

April 26, 1968
**Current Essential questions in the Soviet Union's Politics
of Ensuring European Security**

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Summary:

A copy of a memorandum entitled "current essential questions in the Soviet Union's Politics of Ensuring European Security" submitted by the GDR Ministry of Foreign Affairs' director of the Soviet Union Department to the directors of the West German and West European Departments for comment. The document outlines Soviet policy and goals towards West Germany and Western Europe in early 1968.

Original Language:

German

Contents:

- English Translation

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Internal notification[1]

From: Director of the Soviet Union Department (Goede)

To: Director of the West Germany Department, comrade Dr. Voss[2]
Director of the West European Department, comrade Dr. Oeser[3]

26 April 1968

The attached material
"Current essential questions in the Soviet Union's politics of ensuring European security"

is determined for submission in the next meeting at the director's level.

We would be thankful if you could give us your opinion in writing – particularly concerning the conclusions mentioned under II – by 2 May.

Goede[4]

Attachments

Current essential questions in the Soviet Union's politics for guaranteeing European security

The Soviet Union, in its struggle to ensure European security, assumes Europe to be the central point in the confrontation between socialism and capitalism. It therefore emphasises the particular relevance of the Warsaw Treaty's common efforts and the GDR's role as the Western outpost of the socialist camp. As a central question, the Soviet Union focuses on the GDR's further international recognition and the isolation of West German imperialism.

I. The Soviet Union's approach to ensuring European security

1. The Soviet Union's approach to ensuring European security takes into account [the fact/realisation] that the unity and solidarity among the community of socialist states are crucial necessities for maintaining peace and security.

Given the policy of "bridge building" as a part of US global strategy towards the European socialist states, and in view of West German Ostpolitik, the Soviet Union undertakes great efforts to maintain the principles of socialist internationalism, as a basic principle, and to maintain the unity between internationalism and national affairs in the field of political, economic and military relations between the states of the Warsaw Treaty. [. . .]

2. Within the struggle to ensure European security, the focus of Soviet policy is on guaranteeing the territorial status quo, aiming at preventing West German plans for a revision of the results of the Second World War. [. . .]

The Soviet Union's definite position towards the "*Neue Ostpolitik*" (declaration of 8 December 1967) is designed both to its immediate unmasking and rejection as well as to strengthening the socialist states' united front, according to our jointly taken resolutions.

Based on the assumption that imperialism "is pursuing ever more intense efforts directed at political and ideological undermining of the socialist states, against the communist and general democratic movement" (resolution of the CPSU's Central Committee of 10 April 1968), the Soviet Union is also intensifying the theoretical confrontation against Ostpolitik as one part of imperialism's ideological diversion [of communism]. This is also served by the further unmasking of the SP[5] leaders' role in the Grand Coalition.[6]

2.a) In structuring its relations to Western European states based on the principles of peaceful coexistence between states of different social systems, the Soviet Union works on the basis of a long-term programme. It is aimed at

- eliminating anti-sovietism and anti-communism through a gradual extension of political, technological-scientific and cultural relations;
- reducing US and West German influence, in that the Soviet Union (particularly in the context of NATO and EEC issues) emphasises the Western European states' right to self-determination and in that the Soviet Union ties highly influential economic elites to herself through means of cooperation;
- aggravating the contradictions within the Western pact system.[7] In this sense the Soviet Union supports those forces pleading for their respective states' exit from NATO in 1969.[8] At the same time the Soviet Union maintains her offer to conclude an agreement of mutual non-aggression between the Warsaw Treaty states and NATO states.

Endnotes

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[2] From 1965 to 1970, Hans Voss (*31.1.1931) headed Department VI in the MfAA, the 'Abteilung Westdeutschland'.

[3] Ingo Oeser (1930-1998) became head of the MfAA's 5th European Department, responsible for Western Europe, in 1967. From 1973 to 1979 he served as head of the GDR's delegation to the MBFR talks in Vienna; 1980-1983 deputy head of the East German delegation to the CSCE follow-up conference in Madrid.

[4] Arno Goede (*1925) served from 1966-1973 as head of the MfAA's 1st European Department, responsible for relations with the USSR; he was Counsellor at the GDR's embassy in Moscow 1973-1977.

[5] SP here stands for "SPD", the "Socialdemocratic Party of Germany" – headed by Willy Brandt in West Germany.

[6] The Grand Coalition between CDU/CSU and SPD governed the FRG from December 1966 to September 1969. This is an obvious reference to the "Sozialverraeter" theory of the 1930's – alleging the betrayal of the working classes by social-democratic leaders. For the impact of this theory on Walter Ulbricht's Western policy, see: Oliver Bange: *Détente and Ostpolitik – Die Anfaenge 1966-1969*, Mannheim 2004 (Ms); Jens Schultz: *Die andere Seite der Ostpolitik – Die ideologische und organisationspolitische Auseinandersetzung der SPD mit dem Kommunismus 1969-1974*, Diss. Mannheim 2007 (MS.).

[7] From the beginnings of the Cold War in 1946/47 until 1968, the Western system went through several major crises, from the Suez crisis in 1956, the EEC crisis in 1963, and the MLF crisis in 1964/65, to de Gaulle's withdrawal of the remaining French forces from NATO's integrated military command in 1966.

[8] Apart from representing the habitual reference of Soviet support for the communist parties of Western Europe, the term also seems to imply Soviet hopes associated with the 1968 protest-generation and with the Gaullist challenge to NATO's unity. The original NATO Treaty ran out in 1969 and was up for renewal. See Andreas Wenger, *Crisis and Opportunity: NATO's Transformation and the Multilateralization of Détente, 1966-1968*, in: *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6 (1) 2004, pp. 22-74; Carole Fink/Philipp Gassert/Detlef Junker (eds): *The World Transformed*, Cambridge 1998; Arthur Marwick: *The Sixties. Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c. 1958-c. 1974*, Oxford 1998.