REARMING GERMANY:
AN ESSAY ON BOOKS AND SOURCES

As this book is meant to be more of an introduction to the subject of German rearmament than a comprehensive history, it is appropriate for the editors to provide a brief essay on the best primary and secondary sources available to help any students who wish to pursue facets of this subject in detail.

As a general starting point on the subject of West German rearmament, the editors recommend the work of the Military History Research Institute of the Bundeswehr (Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt; hereafter MGFA). Between 1982 and 1997 the Military History Research Institute published a superb four-volume history of the early years of the Bundeswehr that was written by a group of exceptional historians that includes Roland Foerster, Christian Greiner, and Georg Meyer as well as several of the authors in this volume. For students seeking original documents concerning German rearmament, a useful collection of documents is found in Karl Bauer, ed., Deutsche Verteidigungspolitik 1948–1967: Dokumente und Kommentare (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt, 1968). This collection of documents is especially helpful in its coverage of the debates on rearmament in the Bundestag in the early 1950s.

In Germany the main repository of original documents concerning the Bundeswehr is the Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv in Freiburg am Breisgau. One of the best sources of documents concerning Adenauer and his government is the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Sankt Augustin near Bonn. The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung has a large library and archive of original documents that includes cabinet reports and correspondence of Adenauer and other figures who are central to the study of German rearmament. Some of the papers of Theodor Blank are also located in Sankt Augustin. Both of the archives are exceptionally user friendly for the researcher and have excellent websites and search aids.

There is an extensive body of American documents that deals with the rearmament of Germany. The major places to look are in the Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri, and the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas. These two very
important Cold-War-era libraries and archives are located less than three hours drive from each other. It should be noted that the American presidential libraries contain not only the presidential papers but also the papers of many key figures associated with the administration or era. For example, 90 boxes of documents of General Lauris Norstad, NATO commander from 1956–63, are located in the Eisenhower Library and constitute an excellent source of documents about American assistance to the West German rearmament effort.

The Beginning of Rearmament


It is important to begin a study of Amt Blank and the development of the Federal Defense Ministry with some personal perspectives. Konrad Adenauer provides some insights into his concept of allying Germany with the Western Powers in his *Memoirs 1945–53* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965). However, an even better personal memoir that deals with the early thinking about West German security policy comes from General Hans Speidel, one of the Bundeswehr’s top soldiers. See Hans Speidel, *Aus Unsere Zeit: Errinerungen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Propyläen, 1977).

David Clay Large in *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) does a good job in covering the major strategic and political issues surrounding German rearmament. Another very useful recent