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Gen. Gehlen's careful shift to the Allies

THE SERVICE: The Memoirs of General Reinhard Gehlen. Translated by David Irving. World, \$10.

By K. S. Giniger

A week or two before the European phase of World War II came to its formal close, I was at an airbase in Eschwege, Germany, as an intelligence officer. Watching for a special reconnaissance mission to return to base, I was surprised to see a German Junkers transport flying in low from the east, wheels down for a landing. Our antiaircraft batteries were surprised, too, or asleep, because none fired at the enemy aircraft.

The plane was permitted to land, unharmed, but armed soldiers surrounded the occupants as they disembarked from the craft and took them into custody. We learned on interrogation that they were high-ranking German officers from the Russian front and had come to volunteer their services to us in what they were convinced would be our approaching war with the Russians.

Just about that same time, General Reinhard Gehlen, who had been in charge of German intelligence in the east, was busy transporting two truckloads of his files and his staff to a hideout on the Austrian border about 300 miles to the south. His idea was exactly the same. And his extensive files on the Soviets gave him a bit more bargaining power than his fellow officers to the north.

HIS MEMOIRS tell the story of how he parlayed his convictions about the inevitability of Allied-Soviet conflict and his small staff and collection of file cabinets into an intelligence empire which first operated as a European branch of the CIA and then became the official foreign intelligence service of the new Federal Republic of Germany. And, although 27 years have passed since that armed conflict with the Soviets was a matter of days, he has not changed his opinion about "the ultimate clash with the United States of America." But now, he writes, it won't come until 1980, after

the Russians have eliminated China as a world power.

General Gehlen's book is a work of self-justification rather than the spy thriller the advance notices promised (will the real Martin Bormann please stand up?). But they are worth reading as a lesson in the very real problems of intelligence chiefs.

Allen Dulles once said to me that the publication of the Gehlen memoirs would compromise security, but there is nothing in this book that compromises anything except its author. And one of Dulles' British counterparts, Major General Sir Kenneth Strong, told me at the same time that such a publication would do no harm because most of what Gehlen could tell us was known already.

BUT THESE MEMOIRS do reveal the uncompromising nature of its author's anti-Communist convictions.

In the same exchanges of correspondence and views, Gehlen himself said that he could not publish because what he would say could only expose him and his family to real danger of vengeance, apparently his dislike for the "Ostpolitik" of the present German government of Willy Brandt has prompted him to take this risk, if risk it is.

In his introduction, George Bailey calls the General "a specialist in the salvaging and safeguarding of institutions." He certainly salvaged and safeguarded the one institution he created. It is unfortunate that (so much of) Gehlen's own book, unlike the others on the same subject, is devoted less to that institution, the Gehlen "Org.," than to the currently unfashionable ideas behind its creation.

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