The establishment of the Bundeswehr between 1950 and 1965 offers a case study in overcoming obstacles of all types. There were external obstacles in the form of negotiating a new status with the Western powers. There were political obstacles in the form of a large German peace movement that opposed the rearmament of Germany. There were economic obstacles in the form of raising the funds and developing the industries to produce modern armaments. The various obstacles to rearmament meant that a process that was supposed to be mostly complete in three years took a full decade. The German Federal Republic finally got its armed forces—and forces that were very capable. But it only came at the end of a process far more difficult than anyone had anticipated.

What is especially interesting about the creation of the Bundeswehr and the exceptional birthing problems it experienced are not the outside problems that had to be overcome but the internal ones. While many different actors played their role in building or delaying the establishment of the Bundeswehr, the most important players—and sometimes the greatest obstacles to the creation of the force—came from inside the Bundeswehr. In many respects, the early years of the Bundeswehr provide excellent material for a study on institutional dynamics and organizational leadership. This chapter will focus on the leadership of the Bundeswehr in its first years, 1950 to 1956—from the time that the German Federal Republic possessed only a shadow defense staff and defense minister to the creation of the Bundeswehr and its first official defense ministry.

*The Beginning of Rearmament—Allied Thinking*

With the Berlin Crisis of 1948–49 and the founding of NATO and establishment of the Bundesrepublik in 1949, German rearmament became a critical issue for the Western alliance. It would be impossible
to meet NATO defense goals without a major German rearmament program. The first chancellor of the German Federal Republic, Konrad Adenauer, started thinking about Germany's defense relationships when he assumed office in 1949. With the establishment of NATO and the German Federal Republic in 1949, the lines of the Cold War were being drawn ever more clearly. However, a central aspect of Adenauer's policy and personality dominated the whole of the early discussion on German rearmament. As the first chancellor of the Federal Republic, Adenauer was primarily concerned with Germany regaining its position in the world as a major European power, regaining full sovereignty over its own affairs, and taking its place as a respected member of the Western nations. Rearmament and full German participation in the defense of western Europe were essential parts of Germany regaining its position in the world, and this is how Adenauer approached the problem.\footnote{For Adenauer's views on German rearmament, see Konrad Adenauer, \textit{Memoirs 1945--53} (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965), 286--87, 296--300, 310--15, 344--45.}

One must remember the salient fact that Adenauer was very much a civilian politician all his life, and he was one of the few Germans of his generation with little direct contact with the military in his formative years.\footnote{Normally someone of Adenauer's background—Abitur holder and law student in the university—in Wilhelmine Germany of the late 19th century would have done one year of volunteer service as a kind of officer cadet and, upon completion of his "volunteer" training year, would have been given a commission as a reserve officer. However, when Konrad Adenauer was 19, the year in which he would have done his year of military service, the military doctors determined that he had "weak lungs" and deferred him from military service. Thus, without the year of service done by most of his class and generation, Adenauer proceeded directly to the university, where he took a degree in law and progressed to as a member of the Prussian civil service.} Although, by any standard, one can call Adenauer a brilliant man with a great breadth and depth of knowledge of politics, literature, art, and culture—his knowledge did not extend to military matters. Indeed, his understanding of military organization, tactics, and equipment was quite shallow. Adenauer had few opinions on how new German armed forces might be equipped or organized, or how a future war might be fought. His only concern was that Germany would have armed forces and that they be significant enough to establish Germany in its rightful place as a major Western power. Adenauer's lack of a military background was sometimes beneficial to the process, sometimes not. He showed little interest in such details of rearmament as the size of the military and its armament and organization, and he