

Well, the first -- these are the only ones I have been able to think of, but there may be others -- is to keep Germany disarmed and neutralized as at present. This might seem to many people an appealing course, and would indeed be so in a world where all arms were limited and controlled. But it is impossible under present circumstances. It was impossible in the twenties. How then could it be done now, with the victors of the last war divided and bitterly hostile and in the face of the control of a rearmed communist East Germany by an aggressive, mighty Russian imperialist power? Is Russia likely to give up that control for a genuine international system of supervision of a disarmed, neutral and united Germany which, in its turn, assumes a situation in which the east and west would work amicably and altruistically together for a common peaceful purpose?

The question answers itself from the history of the last ten years. Even if it were possible, how long would a dynamic, powerful and proud people like the Germans -- fifty millions in the heart of Europe -- be willing to accept a position of this kind? In short, the neutralization or disarmament of Germany, as I see it, would be difficult under any conditions, impossible under present conditions. It would, in any event, leave a vacuum right in the heart of Europe. A vacuum may be regarded by nature as something to be abhorred, but it is regarded by the communists as something to be filled.

A second alternative would be to do nothing, continuing as long as possible the present occupation arrangements and hoping that something would turn up. As I see it, that would be a futile and negative course. What turned up would probably be a Germany increasing in strength, with a growing national feeling, taking advantage of every opportunity to end or whittle away the occupation and determined to remove restrictions or her sovereignty as she grew stronger. At best such a policy would lead to an increasingly resentful and unfriendly Germany. At worst the result would be reminiscent of the thirties, with extremists in control.

A third alternative which has been suggested would be to give West Germany back her sovereignty unconditionally, but without making any arrangements for associating her with the Atlantic system or the Western European Union, and again hoping for the best. That might be followed by a separate alliance between Germany and one or more of those Western powers which desired it; or the Federal Republic of Germany might remain outside any collective arrangement while we merely hoped, in our turn, that if there were aggression against the west she would line up with us. We would also hope, and I do not know what basis there would be for our hopes, that under such circumstances Germany would not move east or, even more likely, play the east and west against each other to her own advantage.