of delaying a vote on the EDC as leverage for the Trieste issue, all while waiting to see on developments in Paris.³³⁶

Signals of progress from France, however, were not appearing. In fact, since the FRG had ratified the EDC in March, the path for passage in France had become more challenging. The death of Stalin in March, the winding down of the war in Korea in July and growing domestic and international pressure to engage the Soviets in high-level talks weighed heavily on the French debate.³³⁷ Since the elections in June 1951, governing France had become increasingly difficult, with governments and ministers switching out repeatedly. Moreover, opposition in France to the EDC, both within the National Assembly and in broader society, seemed to be growing.³³⁸ The combination of vocal opposition to the EDC and an opportunity of high-level talks with Moscow to deescalate Cold War tensions proved damaging to the EDC's advancement. In communicating with Anglo-American leaders in July, French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault communicated France's desire to hold Four-Power talks before moving forward with EDC ratification, arguing that it was necessary to secure the parliamentary support. This was contrary to the

³³⁴ Risso, 20.

³³⁵ Colarizi, 'The Italian Political Parties and Foreign Policy in the 1950s', 400.

³³⁶ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 284.

³³⁷ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950–55', 25.

³³⁸ Risso, 27.

view from Washington and London, who argued that EDC ratification should precede discussions with Moscow.³³⁹

American policymakers watched attentively the progress (or lack thereof) on EDC ratification. By mid-1953, the changing domestic and geopolitical dynamics had led American officials to conclude that quick ratification of the EDC was not probable.³⁴⁰ While there was heightening concern in Washington on the lack of progress in Paris and Rome, other points provided reasons for optimism. Within the Benelux countries there were different approaches in how to approach the ratification. As mentioned previously, Belgium and Luxembourg were predisposed to work closely with France and wait for Paris to vote on ratification. In keeping with their more Atlanticist and cooperative mindset with the US, the Netherlands preferred a quicker timeline on ratification.³⁴¹ By an overwhelming margin in July, the Netherlands became the second signatory country to ratify the EDC. In November, Belgium follows as the third signatory country to ratify the Treaty of Paris by a large margin.³⁴² Between the ratification of the EDC by these two states is another boost for supporters of the EDC, with the impressive victory of Adenauer's Christian Democrats in the September Bundestag elections. The German Chancellor's strong mandate for a reelection showed solid backing for his politics of *Westbindung*, or orientation and integration with western Europe.³⁴³ Finally, in November, Belgium becomes the third signatory of the EDC to ratify the Treaty of Paris.

Through the late summer and fall of 1953, Washington wished for additional movement toward EDC ratification and continued to mount pressure on western partners. In August in a National Security Council document, the Americans signaled once again their commitment to the EDC, viewing it as the only "satisfactory" solution to the question of western European security. Importantly, the document also highlighted the necessity to review alternatives, should the ratification process continue to drag out.³⁴⁴ Moreover, after

³³⁹ McAllister, *No Exit*, 228.

³⁴⁰ McAllister, 228.

³⁴¹ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950–1952)', 42.

³⁴² J., 'The European Defence Community', 325.

³⁴³ J., 326.

³⁴⁴ Creswell, 'Chapter Six The Death of Stalin', 127.

Adenauer's victory in September, Eisenhower appealed to France's leaders for quickly ratification, emphasizing his administration's commitment to their French partners and the EDC project in its entirety.³⁴⁵ To prove to Paris his administration's commitment to continental Europe's security, Eisenhower accepted the advice of Secretary of State Dulles and toned down talk on withdrawing American troop presence from Europe.³⁴⁶ During this time, the Eisenhower administration attempts to balance its own foreign policy preferences with those of its European allies, from whom it desired EDC ratification. Upon entering the White House in January 1952, Eisenhower had sought a shift to fiscal austerity by cutting oversea military expenditures. American military spending in this early Cold War period was a massive burden on the budget, due in large part to the more than 420,000 service men stationed in Europe in 1953.³⁴⁷ To draw back troop deployed in Europe amid the Cold War tensions with the Soviets, the Americans had hoped to shift the responsibility to provide conventional military forces to their western European allies.³⁴⁸ It was in this context that the Eisenhower White House formulated the 'New Look' policy, which aimed to economize and streamline American military potential by investing in and prioritizing nuclear weapons while cutting back on conventional large armies.³⁴⁹

Through the first year of Eisenhower's presidency, however, this policy aspiration encountered geopolitical constraints. American partners across the continent, in particular Paris and Rome, feared a Europe without America's military presence. Nervousness toward a rearmed FRG and a menacing Soviet power made the French continuously seek specific guarantees from Washington (and London) on long-term American commitment to continental Europe's security, in exchange for ratifying the EDC. The American president was opposed to making such a commitment, however. For Eisenhower, securing French ratification for the EDC by committing significant troop levels in the medium and long-term to Europe, would defeat the core purpose of the EDC. In Eisenhower's view,

³⁴⁵ Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Reappraisal"', 209.

³⁴⁶ McAllister, *No Exit*, 235.

³⁴⁷ Creswell, 'Chapter Five New Faces, Similar Policies', 112.

³⁴⁸ Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Reappraisal"', 204.

³⁴⁹ Creswell, 'Chapter Six The Death of Stalin', 131.

the very reason that his administration was working to secure the establishment of the EDC was to effectively strengthen western Europe and more equitably share the burden of military expenditure.³⁵⁰ This dichotomy proved challenging to overcome through the fall and into the winter of 1953.

In October 1953, after pressure from officials in Paris, Bonn, and London, Washington agreed to extend an invitation to Moscow for Four-Power talks to discuss the future of the Germanies and Austria, which had remained divided and occupied by the four victorious powers since the end of the Second World War. For different political considerations, the French, Germans, and British opted to take the Soviets up on their public efforts to deescalate the tensions between the two blocs. For the French, a Four-Power meeting to discuss the future of the Germanies with the Soviets had become a prerequisite before moving forward with EDC ratification. In the FRG, strong domestic political pressure led by the opposition SPD led Adenauer to join the French in calling for the talks.³⁵¹ Lastly, the UK supported the talks due to Churchill's own belief that personal diplomacy between the leaders (importantly himself) would be the key to 'lasting peace'.³⁵²

With Moscow agreeing to a Four-Power meeting at the beginning of 1954, Washington, London, and Paris agreed for a high-level talk in December 1953 to coordinate positions and present a common western front vis-à-vis Moscow. In early December 1953, the leaders and foreign ministers of the US, UK, and France, met in Bermuda.³⁵³ The talks in Bermuda revolved around the questions that continued to evade the western partners, including the broader question of western European security and the specific question of the EDC's ratification. The French were not well situated for the upcoming summit with their Anglo-American partners. French Prime Minister Joseph Laniel and Foreign Minister Bidault expected significant pressure from their American and British partners on ratification of the EDC, however, political developments continued

³⁵⁰ McAllister, *No Exit*, 235.

³⁵¹ Creswell, 'Chapter Six The Death of Stalin', 126.

³⁵² Larres, 'British Attitudes to German Rearmament and Reunification in the 1950s'.

³⁵³ Creswell, 'Chapter Six The Death of Stalin', 129.

to render the task difficult.³⁵⁴ Reports of American intent to lower troop levels in Europe brought to the forefront a series of requests from the French to the American and British allies. To strengthen the chances of EDC ratification in the National Assembly, Foreign Minister Bidault (Prime Minister Laniel had fallen sick) requested stronger relations between the EDC and NATO, guarantees that either country would withdrawal from the NATO alliance for twenty years, and confirmation of France's role as a great power within the NATO structure. Neither the Americans nor British could assuage French concerns to a satisfying degree.³⁵⁵ Proposing an alternative should the EDC fail to be established, the British offered a 'NATO solution' in which the FRG would be admitted and rearmed through the NATO alliance. This idea was also blocked by both the Americans and the French. For the Americans, that solution proved just as challenging as the current EDC dilemma.³⁵⁶ With a stalemate persisting between the Atlantic partners, the frustration and exasperation was apparent. At the summit, Eisenhower and Dulles stressed to their French counterparts that were the EDC to fail, the US would be forced to reconsider its foreign policy on western European security. Frustrated by the perceived inaction from their European partners, the Americans escalated their rhetoric meant to pressure Paris into ratifying the treaty through their threat of an 'agonizing reappraisal' of their stance on Europe's defense.³⁵⁷

In the end, while the convening powers were able to find a common stance on the question of German unification, they were unable to resolve the major differences on the question of EDC ratification. Leading into the Four-Power Conference in January 1954, the western powers remained without a breakthrough on the EDC, nor with the structure of the future western European security.

³⁵⁴ McAllister, *No Exit*, 234.

³⁵⁵ Creswell, 'Chapter Six The Death of Stalin', 130.

³⁵⁶ McAllister, *No Exit*, 236.

³⁵⁷ Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Reappraisal"', 212.

Ratification Finale: 1954

The Four-Power Conference began on January 25, 1954, and lasted until the end of February. Set in Berlin, the foreign ministers of the USSR, US, UK, and France, met to settle differences on the statuses of the two Germanies and Austria. Still at odds on the question of the EDC's ratification, the three western powers arrived at the conference united on the principle that only a freely elected united German government could negotiate and conclude a peace deal with the victors of the Second World War.³⁵⁸ The Soviets, represented by Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov, envisioned a united, non-aligned Germany, free from foreign occupation. Moreover, he proposed a pan-European security pact inclusive of more than thirty European states, with the USSR and US associated as external observers.³⁵⁹ Neither side received support from the other in this confrontation of the two visions for a united Germany. In contrast, the two blocs were able to find consensus on the question of Austria, where there was more appetite for a status of neutrality for the country.³⁶⁰ It is generally concluded by historians that either the Soviets or the western allies made an effort to find a compromise on the question of German unification.³⁶¹ For the western partners, participation at the Four-Level Conference was rather a way to demonstrate to their citizenry a willingness to engage in diplomatic talks with the Soviets. Importantly, the failure of the talks was evidence to some that the EDC was in fact the only feasible path forward for European security.³⁶² Having failed to come to an agreement on German unification at the Four-Power Conference, the western partners returned home for a continued push toward the EDC. The following year would prove to be pivotal in the final construction of the European defense architecture, but the outcome still remained uncertain.

In the spring of 1954, the EDC moved forward in two of the three remaining signatory countries. On April 7, Luxembourg became the fourth country to ratify the

³⁵⁸ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 138.

³⁵⁹ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950-55', 25.

³⁶⁰ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950-1952)', 173.

³⁶¹ Larres, 'British Attitudes to German Rearmament and Reunification in the 1950s'.

³⁶² Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 140.

treaty.³⁶³ Like its close neighbors in the Netherlands and Belgium, the Treaty was ratified by a large margin in the national legislature.³⁶⁴ With the final piece of Benelux completing ratification, four countries, including the FRG, had ratified the Treaty of Paris. France and Italy were the two hold outs on ratification.

