

MASTER'S THESIS

Alliance en garde: the United States of America and West Germany, 1977-1985

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Alliance En Garde:
The United States of America and West Germany, 1977-1985

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Abstract

The thesis examines the foreign policy of the United States towards West Germany from 1977-1985 as a drive away from the stereotypes of Cold War studies. Although the relationship between the two governments carried the tendency of fluctuating through time, a more minute examination of U.S.-West German relations constantly went unnoticed under the headlines of Soviet-American affairs. Notable in this period was the emergence of a three-fold development: the decline of the United States, growing autonomy in the Federal Republic of Germany and third, the concurrent rise of the Capitol Hill. Aimed at cracking the changing U.S. perceptions of Bonn and the Germans, the tug-of-war between Congress and the Oval Office serves as a key component in this study, delineating the fine line that decided the state of Washington-Bonn relations. Furthermore, this thesis is basically fragmented by the presidencies of two American leaders- Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, both of whom carried highly varying intelligence towards Congressional power and subsequently, the FRG and vice versa.

Approaching the problem from the American point of view, this paper sheds light on the ambiguities of the American Constitution, sketching for once and for all, the struggle between the legislative and executive branches as an extension that impacts relations between the United States and foreign governments. In addition, the canvas of U.S. foreign policy-making allows more insights on changing American perceptions of the Federal Republic, transitional as presidential determination is in face of pressure from both domestic and outside forces. This research conceals the road to how U.S.-West German relations evolved from mutual reservations halfway through the Cold War to its present state of friendship and equivalence.

Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
List of Abbreviations	iv
Table of Contents	v
Introduction: Clash of the Titans: U.S.-West German Relations and the Intervention of Capitol Hill, 1977-1985	1
Overview: Going Against Paradox and Cold War Convention	1
Literature Review and the Traditional Emphasis on U.S.-German Friendship	4
Literature Review in American Foreign Policy Making.....	7
A New Arena in U.S.-West German Relations	9
Chapter One: Chef d'œuvre in the Latter Cold War: A Changing World in Politics and the Transition in U.S.-West German Relations	14
The Quick Ride: Washington-Bonn in Axis and the Rocky Road.....	14
American Foreign Policy: Decision Makers in the Global Arena	19
I. The President	19
II. Party Politics	22
III. Congress.....	25
IV. Other Actors	31
Überflieger: Starting a Country From Debris	33
Chapter Two: <i>En Rapport?</i> The Carter Factor in the Development of U.S.-West German Relations	42
Jimmy Carter and the Strategies of a “Peanut Farmer”	42
Congress.....	45
I. Personal Goals and Public Perception	45
II. The Failure of Party Treatment	49
Carter’s Vision on Foreign Policy.....	52

Chapter Three: <i>Fait Accompli</i>: Carter’s Susceptibility and The Blunder of the 1980 Olympic Boycott	58
The Dismantling of the Transatlantic Alliance	58
The Moscow Olympic Boycott: Congress Success	61
The Carter Administration and the Blame of Inconsistency	66
Confrontation between Bonn and Washington	71
Chapter Four: Scandal <i>Du Jour</i>: The ERW’s Bombardon of U.S.-West-German Relations and Jimmy Carter’s Unfortunate Slip.....	77
The Deepening of a Crisis & the “Cookie Cutter” Problem.....	77
Congressional Climb: The Long Fight in Capitol Hill	81
The Neutron Bomb Fiasco, Washington and Bonn in a Lose-Lose Situation	89
1978: The Year of U.S.-West German Havoc	97
Chapter Five: <i>Tête-à-tête</i>: Ronald Reagan in the Improvement of U.S.-West German Relations	104
Star Wars and the Evil Empire under the Reagan Administration	104
Congress.....	107
I. The Reagan Vision and Congressional Setback.....	107
II. The Republican Party in Favor of the Administration	111
Ronald Reagan’s Foreign Policy Views.....	114
Chapter Six: The Construction and Collapse of <i>Cheval-de-frise</i>: Compromise amidst Rupture in the Siberian Pipeline.....	123
The Reagan Administration: Turning Point for U.S.-West German Relations	123
The Détente Argument and Divergence in East-West Policies.....	125
Congress Diplomacy: Reagan Fights Local Influence for Consistency	133
Change in U.S. Priorities and a Boost of West German Confidence	140
The Perishable Status Quo and the Evolution in 1982	147
Chapter Seven: Ronald Reagan’s <i>Carte Blanche</i> to Bonn: The Promise to Bitburg and the Uproar of Congress.....	152
The Bitburg Controversy & the Balancing Act of U.S.-West German Relations.....	152
The Height of Congress Failure: The Soundness of U.S. Foreign Policy	156
The President’s Word and the Confirmation of West German Equivalency.....	161
Eight Minutes at Bitburg: An Attempt to Reconciliation.....	167
Consistency and Cooperation	170

Chapter Eight: The <i>Nouveau Riche</i> in the Transatlantic World:	
U.S.-West German Relations under a Politically Multipolar and	
Military Bipolar Era	175
The Fall of the Cold War System and the Emergence of Confrontation	175
West Germany under Carter’s Tardy Conception and Reagan’s Implementation	179
The Paradox in the “New” World Order	186
The Less Complicated Heydays of a Quieter Power Alignment	192
The Miserable Past and the Imminent Future	195
Conclusion	199
Selected Bibliography	207
Curriculum Vitae	230