

Felix von Eckardt

19 December 1956

MEMO (Influence of Felix von Eckardt's Views on Foreign Affairs.)
(CONFIDENTIAL)

1. Since his reappointment as Press Chief, Felix von Eckardt has emerged as one of the strongest influences on Chancellor Adenauer. Not only does he supply the Chancellor with the bulk of his daily information, both domestic and foreign, but he also interprets the news for him and adds analyses of his own concerning official Foreign Office reports. In so doing, he pursues his own line which he has espoused since his return from the United States. Partly for personal reasons (Mrs. von Eckardt was very unhappy in New York because she felt socially snubbed by international society there and urged him repeatedly to return to Bonn, even threatening that she would leave him if he did not accede to her demand), and partly from impressions and convictions he acquired during his association with UN delegates, his foreign policy views have changed considerably as compared to those he held prior to his UN assignment in the U. S. Whereas formerly he fully backed a policy of closest Federal Republic alliance with the U. S. to even to the point of ceasing German domestic and foreign policy to coincide with what was thought to be U. S. objectives, he has now apparently come to the conclusion that the Federal Republic will have to develop its own independent policy and cut loose from the U. S. He feels that U. S. policy is becoming more and more anti-European in the sense that it conflicts with European interests and that, in view of this threat, an independent European policy is necessary. Formerly, he vigorously rejected neutralism and the "Third Force" concept. He now, however, advocates a "Third Force" policy as the only possible salvation for Europe.

2. All indications are that von Eckardt has been able to influence Chancellor Adenauer with his apprehensions and distrust concerning the U. S. In so doing, he has pushed Hallstein almost completely out of the inner circle. On the other hand, von Eckardt cooperates well with Blankenhorn who also distrusts U. S. policy.

3. The Brussels speech on European integration was a good example of von Eckardt's influence on the Chancellor. Neither the Foreign Office nor the CDU had any inkling that this speech was to be delivered. It was worked out between the Chancellor and von Eckardt and it was the latter who formulated and wrote the major portions of the speech. He afterwards confided to Kiesinger that he hoped the speech would be definitely credited to the "Third Force" concept.

4. The view of his restricted briefings for small groups of German correspondents, von Eckardt warns on the same lines: "You cannot trust the U. S. Any concept they will sell us down the river if they can achieve a super-coexistence with the Soviets. The U. S. intends to arrive at a Pax Atomica with the Soviets". This line is not without effect. Since the return of von Eckardt, there has been a general tendency on the part of the West German press, particularly the pre-government and conservative press, to be less understanding and more suspicious of U. S. intentions. A considerable number of politicians have also been adversely influenced in the same way since they frequently turn to von Eckardt for

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information as well as to learn about Adenauer's views on various matters. At a number of recent CIB caucus meetings, the Chancellor has referred to von Eckardt as having told him this or that. It also appears that the Chancellor confides in von Eckardt on domestic issues such as the recent Cabinet reform.

5. The events in Hungary have momentarily obscured and overshadowed von Eckardt's desire for a "Third Force" and even he admits that for the time being the U. S. will still be needed to maintain the balance of power in Europe. He feels, however, that this will be but a short interlude and that eventually even these events will only serve to prove that the U. S. has already re-oriented its foreign policy away from Europe and toward a status of a world clearly divided between the two super-powers. In fact, he believes that should anything serious happen in Europe the U. S. would stand aside just as it did in the case of Hungary; therefore the Europeans will have to create independent resources for their self-protection and they will have to determine ways and means on how to survive in a divided world.

6. In this connection, von Eckardt believes that the possibility of closer cooperation with some of the uncommitted Asian countries should be explored. Together with these Asian nations, the "Third Force" could become an influential reality and be able to oppose either one of the two giants. Another necessity would, of course, be to break the atomic monopoly of the U. S. which accounts for the haughty and inconsiderate policy of the Americans toward their allies.

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