Several factors continued to delay the Italians on the ratification of the EDC. As previously discussed in this work, since the ejection of De Gasperi in June 1953, Rome had experienced a heightened level of political instability.³⁶⁵ The frequent shuffling of ministers and heads of government added complexity to an already challenging picture. The opposition PCI and PSI were providing a strong bulwark against the EDC, in both the halls of parliament and publicly in the streets. Their arguments against the Treaty including the safeguarding of Italian sovereignty and warning against the escalatory nature of the EDC vis-à-vis the Soviets, found receptive ears across the country.³⁶⁶ Despite the governing parties' support for the EDC, political instability and the recent thawing of tensions with Moscow following Stalin's death had allowed for persistent delays of the debate.³⁶⁷ Throughout these delays, Rome had continued to use ratification as leverage on the thorny issue of Trieste, for which the strong support of their western partners was needed for a favorable outcome for Rome.³⁶⁸ With the conclusion of the Four-Power talks in February 1954, however, Rome received increase pressure from their American allies to move forward with ratification. In responding to these increased threats, the Italian prime minister introduced to parliament a bill on the ratification of the EDC in early April. Despite submitting the bill to the legislature, however, the Italians continued to slow walk the issue, mindful of the challenging parliamentary vote. Rome therefore remained waiting for and watching developments in Paris.³⁶⁹

³⁶³ Creswell, 136.

³⁶⁴ J., 'The European Defence Community', 325.

³⁶⁵ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 284.

³⁶⁶ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950–55', 18.

³⁶⁷ Varsori, 'Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948–1955', 299.

³⁶⁸ Varsori, 288.

³⁶⁹ J., 'The European Defence Community', 326.

All Eyes on Paris

France held center stage of the ratification of the EDC from the end of the Four-Power Conference in early 1954 until the year's end. With only France and Italy remaining to ratify the Treaty of Paris, and Rome waiting for Paris to hold a vote, the problems of France became the collective problems of the wider western community attempting to build the EDC. Despite originally being introduced as a French proposal in the Pleven Plan of 1950, the Treaty of Paris's ultimate structure failed to adequately assuage long-held French concerns and limitations. Entangled with the numerous and persistent concerns on France's vulnerability on German rearmament was the seismic trouble of the war in Indochina. The war represented more than just a tremendous financial drain on the French budget that inhibited its ability to fulfill its role under the EDC. The damage to the French national morale and the country's self-perception as a great power was arguably just as great.³⁷⁰ By spring 1954, the conflict that had increasingly plagued the French since 1946 reached its apex with the devastating national defeat at Dien Bien Phu on May 7.³⁷¹ This military defeat was viewed as a humiliating blow to French national prestige and unleashed a storm of political disruption in Paris. The Laniel government, which had ruled since the summer 1953, collapsed in June 1954 as a response to rampant discontentment with war in Indochina.³⁷² In seeking a new direction on Indochina, a broad crosscut of parties put their confidence in a consistent opponent to the war. In promising to bring an end to the conflict within one month, Pierre Mendes-France receives overwhelming support from the National Assembly to form a government. Riding on a wave of popularity and deference to tackle to the country's challenges, in July, Mendes-France succeeds in negotiating a temporary peace settlement with the communist Viet-Minh, dividing the country in two.³⁷³

Having found an adequate if only temporary settlement on the question of Indochina, Mendes-France shifts his attention to the question of the EDC. With the war in

³⁷⁰ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 147.

³⁷¹ Young, 'The Failure of the New Entente Cordiale 1947-1950'.

³⁷² J., 'The European Defence Community', 331.

³⁷³ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 148.

Indochina only temporarily settled and a plethora of concerns around the EDC's fundamental structure remaining, the new French Prime Minister was convinced that there was no majority in the French National Assembly for ratification. Sandwiched between the communist PCF and Gaullist RPF, opponents to the EDC, the Third Force parties congregated toward the center of the National Assembly's political spectrum was the only realistic path for EDC ratification. Even there, however, amongst the socialist SFIO, Christian Democratic MRP, and radical-socialists, support for the treaty had weakened tremendously.³⁷⁴ With intransigent opposition among French lawmakers to the supranational nature of the EDC, Mendes-France sought modifications to the treaty that would strengthen its support in the National Assembly. In late August 1954, Mendes-France proposed certain changes to the EDC to leaders of the other signatory states of the Treaty of Paris.³⁷⁵ Among the modifications the French requested was a clause that allowed EDC members to decide on whether to continue their participation in the common defense institution upon a change in policy from Washington and London.³⁷⁶ It was a requested modification that tackled a persistent French concern with the EDC; the Americans and British had been unable and unwilling to reassure the French on their long-term commitment to security in continental Europe. The other participants, however, received this *protocole d'application* coldly. With four other states having already ratified the Treaty, there was no appetite to slice and dice the existing agreement merely for the French, who had already tested the patience of their partners.³⁷⁷ Even among supporters of the EDC in Paris, was Mendes-France's *protocole* unpopular, for it structurally altered the very nature of the supranational European defense and would even weaken support among the treaty's supporters.³⁷⁸ Brussels Conference ended without changes to the existing treaty. Analyzing the results of the conference, Mendes-France believed that the

³⁷⁴ Simpson, 'The Rearming of Germany 1950-1954', 84.

³⁷⁵ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 155.

³⁷⁶ Bebr, 'The European Defence Community and the Western European Union', 234.

³⁷⁷ Palm and Erlandsson, 'Multilateralism as Small Power Strategy The Netherlands, the Benelux and the European Defence Community (1950-1952)', 42.

³⁷⁸ Pastor-Castro, 'The Quai d'Orsay and the European Defense Community Crisis of 1954', 398.

previous French governments' delays had weakened country's credibility vis-à-vis their negotiating partners, who had arrived unwilling to listen to Paris's concerns.³⁷⁹

The French Prime Minister returned to Paris to hold a vote on the EDC's ratification. He was nevertheless certain of its failure.³⁸⁰ On August 30, the question of the EDC's ratification was put before the National Assembly. By a vote of 319 to 264, the treaty was stopped in its tracks in Paris.³⁸¹ The treaty had been voted down before even a substantial debate on the treaty's specifics. In the end, near unanimity among the EDC's opponents and split voting among the parties more favorable to the treaty, meant ultimate failure.³⁸²

The French failure to ratify the Treaty of Paris after more than two years of debate and delays on the EDC was a cataclysmic defeat to the West's postwar security strategy. The criticism of the French was severe, especially from Washington and Bonn. The Eisenhower administration was appalled at France's rejection of its own proposal, and Adenauer characterized it as a "black day for Europe".³⁸³ The defeat of the EDC provided a seismic jolt to western capitals; the primary question of western Europe's security remained unanswered.³⁸⁴ In wake of the news from Paris, the partners begrudgingly organized to respond to the root question of how to secure western Europe.

³⁷⁹ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 156.

³⁸⁰ Creswell, 156.

³⁸¹ Sharp and Stone, *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century*.

³⁸² Kanter, 'The European Defense Community in the French National Assembly: A Roll Call Analysis', 221.

³⁸³ Kaplan, 'NATO and Adenauer's Germany', 621; Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 158.

³⁸⁴ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950-55', 29.

Chapter III: The Path Taken

A Proposal from London

As the dust settled following the collapse of the EDC pathway for European security, western leaders weighed the next steps. Disappointed and fatigued, the American response led by President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles, was to take a step back and enable to Europeans to resolve the predicament themselves. Following the EDC experience, Dulles was mindful that a solution to European security fabricated and advocated by Washington would be received with hostility by a large portion of the European body politic.³⁸⁵ In collaboration, Dulles would remove himself as a central player to allow British Foreign Minister Antony Eden the chance to fill the subsequent gap in leadership. In the lead up to the French vote on EDC ratification, Eden had become increasingly skeptical of its ultimate passage and was therefore inclined to find adequate alternatives. It is in this context that starting in late September, Eden hosted a high-level summit in London between nine different actors: the six participants of the moribund EDC joined by the UK, US, and Canada.³⁸⁶

During this short Nine-Power Conference, the participants debated how an alternative western European security structure would be structured. As through the EDC negotiation and ratification debates, the overarching concerns of the French were the primary hurdles to clear. How would the FRG's military potential be mustered to contribute to the region's security, while addressing French fears of German domination? Would the British and Americans provide guarantees of their long-term contribution to the continent's security? What would the relationship be between the NATO alliance and a European security architecture? How would the FRG be readmitted into international community as an equal actor?

To address these concerns, Eden proposed a refashioning of the Treaty of Brussels, which had led to the creation of the European-centric Western Union in 1948. In his

³⁸⁵ Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Reappraisal"', 218.

³⁸⁶ Sharp and Stone, *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century*.

proposal, the Western Union (which already had as members the UK, France, and Benelux), would expand to the remaining two EDC signatory states: the FRG and Italy. Eden's approach marked a significant shift away from the previous preference for an integrated supranational security structure and toward the traditional alliance model, mitigating the nationalist concerns in western capitals everywhere on the loss of national sovereignty. Importantly for French concerns, the British Foreign Minister's proposal also provided credible guarantees of long-term British involvement on the European continent. The proposal also tackled the question of NATO and its role in contributing to western Europe's long-term security; the enlarged Western Union alliance would be a closeknit junior partner to NATO. In addressing concerns from Bonn, the FRG would obtain its sovereign and be admitted into the NATO alliance, along with Italy. In exchange, the FRG renounced its future development of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.³⁸⁷

Eden's proposal in the Nine-Power Conference stayed true to the principle of the FRG's rearmament and contribution to western European defense, while shifting from the EDC's innovative supranational model to traditional model manifested by the Western Union and NATO alliances. In London, the persistent barriers to French approval attempted to be addressed by concrete commitments from the British and Americans on their long-term involvement in continental Europe, as well as the shift away from the EDC's supranational structure.³⁸⁸ By the end of the conference in early October, the westerners had an agreed upon framework to move forward.

A Parisian Conclusion

The Paris Conference was organized as a follow-up to London's Nine-Power Conference. Its objective was to build on the consensus established in London and find a conclusive final agreement among the participating countries.³⁸⁹ With leaders seeking an agreeable exit to the diplomatic crisis that had taken hold with the EDC's failure in Paris, there was a general willingness to negotiate.

³⁸⁷ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 161.

³⁸⁸ Sharp and Stone, *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century*.

³⁸⁹ Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Reappraisal"', 219.

