

## **ABSTRACT**

The dissertation deals with relations of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States in the era of Chancellor Ludwig Erhard. At that time, Erhard's partner on the American side was President Lyndon Baines Johnson. Therefore, the subject of my research were the ups and downs through which the relationship between Bonn and Washington went from 1963 to 1966. Both countries were bonded within the Western bloc with solid friendship, but in the given period they ran into a few points of friction that hindered their cooperation. The first issue that was causing tension were the Multilateral Forces (MLF). Although both countries were among the biggest supporters of the MLF, Johnson understood earlier than Chancellor Erhard that this project represented a blind alley. On the diplomatic contacts between the two countries it was evident that the Germans were heading to a certain isolation because of their pressure to implement the MLF.

During 1965, Johnson and his administration chose to prefer the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to the MLF, but for the Germans it was more difficult to absorb this change of priorities. Another point of conflict was the question of the U.S. forces stationed in the Federal Republic, which meant heavy economical burden for Washington. Johnson, therefore, particularly in 1966 - also because of the increasing costs of the war in Vietnam - was pushing to reduce U.S. commitments. In the long-term, Bonn compensated the Americans troops stationed in the Federal Republic. In 1966, however, Erhard, compared to the previous period of economic boom, got into trouble, and so wished that the offset agreement would be better for Germany. In this case, the ideas of Johnson and Erhard clashed in September 1966, when the Chancellor visited the US again. After the meeting, Erhard found himself at home on the defensive. His long-term poor position on the political scene was also caused by the fact that compared to his predecessor Konrad Adenauer, he seemed not to be such a strong politician. The last straw which contributed to the fall of Erhard was the proposal to increase taxes, which his coalition partner - the liberal FDP - refused. Erhard eventually had to resign.

In addition to these two basic problems, the period from 1963 to 1966 also understandably reflected domestic policy in the US and in the Federal Republic. The dissertation, therefore, describes the electoral contest which Erhard and Johnson had to go through. In the Federal Republic, also the relations with Washington were influenced by the split in the governmental bloc CDU/CSU. There were two wings – Gaullist and Atlantic. The first group favoured cooperation with France, the second group was closer to the U.S. Among the Gaullist politicians was Adenauer, while Erhard was more critical to Paris.

At the end of the Erhard's period, it was clear, however, that the division between the Atlantic and the Gaullist wing does not make sense anymore. The new government was formed as a grand coalition of CDU/CSU and SPD. The new foreign minister was then Willy Brandt - the creator of what later became known as the new eastern policy.