
Defense Report

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The West Germans Know Their Best Interests — They Understand the Soviet Threat

In recent months a great deal of publicity has been given to antiwar, anti-nuclear and anti-American demonstrations in Europe, tending to create the impression that Western Europe would, in fact, be “. . . better Red than dead.” Hardly any notice has been given to polls taken in West Germany, where, if deterrence fails, the initial battles of World War III might very well take place. Those polls indicate that the average citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany thinks a great deal of his freedom, is prepared to defend it and appreciates the help being given by the United States.

In a poll conducted for the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, 73 percent of the respondents said the long-term goal of the Soviet Union is military superiority over the West, 58 percent said that Moscow misuses the opportunity of *detente*, 54 percent said Moscow is faking its concern about a threat posed by the United States and 55 percent voiced real concern about a military threat from the East. Of those responding to the survey, 82 percent attributed the Soviet Military build up to the intent to expand the communist domain, to attack the West, to exert political pressure or to put down uprisings in the areas where its hegemony has already been achieved.

Great or very great faith in the United States' ability to solve world problems was expressed by 62 percent of the *Der Spiegel* respondents. The Old “Yankee go home” syndrome was denied by 62 percent who said they would regret the withdrawal of U.S. troops. Only 12 percent said they would welcome the withdrawal of American soldiers. The same poll showed an increasing number of Germans see U.S. troops as “welcome protection.”

Still another poll, this one done by the Allensbach Institute in Germany, showed that the number of Germans who like the Americans has risen steadily since 1975. This poll showed that 80 percent of its respondents wanted West Germany to stay in NATO. The larger portion of the Allensbach participants doubted the Soviets have the good will to reach an understanding with the West.

Because of their geographic position astride the obvious attack routes from East to West, the Germans must be totally realistic when they set their best course of action. It seems obvious from this evidence that they will cling to their NATO allies and to the nation which helped Germany arise from the ashes of World War II — the United States.