The Paris Conference concluded with a series of agreements between the western countries. The consensus established in London on the FRG and Italy's admission into the Western Union and NATO alliance, were approved by all participating countries. With this, the Western Union would be transformed into the Western European Union (WEU). Along with this, the US, UK, France, agreed to restore west German sovereignty. Participants also agreed on the levels to which the FRG would be expected to rearm, providing a crucial bulwark in central Europe to Soviet influence and encroachment.³⁹⁰ Critically for France, the British and American commitments to continental Europe were reinforced, providing a sense of security to Paris. Between the French and west Germans, a solution to the thorny issue of the Saarland was constructed. Through this agreement, the Saarland would be a European territory with a neutral governing administrative body. The two countries agreed on the holding of a plebiscite, where inhabitants of the region would be able to voice their opinion on the territory's European status.³⁹¹

With the signing of the agreements finalized by October 23, 1954, the Paris Accords were sent, once again, to the signatory countries for ratification.³⁹² When comparing to ratification process of the EDC to that of the Paris Accords, a couple of notable aspects are worth noting. First, as opposed to the EDC, the Paris Accords were promptly ratified by some of the signatory countries. The FRG was first to ratify, quickly followed by Italy. The Benelux countries, this time, decided to wait on French ratification before voting.³⁹³ As a similarity to the EDC ratification, however, Paris was once again the scene of a dramatic conclusive finale.

Since the conclusion of the Paris Conference in late October, Prime Minister Mendes-France had worked to secure the support that had previously alluded him in the French National Assembly. His efforts to secure the support of the necessary political parties came to a head in late December of 1954. The Paris Accords faced similarly rough path to ratification as the preceding EDC. As expected, French communists kept their opposition to the very principle of German rearmament, yet their opposition was

³⁹⁰ Duchin, 219.

³⁹¹ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 161.

³⁹² Sharp and Stone, *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century*.

³⁹³ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 157.

measurably weaker to that of the EDC.³⁹⁴ While the shift away from the supranational EDC mitigated concerns on national sovereignty among the Gaullist RPF bloc, previous supporters of the EDC, such as the Christian Democratic MRP, were left unsatisfied with the abandonment of the EDC's integrated defense apparatus.³⁹⁵ The socialists found themselves similarly divided on the question of the expanded WEU.³⁹⁶ Facing this difficult landscape in the National Assembly, the Prime Minister Mendes-France also received the external pressures from international partners. London warned their French partners that the Americans would bypass them and rearm Germany, should Paris fail to ratify the new Accords from Paris.

On Christmas week 1954, the French government held a series of votes on the Paris Accords in the National Assembly. After a successful vote to grant the FRG its sovereignty under the Paris Accords on December 23, the following day, a vote pertaining to the enlarged WEU was voted down by French parliamentarians. With collective international pressure applied on Mendes-France's government, the Prime Minister against submitted the question to the legislature, this time procedurally tied to his government's survival through a question of confidence. Unwilling to remove the incumbent government, on December 30, 1954, the National Assembly approved the bill to admit the FRG and Italy into the enlarged WEU by a tight vote of 287 to 260.³⁹⁷ With the stamp of approval from France, the Paris Accords were on a stable path to ratification. Onlookers in western capitals breathed a sigh of relief after seeing the French finally approve a new security structure for western Europe. From Washington, Secretary of State Dulles reportedly congratulated the French Prime Minister for success in ratification.³⁹⁸ In subsequent fashion, the remaining Benelux countries quickly ratified the Accords in early 1955.

³⁹⁴ Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950-55', 29.

³⁹⁵ Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, 158.

³⁹⁶ Kanter, 'The European Defense Community in the French National Assembly: A Roll Call Analysis', 220.

³⁹⁷ Kanter, 214.

³⁹⁸ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 163.

The passage of the Paris Accords was a conclusive finale to the saga that had begun in October 1950 with the introduction of the Pleven Plan. For more than four years, western European countries, in close collaboration with their American ally, had negotiated and debated the region's security framework. These substantive and frustrating discussions highlighted the different factors at play with each of the countries involved. Their domestic concerns and international pressures influenced the direction of the negotiations from original plan to integrate western Europe's armed forces, to the ultimate compromise of traditional alliance building. These constraints and national character dynamics also led the continent as a whole in a direction of reliance on the offshore American partner, through a persistent preference for the NATO alliance. By opting for an American-led security framework over a European-first structure, the Europeans set the trajectory for several decades of comfortable but at times unfortunate dependency.

Conclusion

Having examined the development and debate of the EDC, this final chapter will present the conclusions of the thesis and examine the implications on the failure to ratify the EDC for Europe's postwar geopolitical development.

This section will expand on the findings discovered in previous chapters. Dividing this conclusive section into two parts, this thesis will begin by outlining the reasons for which the EDC was the practicable, though imperfect, solution to Europe's early Cold War security dilemma. It will further answer why the EDC ultimately failed to be ratified and assess which actors played the most pivotal roles in the initiative's defeat. In the last section, this thesis outlines the implications for the failure to ratify the EDC. Western Europe's collective failure to establish a common European defense in the early 1950s had significant geopolitical consequences. This thesis argues that this decision led to a flaw in European development in the postwar era. While European integration progressed after the EDC's defeat, economic and political integration continued without a complementary defense dimension, omitting a fundamental pillar of prerogatives for which a state is responsible. Moreover, the EDC's defeat represents a pivotal moment for Europe's place on the world stage. In a crucial period in the early Cold War as a new great power dynamic was consolidating, western European states collectively failed to step up as more autonomous actors in the international system. This abdication of responsibility was cemented with the broader European accommodation to the American-led security umbrella.

Assessment

The EDC was a European solution to Europe's regional security challenges. Proposed by Paris and supported by Washington, the EDC attempted to address the concerns of the participating countries. At the heart of the proposal was an attempt to settle the dichotomy between the need of a strong, western-aligned bulwark in the middle of Europe, and the French hostility to German rearmament. For the other relevant players, the EDC provided an avenue to pursue other national priorities.

The EDC as a Solution

As discussed previously in this thesis, the late 1940s saw a series of developments that heightened the tensions between the rivalling superpowers. Struck between the two postwar superpowers, Europe found itself a central theater for the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Too weak following the war to compete with the Americans and the Soviets, western European states found themselves accommodating to the role of supporting actors aligned with the United States. This was largely done because of the American capacity and willingness to provide financial assistance to the feeble and cash-strapped European states, as well as the geopolitical dynamic of band wagoning. As explained in *Chapter I*, a series of escalatory measures heightened western concerns about Soviet encroachment. Amid disruptive communist parties at home and expansionist moves abroad, western countries began to turn to the American ally for security. These dynamics lead to western partners agreeing to the establishment of the FRG in the occupied zone of western Germany, as Washington was eager to channel German military potential to serve as a bulwark against the Soviets in central Europe.

With the development of the FRG in 1949, western geopolitical planning shifted from the creation of a western-aligned German state to German rearmament for the benefit of western European security. Western states found themselves with vastly different stances concerning the rearmament of the former Axis power. While Washington, and increasing London, were convinced of the geopolitical realities with the escalatory nature of the Cold War, Bonn's immediate neighbors to the west, in Paris, were vigorously opposed to the mere concept of German rearmament. Just as German military potential was fundamental to an adequate western defense against Soviet encroachment, the French were a cornerstone to any western European military arrangement. For the United States, Paris was a crucial ally, whose cooperation and support they would need if they wished to have an adequate western-aligned bulwark to Soviet expansionism in Europe.³⁹⁹ Throughout this saga, Washington maintained consistent pressure, albeit to varying degrees, to win over their partners in Paris.

³⁹⁹ Creswell, 'Chapter Three Washington Pulls, London Follows, Paris Accepts, Bonn Hesitates', 42.

In 1950, the already-heightened tensions of the Cold War received another boost with the start of the Korean war. With this newest conflict between the communist and western-aligned bloc, Washington's pressure on European partners ramped up. As it dawned on the French that the Americans would soon move to rearm the FRG, the government in Paris proposed the Pleven Plan for the supranational European defense body.⁴⁰⁰ Originally the result of a French proposal, the EDC was Paris's attempt to get ahead of the Americans and preemptively present a proposal that would address French concerns. The EDC represented an innovative attempt channel German military potential while bypassing the establishment of a German military with the creation of a common European defense.

For each state, there were reasons to see the EDC as an adequate solution. As already discussed, the supranational structure of the EDC gave France some reassurance that superior German military strength would not pose a threat to their national security. For Bonn, the fate of the EDC's Treaty of Paris was tied to the Treaty of Bonn, which upon ratification by each of the participating states, would end the Occupational Regime in the FRG. For German Chancellor Adenauer and his Christian Democrat government, regaining sovereignty and achieving the status of a 'normal' country in the international system was a primary objective of the EDC negotiations.⁴⁰¹ As another defeated Axis power, support for the EDC in Italy had some similarities to Germany. It was a top priority for the Italian governments to regain an equal status on the world stage. As a western-aligned power, Italy wanted to be treated equally to Paris and London. For this, a strong relationship with the Americans was desired in Rome. Support for the EDC was a crucial step toward these Italian geopolitical objectives.

As the three largest players involved in the EDC, France, the FRG, and Italy each had strong reasons to see the EDC as the practical, if not perfect, solution to the European security dilemma. The EDC would provide a major boon to each power on several of their domestic or foreign policy priorities. Through the course of the ratification debate, these states played pivotal roles in the result of the EDC.

⁴⁰⁰ Gavin, 'Power through Europe?', 87.

⁴⁰¹ McAllister, *No Exit*, 221.

Why did the EDC Fail?

Ultimately, the EDC failed to garner the necessary support for ratification. The initiative for a common European defense received tough criticism from different sectors of the European body politic. Apprehension to the EDC across western Europe sprouted for a variety of reasons. While there was a broad predisposition against the loss of national sovereignty through a supranational defense initiative, other critiques of the EDC originated from more unique national concerns.

Western European countries failed to establish the EDC because of an unwillingness to move past the individual mentality of the nation-state. The early postwar years saw significant movement on behalf of western European states to take steps toward regional integration. As reviewed in *Chapter I*, after the end of the Second World War, there was collective momentum in favor of building institutional bridges that would help to reconstruct a devastated continent. The establishment of the OEEC in 1948 and the creation of the ECSC in 1951 represent two examples of this momentum for integration. Despite these advances, however, limits remained to a state's willingness to delegate competencies to another entity. With the proposal of a common regional defense, western European countries were debating a transfer of significant state competencies. While the ECSC resulted in sharing the natural resources needed for waging war, the EDC would be taking the additional step in transferring national defense decisions to a shared, supranational entity. For signatory states, the cost-benefit analysis of the EDC was difficult to measure, given the unknowns of creating such an innovative organization.

This hesitation to relinquish a significant portion of national sovereignty was a common focal point in discussions across western Europe. These discussions, however, were complemented on other concerns unique to signatory states. When looking at the major contributing factors that led to the collective failure of the EDC, this thesis identifies three such cases. The Italians, British, and French, each contributed to the failure of the EDC.

