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Chancellor Ludwig Erhard told a small group [REDACTED] that he does not anticipate that the agenda for his forthcoming visit to Washington will "provide enough time" for a discussion of German involvement in a possible future MLF. In any event, said the Chancellor, the West Germans would be willing to discuss such a force only if the concept were completely different from any that has thus far been advanced. In the meantime, Bonn will press its case for a fight to defend German soil against atomic attacks by an appeal to "international public opinion."

When a further discussion of West German involvement in the Western defense strategy centered upon the matter of offset payments, Erhard evinced a degree of firmness bordering on the belligerent. He conceded that it behooves the Germans to appreciate the balance of payments problems with which the U. S. is confronted. Nonetheless, he said, U. S. Defense Secretary McNamara's "demands" in the area of offset payments are "completely arbitrary" and must be categorically rejected. Asked whether he would display this attitude during his forthcoming visit to Washington, the Chancellor replied emphatically -- "You can bet on that."

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