

## **Decision making moments**

*These need copying (1 for each student/group of students taking on a character) and cutting up so that they can be given to each character one at a time. There is also a worksheet for students to record their decisions. Give each character one decision at a time. They answer the question at the end and then progress to the next decision. There is a PPT of context to each decision that needs to be shown to students as each decision is being made.*

### **Decision 1: September 1950**

The Korean War is underway. NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) agrees to move Western Europe's defence line further East to somewhere between the rivers Rhine and Elbe. This will be known as 'forward-defence'. The US will not provide all the troops for this and the USA wants to make sure that European countries contribute to their own defence. The US Government suggests that West Germany should be allowed to rearm in order to contribute to NATO. The USA sees the size of West Germany's population, its industrial potential and geographical position as crucial to Europe's security.

- *What position will you take on this US proposal to allow Germany to rearm and enter NATO?*

### **Decision 2: October 1950**

The French government fears that the USA will ignore their concerns and allow West Germany to rearm anyway as part of NATO, and so the French Prime Minister Pleven suggests that a European Defence Community should be established, with its own Assembly, Council of Ministers, Court of Justice and Defence Force. These plans would be an example of supranational cooperation; that is an organisation above each of the nation states, which take power over them in a particular area. Pleven's plan wants to integrate West Germany into this new European structure, where decisions will have to be taken by majority voting.

- *What position will you take on these proposals to set up a European Defence Community?*

### **Decision 3: May 1952**

After 2 years of complex negotiations, the European Defence Treaty is signed by the representatives of the governments of France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1952. The Treaty involves giving up some sovereign power on military issues and the US and UK will not do this. As part of the agreement Germany will supply most of the troops and therefore will be regarded as an equal partner. However, Germany will only have an army as part of the EDC and its weapons production is restricted. The Treaty now has to be ratified by all the legislative assemblies of the signatory countries. Without this happening, the Treaty cannot come into effect. As part of the negotiations, the US and Britain have agreed that when the Treaty is fully ratified the US and Britain will cooperate fully with the new European Defence Force and the military occupation of West Germany will come to an end.

- *What decision do you think that your legislative assembly will make about the ratification of the Treaty?*

#### **Decision 4: December 1953**

It is now December 1953 and the French National Assembly has still not ratified the Treaty, even though the so-called 'Pleven Plan' was the idea of the French Prime Minister. The delay has allowed time for much public debate on the Treaty. This has revealed the extent to which the French public are opposed to German rearmament of any sort. Also, the new Prime Minister Mendès-France is leading a weak coalition government and France is facing defeat in Vietnam. This is not a good time to be trying to persuade the National Assembly to hand over some of France's control over defence. Mendès-France feels that he cannot risk the fall of his government by pushing the National Assembly to ratify the Treaty. In frustration, the USA now threatens to review its commitment to European defence if the French National Assembly refuses to ratify.

- *How will you decide to react to the French position and the US threat?*

#### **Decision 5: Autumn 1954**

In a few weeks in the September and October 1954 there are meetings of 9 powers of NATO in London and Paris. The British Foreign Secretary proposes a new solution to try to bridge the division between France and the US. He tries to work with three realities. Firstly, West Germany has to be rearmed to keep the US in Europe. Secondly, the UK will not give up defence sovereignty and therefore France cannot be expected to do so. Thirdly, France still fears German militarism. His plans are:

- Britain is prepared to commit 4 divisions of soldiers to a permanent presence in continental Europe.
  - The Brussels Treaty of 1948 should be extended to make a Western European Union (WEU) with West Germany and Italy as part of it.
  - France should agree that Germany could form an army of no more than half a million men.
  - West Germany should become a member of NATO as a sovereign independent state. (This would effectively mean that peace would be made with West Germany).
  - West Germany should not have a separate military general staff. That is, German troops should only be under NATO command.
  - NATO troops should remain in West Germany. This would guard against any problem of German reassertion of power, but the presence of these troops would be part of agreed, mutual defence against the USSR.
  - Germany should be forbidden from ever having its own nuclear weapons programme.
  - The Benelux countries should agree not to have their own nuclear weapons programmes.
  - West Germany should promise not to use its troops to change its borders or reunify the country.
- *What decision will your character make about Eden's proposals?*