First, in failing to hold a vote on ratification, Rome played a major role in this collective failure. Despite difficult domestic political terrain, it was widely believed that

before the elections of 1953 the Christian Democratic governments in Rome had the necessary majorities to pass the EDC.⁴⁰² Their willingness to postpone the vote on the EDC for short term political gain represented shortsightedness on behalf of the governing Italian political elite who favored European integration.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their absence in the EDC, the British are also responsible for the failure of the EDC. Preferring to stick to their role as an isolated power detached from the full responsibilities of continental Europe, the British failed to meet the moment. London had a critical role to play in the EDC debate because of its importance to Paris. During the negotiations and ratification debate, the French repeatedly requested concrete commitments on continental security from their British ally. While ceding at times to certain requests, the UK preferred to remain outside of the EDC, refusing to participate as a full participant.⁴⁰³ Had the UK decided to join the EDC, it is possible that France would have had the necessary reassurance to ratify the treaty and create a common European defense.

This thesis finds that the French must receive the bulk of the blame for their inability to ratify the EDC. As the original brainchild of the supranational European defense architecture, Paris invited western European countries to a prolonged and futile debate on the EDC, only to be the only signatory state to reject the treaty after more than two years of debate. The political dysfunction of the French Fourth Republic paved the way for the long discussion and slow death of a common European defense.⁴⁰⁴ Moreover, the French preoccupation with regaining its lost *grandeur* through its dragged-out conflict in Indochina slowed the debate's advancement.⁴⁰⁵

The inability of western European countries to establish a common regional defense was, in fact, a collective failure. Each of the relevant countries played a role in the EDC's demise. Nevertheless, through the findings, this thesis finds that three states play outsized roles in the ultimate death of the EDC. In their own way, Italy, the UK, and

⁴⁰² Risso, 'Against Rearmament or Against Integration? The PCI and PCF's Opposition to the European Defence Community and the Western European Union, 1950-55', 27.

⁴⁰³ Bebr, 'The European Defence Community and the Western European Union', 173.

⁴⁰⁴ Kanter, 'The European Defense Community in the French National Assembly: A Roll Call Analysis', 202.

⁴⁰⁵ Creswell, 'Chapter Seven The End of the Affair', 141.

France engaged in fatal decision-making that led to a collective inability to establish a common European security framework. This failure had consequential effects on the subsequent geopolitical development of western European countries. In the following section, this thesis concludes with a review of the implications of this collective failure.

Implications

The collective European failure to establish a common regional defense in the EDC represents a definitive moment in the history of European integration and its geopolitical development. In failing to ratify the EDC, European efforts for economic and political integration moved forward without a complementary security component. Furthermore, the rejection of the EDC was a significant moment in which western European countries opted for dependency on the United States. These twin implications had drastic consequences for Europe's postwar history. The challenges confronting European countries today can largely be traced back to this early decision in the early Cold War, when western European states preferred to delegate the region's security and defense to the United States.

As mentioned at the onset of this thesis, US President Donald Trump has threatened to undermine the NATO alliance and remove American security protections for European allies. European states that have long benefited from a generous American security umbrella have found themselves flooded with uncertainty and in vulnerable positions. This is largely because for the past several decades, many states have neglected to invest in their own national defenses.

This unwillingness to independently address Europe's contemporary security dilemma is also a collective regional failure. Since the original failure to ratify the EDC, European states have neglected the security dimensions to their shared project of European integration. It has been a collective failure to not invest adequately, and not collaborate in presenting a common front on shared geopolitical challenges. Through the nearly 80-year-old history of the transatlantic relationship, this inability to present a common front or project power has led to strategic fumbles. The 1960s saw a massive divide in western

Europe, as France, under nationalist President Charles de Gaulle, withdrew from the integrated military command structure of the NATO alliance. This rift was not only between Washington and Paris, but also between western European allies, who had vastly different approaches to the imbalanced relationship with the United States.⁴⁰⁶ Transatlantic tensions also rose in the 1980s during the deployment of the “Euromissiles” in western Europe. Despite support from the hosting governments, large scale manifestations across the UK, the FRG, Italy, and Spain, demonstrated public discontentment with the government policies of European countries in relation to the Cold War.⁴⁰⁷ In the early 2000s, differences in foreign policy between the Americans and Europeans resurfaced with the Iraq war. In this conflict, European public opinion found itself strongly against Washington’s war with the regime of Saddam Hussein, and this time the French and German governments did not follow the Americans, while the British did.

While the transatlantic relationship has shown an ability to persist, the past 80 years are filled with instances where discrepancies in American and European foreign policy priorities are made evident. Events in recent years have only compounded this reality, as the glue that held the two sides of the Atlantic together for nearly a century has weakened with the rise of populist voices in the United States calling for a recalibration of American foreign policy.

Through these developments, European countries both in and outside of the EU are forced to reckon with shifting geopolitical realities. The existing framework for European security is fractured, with the potential to suddenly disappear. Amid this uncertainty, European states are ill-prepared to adapt to the challenges. This lack of preparation is a long-term symptom that has festered since the early postwar era, when western European states, still feeble from the preceding war, found themselves in a different security dilemma. Too weak to embark on a nation-based foreign policy and too unwilling to form a common European defense through the EDC, the western European states opted for a different route. While continuing to pursue economic and political

⁴⁰⁶ Calleo, *The Atlantic Fantasy: The U.S., NATO, and Europe*, 61.

⁴⁰⁷ Crump and Erlandsson, *Margins for Manoeuvre in Cold War Europe*, 224.

integration efforts without the stabilizing backing of a core security pillar, Europe embarked on a path of dependency on the United States.

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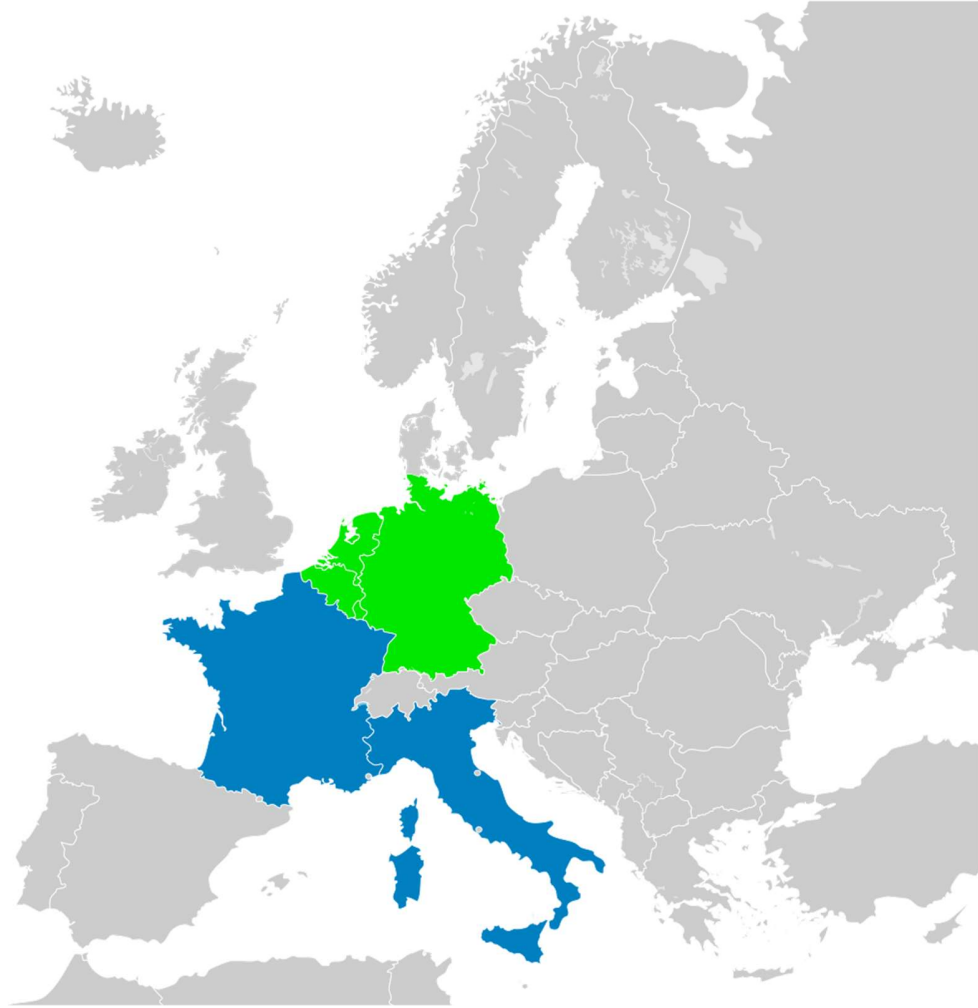
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Appendices

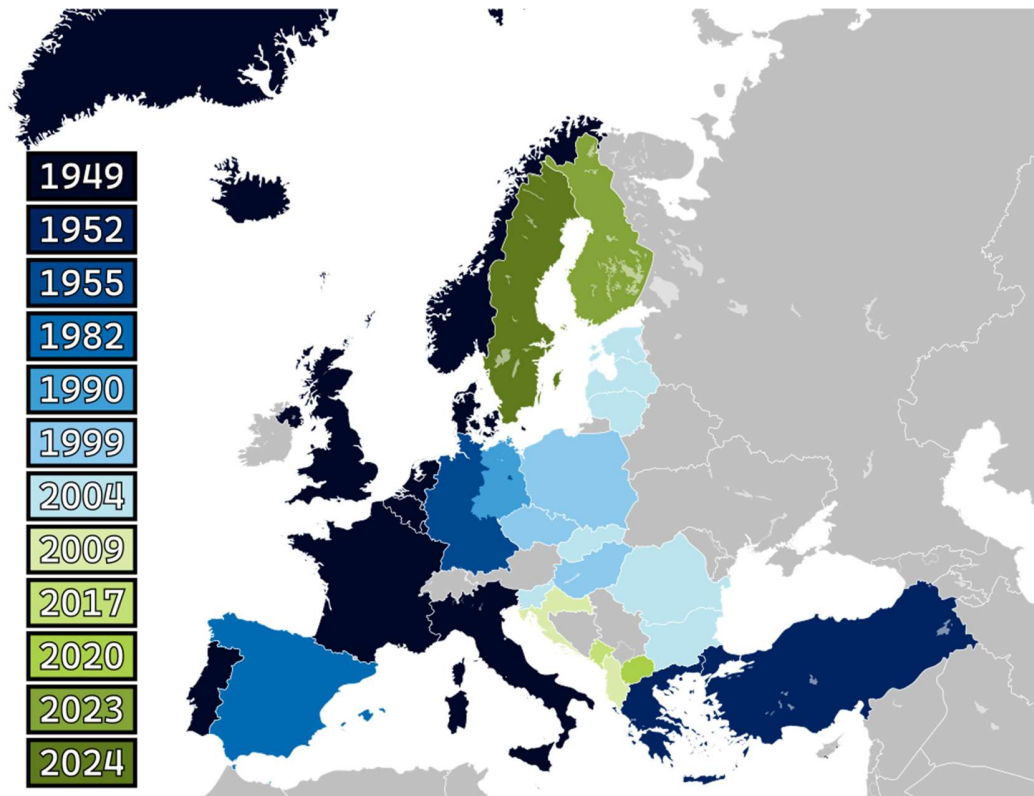
a. Maps and Charts



Map 1: European Defense Treaty Ratification. Source: Wikipedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EDC_ratification_2025.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).



