

'Peace and security' from the Süddeutsche Zeitung (3 May 1946)

Caption: The German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung comments on the debates taking place at the Paris Conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Allied countries on the fate of defeated Germany.

Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung. Münchner Neueste Nachrichten aus Politik, Kultur, Wirtschaft und Sport. Hrsg. Friedmann, Werner; Goldschagg, Edmund; Schöningh, Dr. Franz Joseph; Schwingenstein, August. 03.05.1946, Nr. 36; 2. Jg. München: Süddeutscher Verlag. "Friede und Sicherheit", auteur:Brück, Max von , p. 1; 2.

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Peace and security

The draft of a four-power pact for the demilitarisation of Germany tabled by the US Secretary of State, James Byrnes, at the Paris Conference of Foreign Ministers has caused worldwide sensation and not least proved a great surprise for Germany. Nobody expected that the German question, and indeed a key aspect of it, would be tackled so soon, as the four Great Powers are currently battling with the problems posed by the Italian Peace Treaty. According to leading statesmen of the Big Four, the problem of Germany is always in the foreground, even when it is not referred to directly. Because Germany is, to quote France's Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault, the key to world peace and security. It is therefore in the world's interest to create conditions which ensure that Germany will never again be able to disrupt this peace and security. And it is precisely these objectives that the four-power pact proposed by Mr Byrnes seeks to serve.

Politically and in terms of international law, the pact is an independent instrument alongside the future peace treaty. It consists of an introduction (preamble) and five articles. It is this pact and not the peace treaty with Germany itself which the USA is now tabling for discussion. The situation continues to be that negotiations concerning the actual peace treaty will be held at a date not yet specified, once the treaties with Italy, Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria are safely wrapped up. The pact, which guarantees Germany's demilitarisation, will, however, be a major component of the future arrangements for maintaining the peace. Never again shall it be possible for the peace to be broken by Germany's open or clandestine rearmament. If the solidarity pact is ratified by the four Great Powers, it will provide materially for such an outcome in the form of permanent military readiness. This means that the pact will to some extent set the course for the future peace treaty; it is in this sense its forerunner.

It has to be assumed that this pact will receive the approval of Great Britain, Russia and France. Although US diplomacy surprised the rest of the world with its proposal, it came as no surprise to the other three Great Powers. The political ground has been meticulously prepared for months. There have been consultations with Moscow, London and Paris.

As for we Germans, whose future — right down to the detail of how we go about our daily lives — will be decisively determined by this pact and the subsequent peace agreement, its ratification will probably set serious, tough and probably even horrendously severe conditions. Nevertheless all that is left to us is to *hope* that the pact is adopted by the Powers. Only then will we have taken the first step towards settling Germany's future and dispelled the lingering uncertainty which currently makes it impossible to plan this country's future. What Germany needs is to know where it is going. This it is now to be told. Germany will have to tread that path: without illusions but with all its energy, in a spirit of trust and goodwill. Only in this way will it be possible to slowly dispel the world's loathing and mistrust, brought upon Germany by the Nazis' insane and criminal policies.

Let us recall, Eisenhower said that Germany would be treated 'fairly, but without mercy'. Can a right-thinking German now expect the Allied Powers to forgive everything that was perpetrated in Germany's name and commit the same errors, yes errors, that were committed with the Treaty of Versailles? No. The world wants to protect itself and ensure that it is finally safe from any further German onslaughts. Millions of dead demand that this be so, raising their hands accusingly from the shadow kingdom.

The Versailles Treaty left Germany with an army of a hundred thousand men and declined total military control. We all know what happened next. While we can be certain that German democracy will always choose the path of peace, nothing could be more natural and indeed more just than for the Allied Powers to wish to eliminate once and for all the possibility of Germany one day straying from that path. This is why Germany will be demilitarised for all time, something that was in any case always to be expected. It will retain a police force to maintain internal order and security, but any possibility of rearmament or of re-establishing armed forces will be eliminated forever.

The pact provides for a step-by-step process. It will be served by the *Allied Control Council* currently in office in Berlin and later by a *Control Commission*, which will come into being once the Control Council has completed its tasks. The Control Council is in charge of maintaining the peace for the undefined period

of the total military occupation of Germany. Once the occupation is over, this task will be taken over by the Control Commission, which will be required to keep the four treaty signatories informed at all times of developments in Germany by means of 'reports' and 'recommendations'. If Germany violates or even attempts to overstep the provisions, the four Great Powers will take military action and report to the World Security Council. Such military action is not, however, subject to an application to the Security Council. The pact allows the Powers, following mutual agreement, to act immediately and on their own initiative. This provision is in line with the realistic spirit of the pact, which is designed to prevent delays arising and stifle at birth any intended violation of the peace. The pact has an initial term of 25 years and can then be extended at any time. It is intended as a permanent instrument for maintaining the peace and comprises permanent military readiness on the part of the victorious powers. The future may prove, however, that it will never be necessary to invoke it because a Germany built on dignity and freedom is itself the best guarantee of peace.

Max v. Brück