Map 2: NATO Expansion by Year. Source: Wikipedia Commons, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:NATO_vs_Warsaw_\(1949-1990\).png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:NATO_vs_Warsaw_(1949-1990).png) (accessed June 18, 2025).



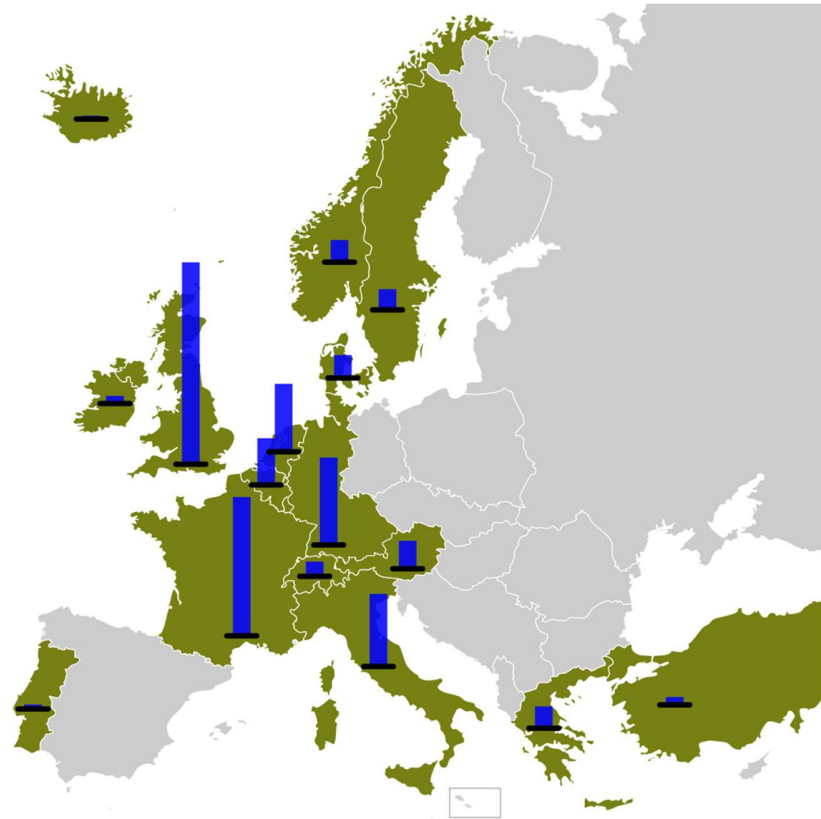
Map 3: European NATO Membership. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:History_of_NATO_enlargement.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).



Map 4: Western Union Membership (1948-1954). Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Western_Union.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).



Map 5: Western European Union Membership (1954-1990). Source: Wikimedia Commons, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Western_European_Union_\(1954-1990\).svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Western_European_Union_(1954-1990).svg) (accessed June 18, 2025).



Map 6: Recipients of the European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan). Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Marshall_Plan.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

b. Glossary

i. Treaties

Ambitious Decade: Ten Years of Institution Building		
Treaty	Institution	Date & Participants
Dunkirk Treaty	Mutual Defense Pact	March 4, 1947 (France, UK)
Treaty of Brussels	Western Union	March 17, 1948 (UK, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg)
Washington Treaty	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	April 4, 1949
Treaty of London	Council of Europe	May 5, 1949
Treaty of Paris	European Coal and Steel Community	April 18, 1951
Treaty of Bonn	Ended Occupation Regime in FRG, subordinate to EDC ratification	May 26, 1952 (UK, France, United States, the FRG)
Treaty of Paris	European Defense Community	May 27, 1952 (France, the FRG, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg)
Treaty of Brussels	Western European Union (previously the Western Union)	October 23, 1954 Amended original treaty, admitted the FRG and Italy
Treaty of Rome	European Economic Community	March 25, 1957

ii. Charts and Figures

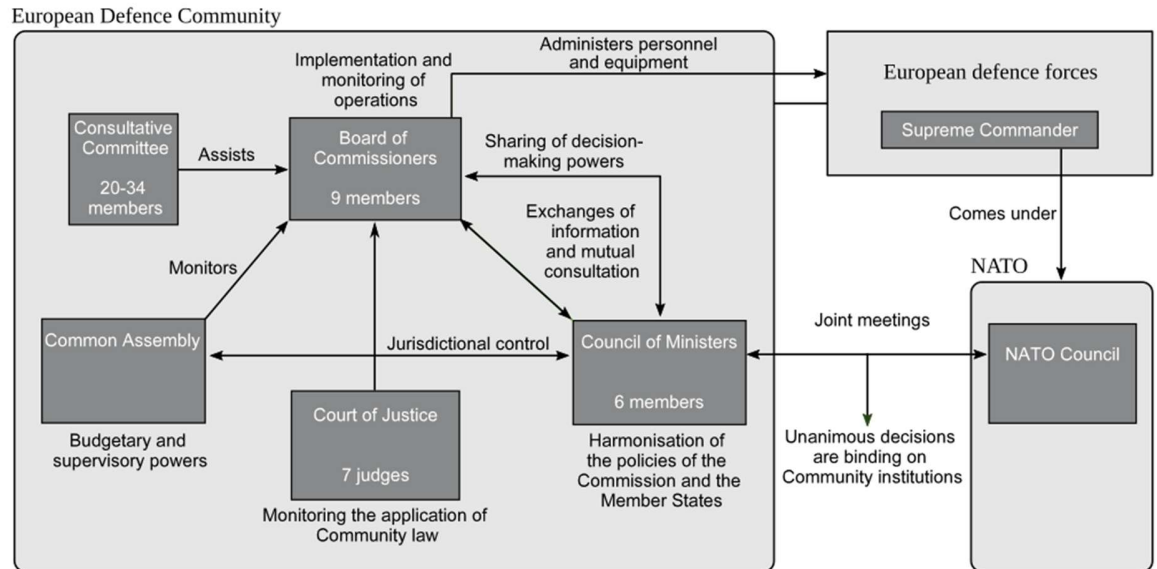


Figure 1: Structure of the European Defense Community. Source Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Organisation_of_the_European_Defence_Community.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

iii. Electoral Graphs

Elections Législatives françaises de 1946

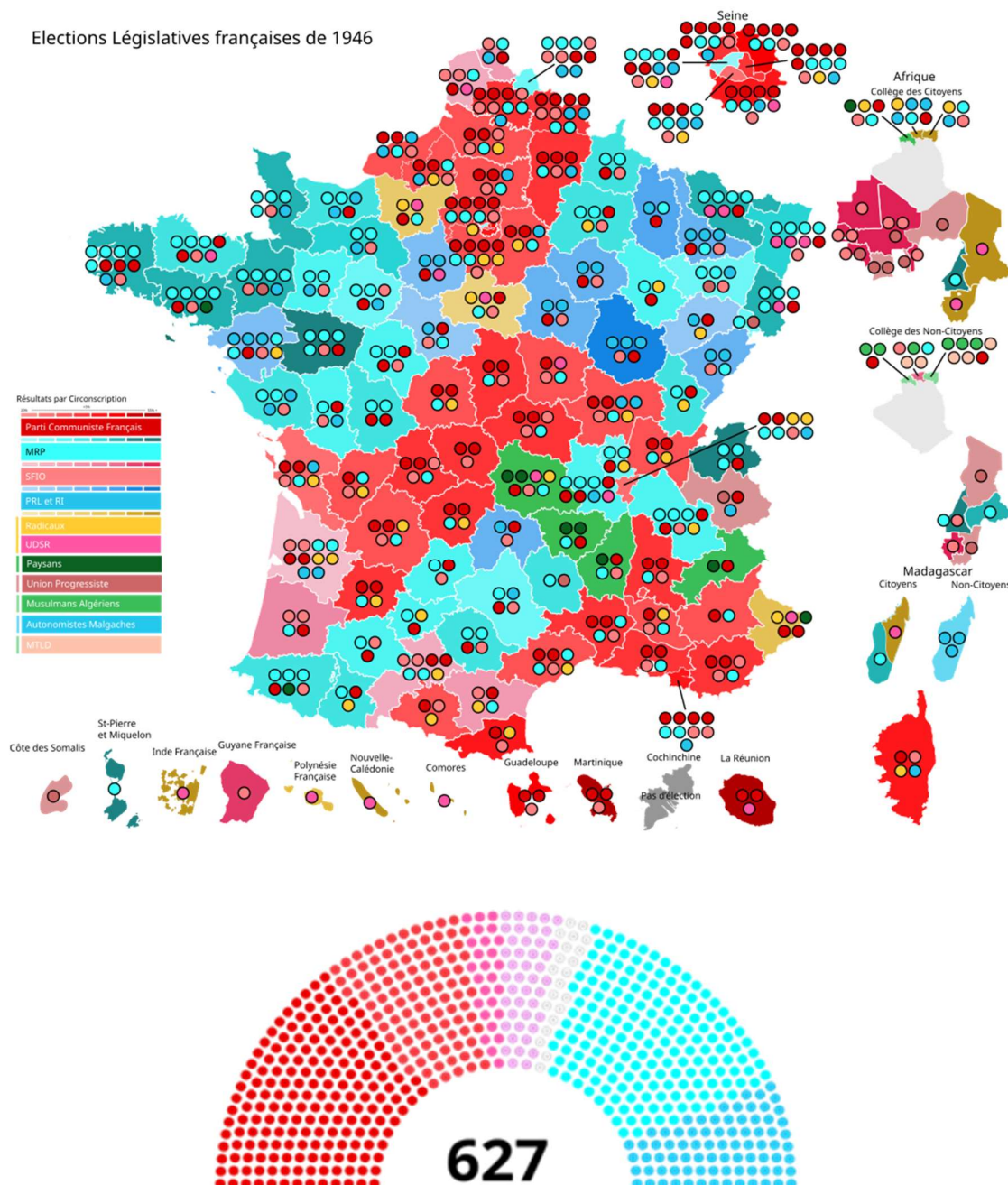


Figure 1: Results of the November 1946 French parliamentary elections. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:C3%89lections_l%C3%A9gislatives_fran%C3%A7aises_de_novembre_1946.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

Élections législatives françaises de 1951

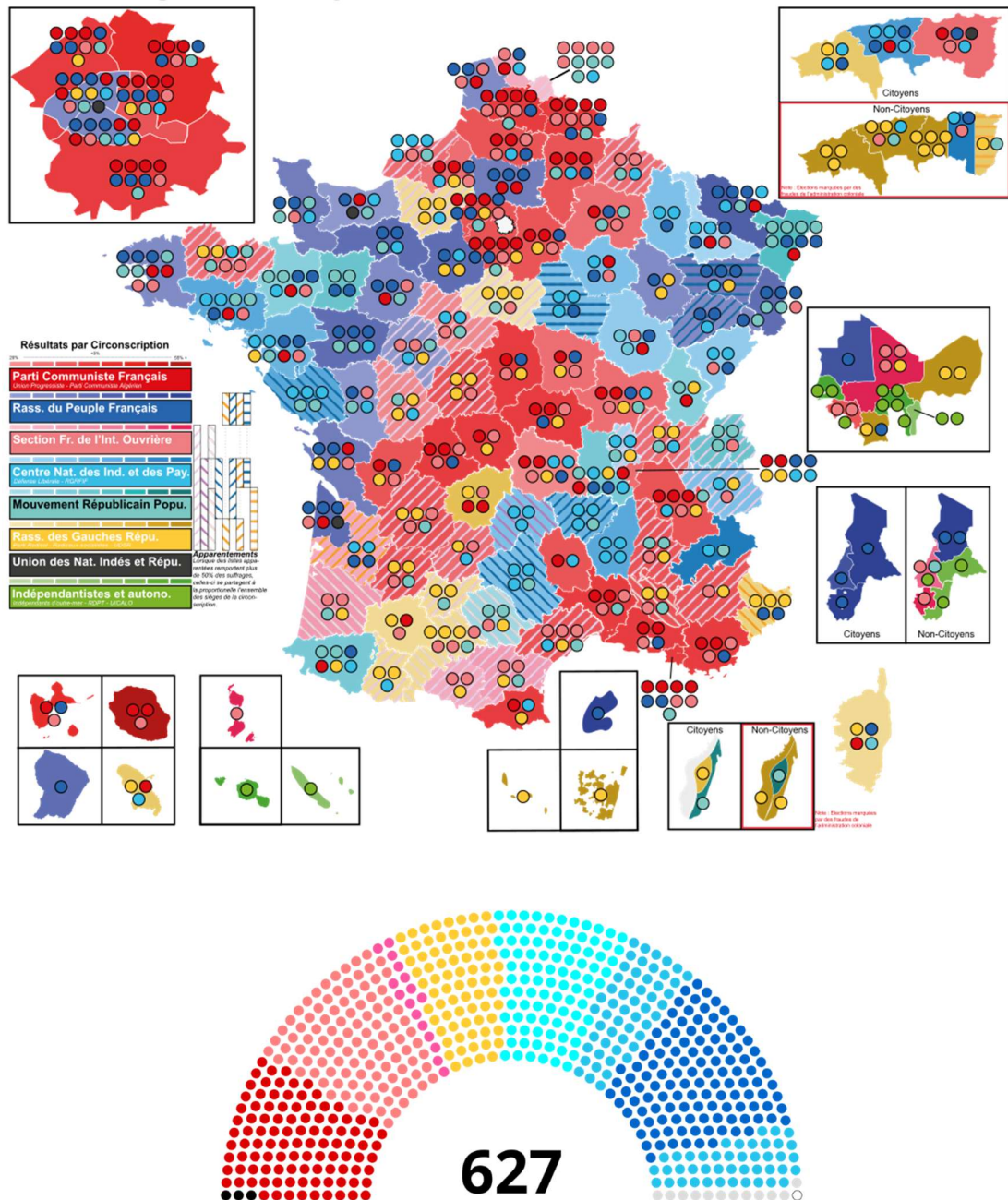


Figure 2: Results of the June 1951 French parliamentary elections. Source: From Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%C3%89lections_l%C3%A9gislatives_fran%C3%A7aises_de_1951.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

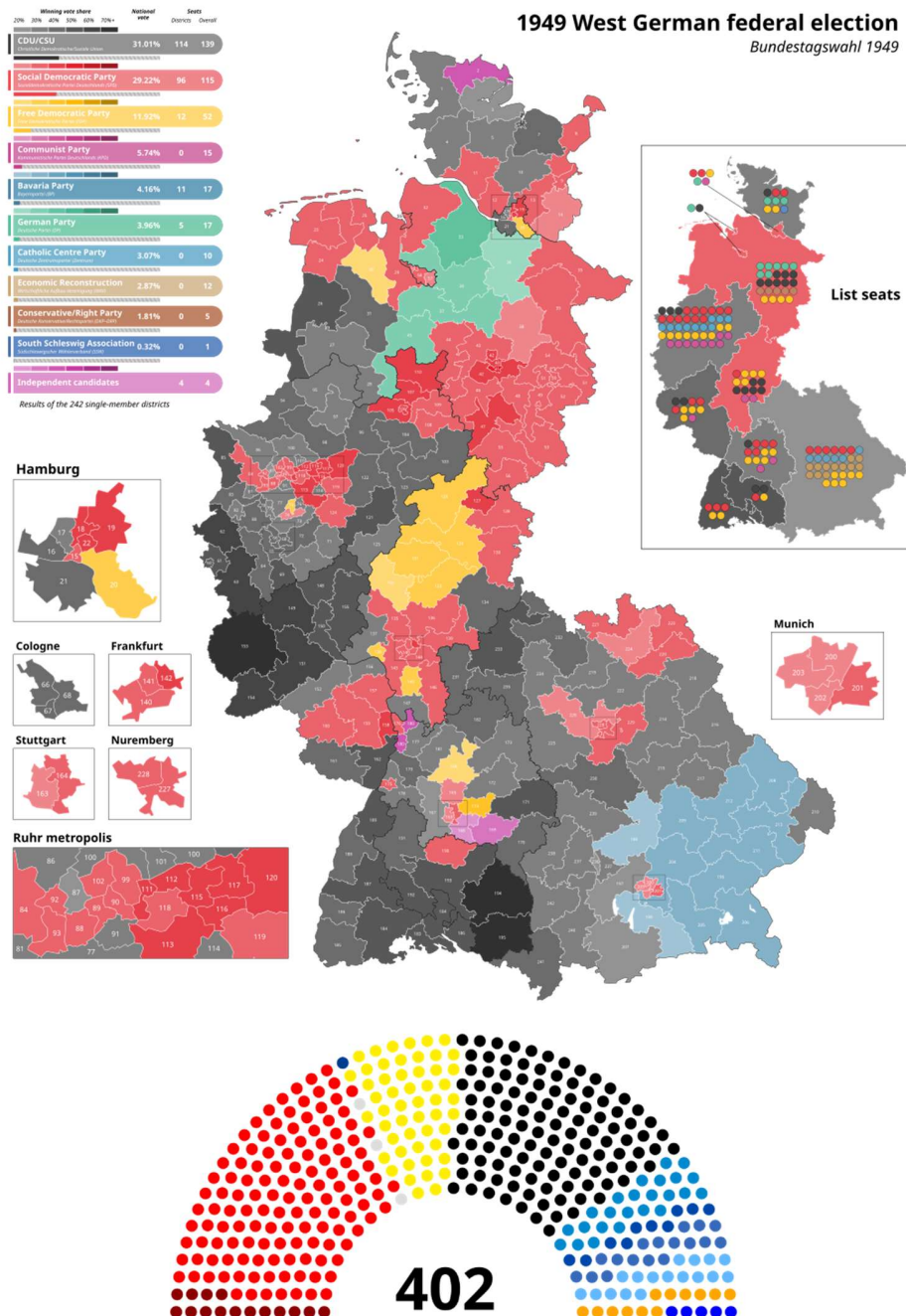


Figure 3: Results of the August 1949 West German Federal elections. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1949_West_German_federal_election.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

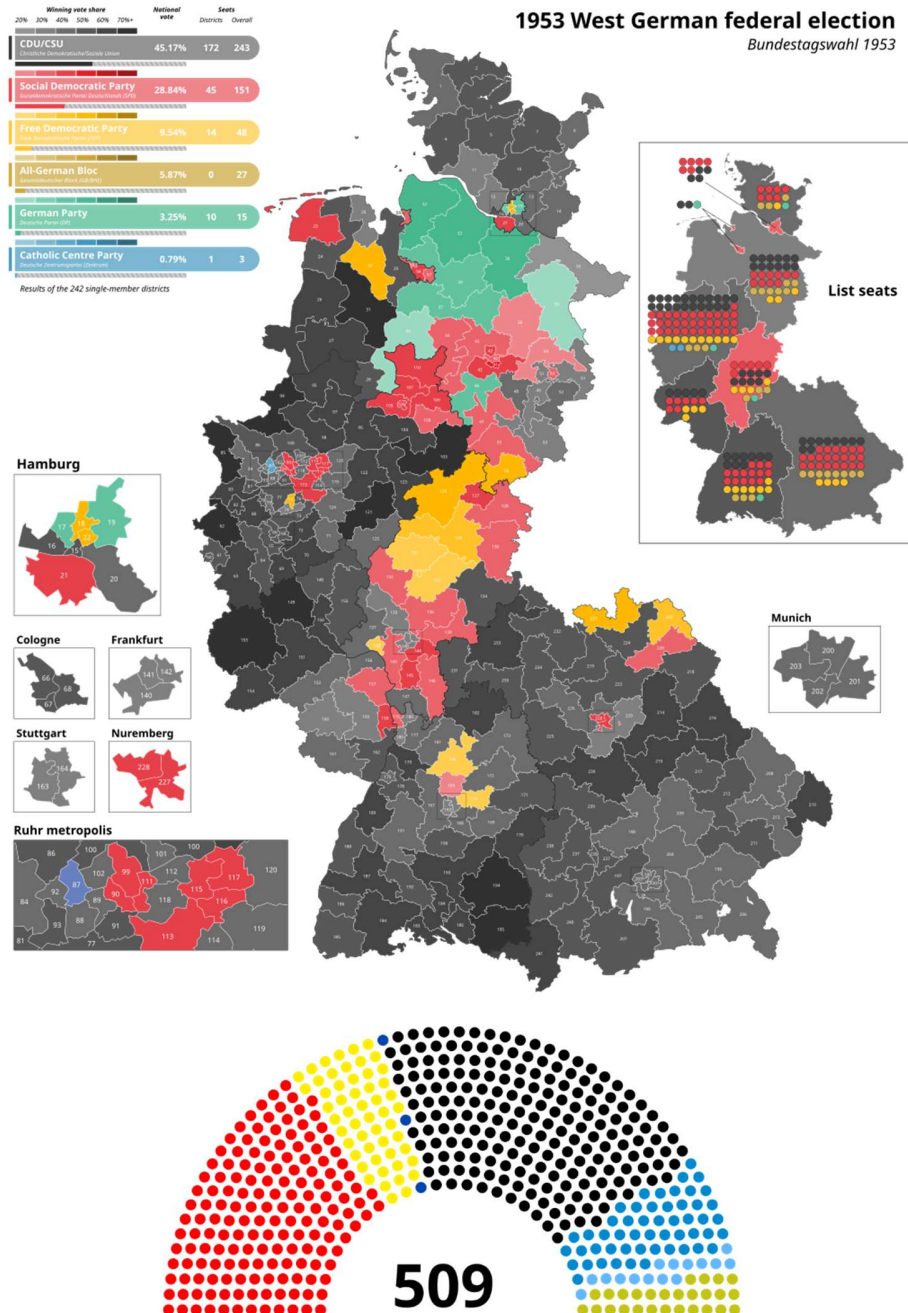


Figure 4: Results of the September 1953 West German Bundestag elections. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1949_West_German_federal_election.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

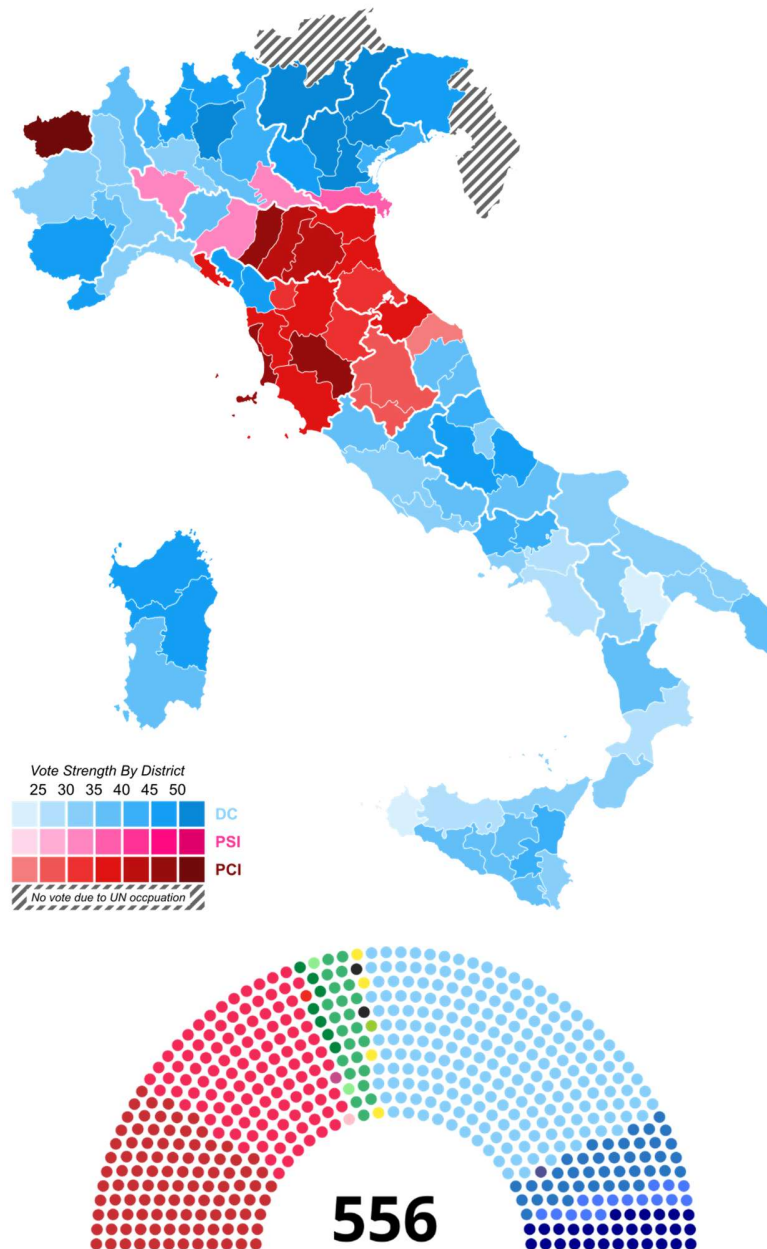


Figure 5: Results of the June 1946 Italian Constituent Assembly elections. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1946_Italian_general_election_-_Results.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

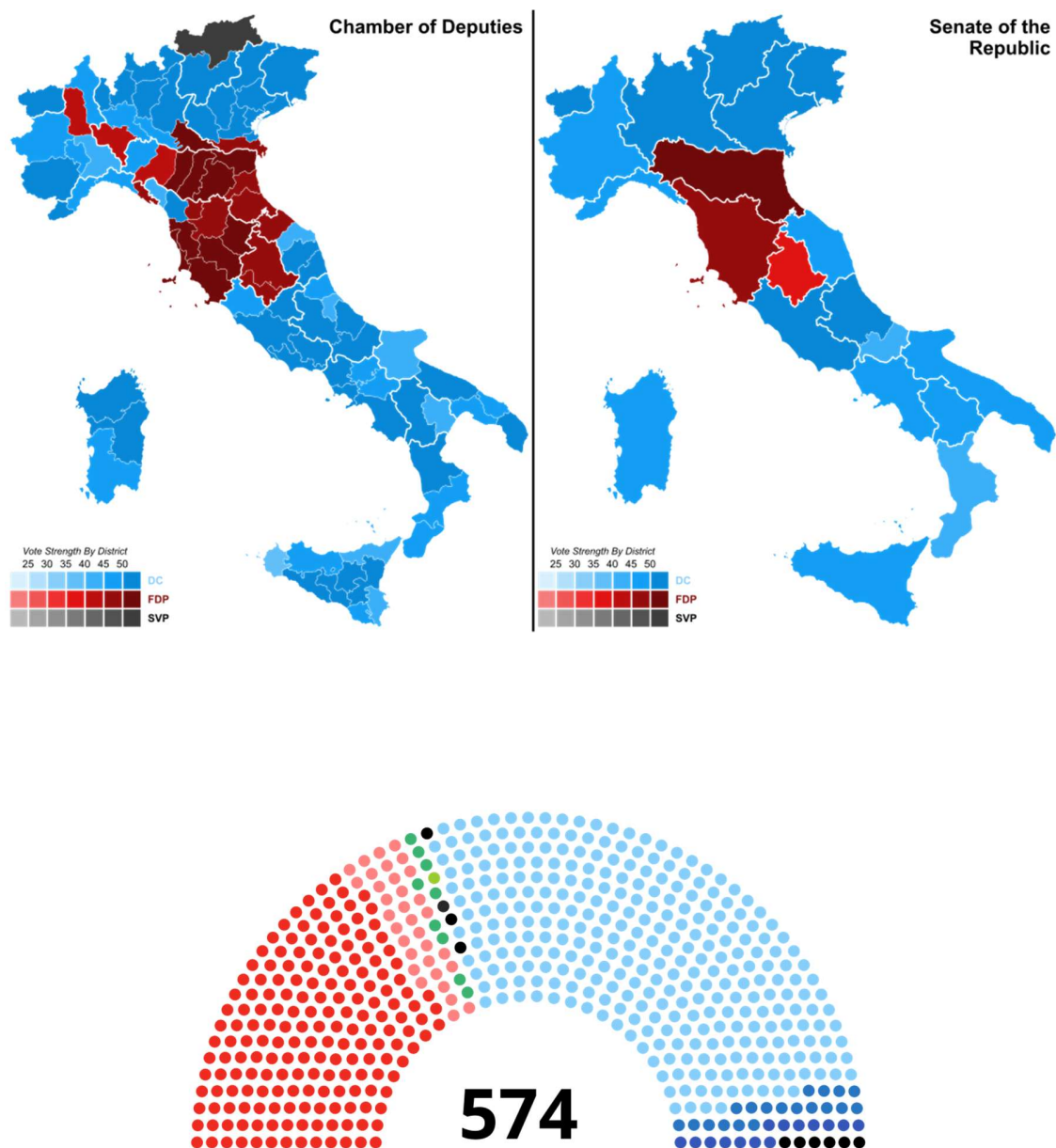


Figure 6: Results of the April 1948 Italian general elections. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1948_Italian_general_election_-_Results.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

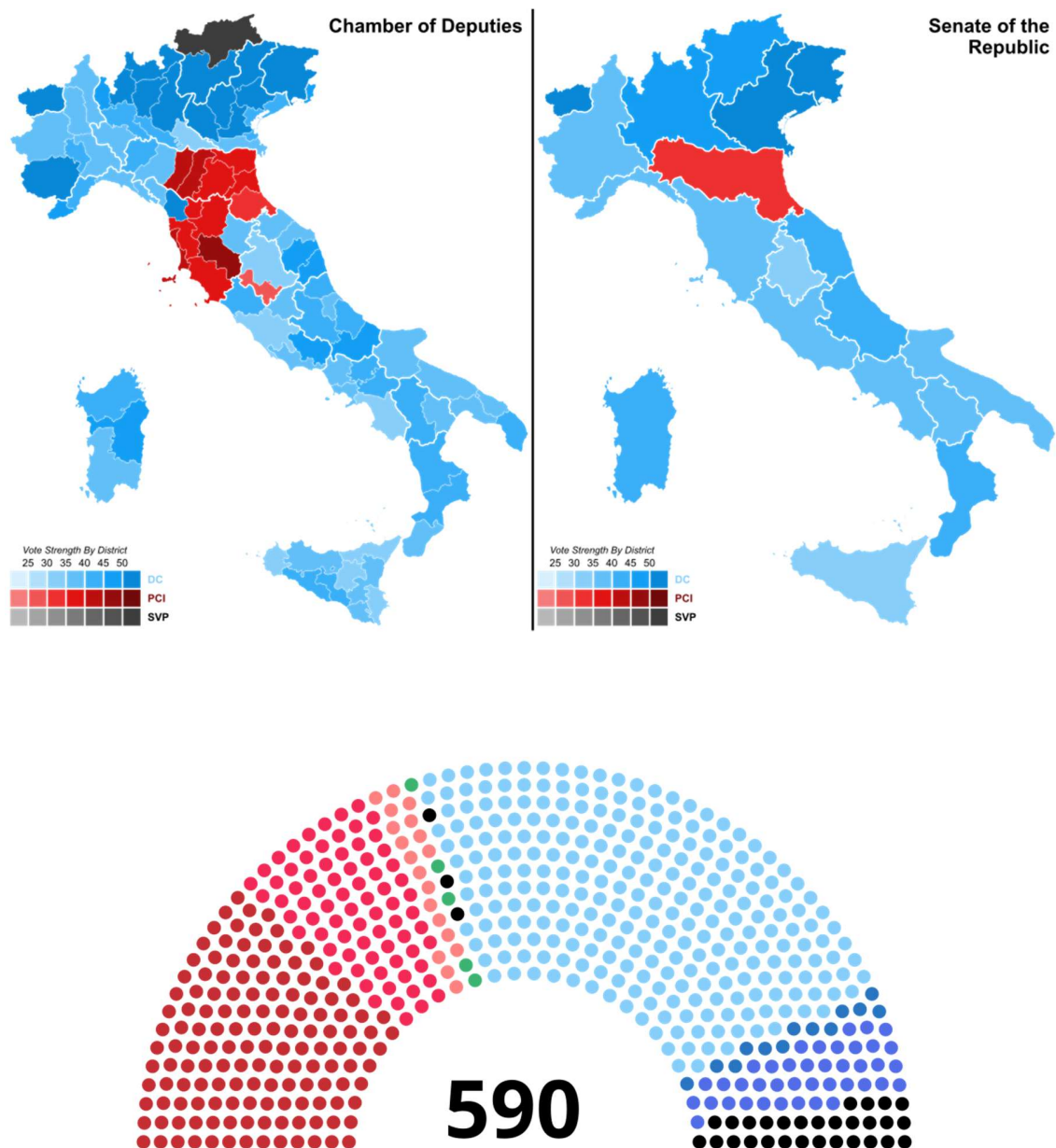


Figure 7: Results of the June 1953 Italian general elections. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1953_Italian_general_election_-_Results.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

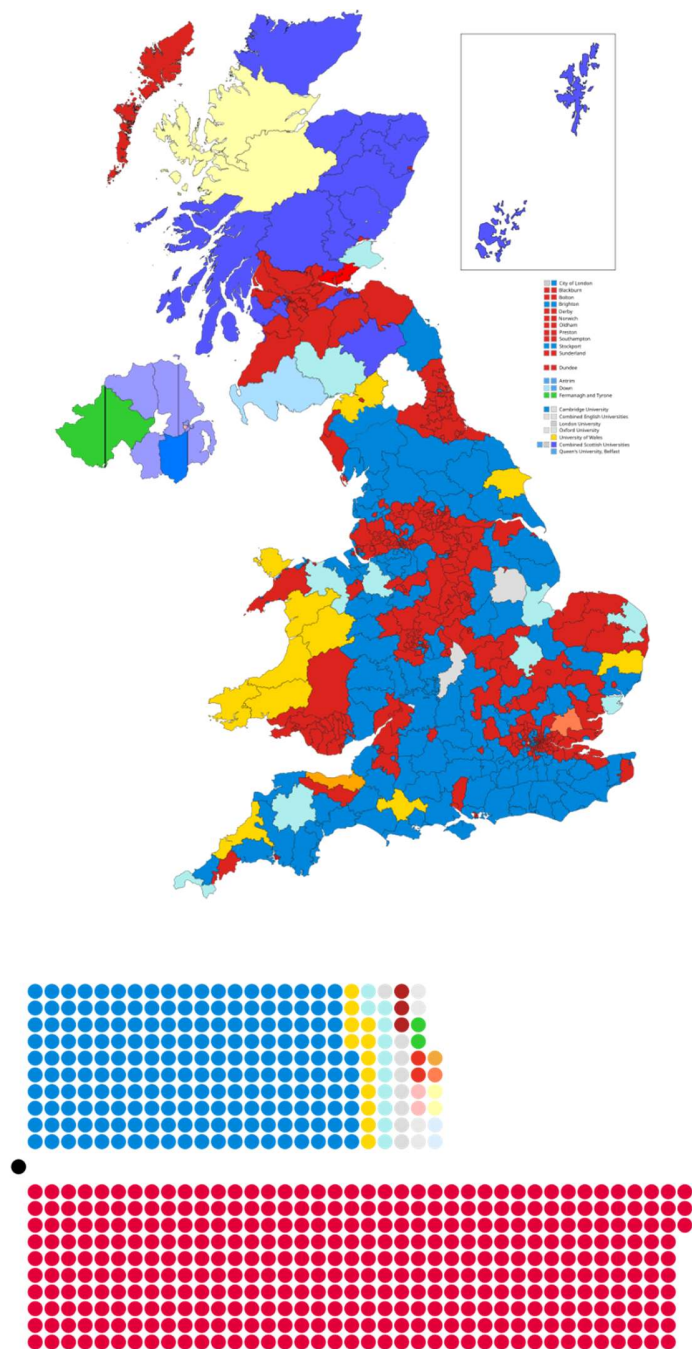


Figure 8: Results of the July 1945 British general elections. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1945_UK_general_election_map.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

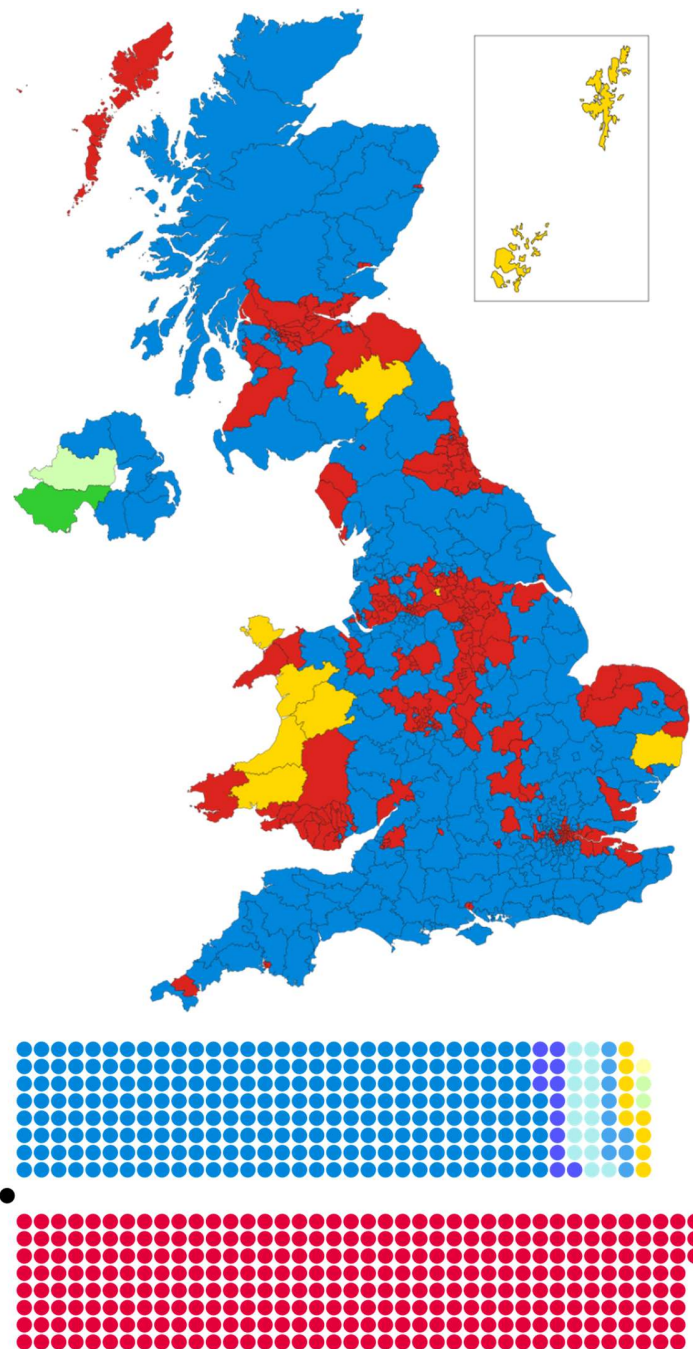


Figure 9: Results of the February 1950 British general elections. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:UK_General_Election,_1950.svg (accessed June 18, 2025).

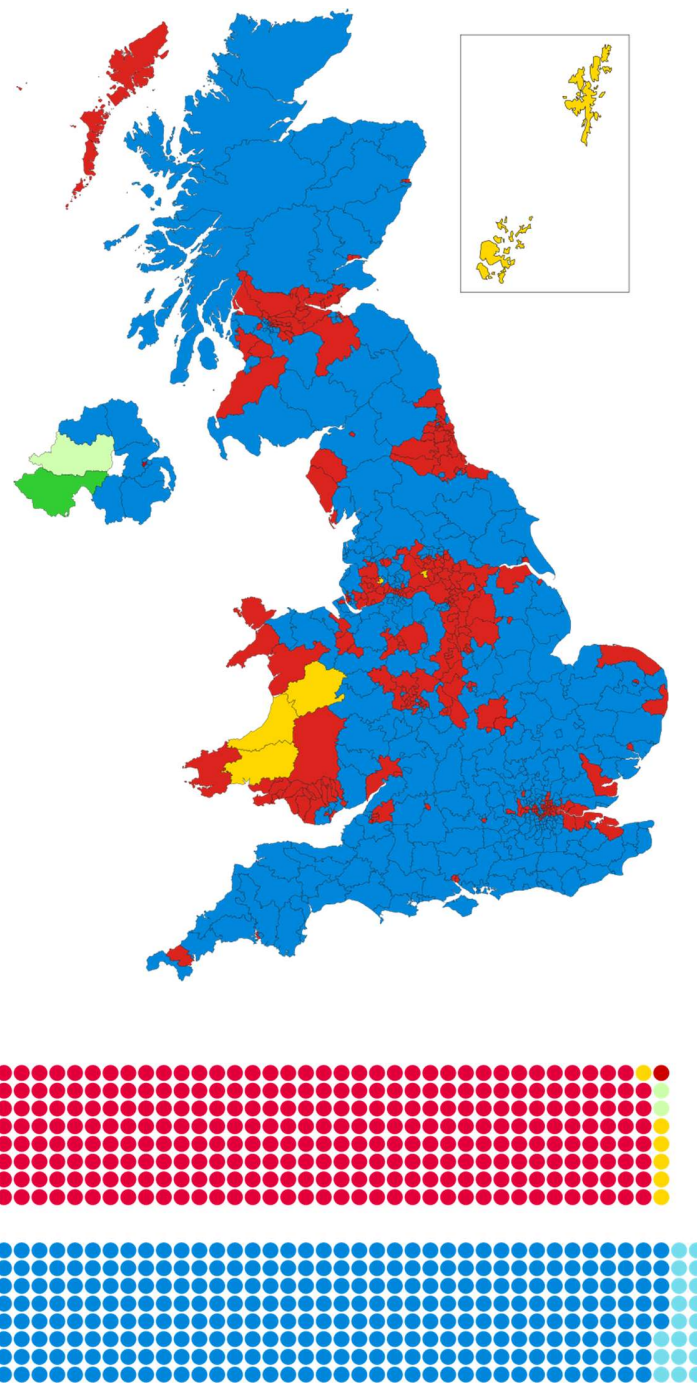


Figure 10: Results of the October 1951 British general elections. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:UK_General_Election,_1951.svg (accessed June 18, 2025)

c. Pledge of Honesty

Master's Thesis

*On my honor as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit
this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received
unauthorised assistance on it.*

Author: Sergio Uribe Henao

June 6, 2025