

May 08, 1953
USSR Foreign Ministry Draft Memorandum, 'On Further Soviet Government Measures Pertaining to the German Question'

Citation:

"USSR Foreign Ministry Draft Memorandum, 'On Further Soviet Government Measures Pertaining to the German Question'," May 08, 1953, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 12, pap. 16, d. 259, ll. 39-46. Translated by Daniel Rozas.

<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111334>

Summary:

Memorandum from the Soviet Foreign Affairs Ministry on Soviet foreign policy options with regard to the German Question. The memorandum looks at the effects on Soviet policy toward the western powers in the context of the Postdam conference and at the future state of the Soviet-East German relations.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

8/V/1953

Draft

TOP SECRET

On Further Soviet Government Measures
Pertaining to the German Question

At the present time the Soviet government is facing two types of questions with regard to Germany:

First, questions that pertain to Germany as a whole and concern mutual relations between the USSR and the three Western powers--USA, England and France;

Second, questions that pertain directly to bilateral relations between the USSR and the German Democratic Republic.

The measures proposed below have been worked out in accordance with the fundamental principles of the primary post-war document on the German question--the Potsdam treaty--and in addition, bearing in mind the important political changes in the political development of Germany and Europe that have taken place over the eight-year period following the war.

The Soviet Union has always insisted on adhering to the Potsdam treaty, imparting the utmost importance to this international document, according to which not only the USSR, but the USA, England, and, later, France took the responsibility to join forces as the four powers to insure the reestablishment of a united Germany as a peace-loving and democratic country. Of course, in addition to this we have had to contend with the circumstance that the three Western powers had {always} from the very beginning tried to impose their own bourgeois-imperialist path on the Potsdam treaty, the goal of which was to turn Germany into a bourgeoisie-imperialist country that would have no interest in strengthening peace and democratic order and would quickly become once again the most dangerous source of aggression in Europe. {In order to reach their goals} This is demonstrated by the fact that the three Western powers {have from the very beginning chosen} are increasingly choosing to violate the Potsdam treaty.

We have continually opposed this policy of the three powers and corresponding circles in Germany itself by adopting the Soviet Union's policy to reunite Germany on truly peace-loving and democratic foundations; and since the Western powers did not move to meet the Soviet Union on this issue, we saw our task as being the all-around strengthening of our, Soviet, position in East Germany. In this, we have relied primarily on the work of the SED and democratic German organizations, and also on the strengthening of the

democratic forces in West Germany that are carrying on the struggle against the militarization of West Germany and its inclusion into the aggressive North Atlantic bloc.

Since, during the post-war period, the USSR's position in Europe, particularly in connection with the transition of a number of countries to the path of people's democratic development, has been increasingly strengthened and since our position grew stronger with each passing year in East Germany as well, the three Western powers have shifted to a policy of rapid reinstatement of a bourgeois-reactionary order in West Germany. With each passing year, the three Western powers have ever more openly moved to wreck the Potsdam treaty and prevent the enactment of the fundamental principles of this treaty in West Germany, which has resulted in the establishment of a West German state based in Bonn and brought about the liquidation of the quadripartite Control Council in Berlin.

Because the West German state based in Bonn was formally established in 1949 and the policy of the three Western powers reached its final form in the refusal to carry out the Potsdam treaty, the Soviet Union has adopted the position of aiding in the establishment {in East Germany} of the German Democratic Republic as a friendly and close country to the Soviet Union.

Up to the present time, the policy of the three Western powers has taken the form of supporting West Germany as an imperialist ally and vassal, with the gradual inclusion of West Germany into the aggressive North Atlantic bloc and with a further tightening of the yoke of the reactionary-capitalist regime, which has tied its fate to the continuation of foreign occupation. However, the implementation of this policy of the three Western powers has been attended by increasing contradictions within the North Atlantic bloc, as well as increasing contradictions between the various countries of this bloc and West Germany. [These] demonstrate that there are a significant number of weak and unstable points in the implementation of this policy, which is being increasingly imposed by the Anglo-American bloc. Carrying out the Anglo-American bloc policy will necessarily cause a serious exacerbation of the class struggle in West Germany, not to mention the fact that this policy, while playing to the advantage of German revanchists yet taking away the prospect of lasting peace and national unification from the German people, cannot rely on the German people's popular support.

In connection with the aforementioned circumstances, the chief task facing the Soviet Union is unyielding implementation of the policy to strengthen the political and economic position of the GDR, which has already embarked on the course of people's democratic development and with each passing year is becoming an ever-stronger bastion of peace in this part of Europe. In addition, it is necessary again and again to implement our resolutions on all-German questions in the

spirit and in the interests of strengthening peace in Europe, which is especially important given the move toward open militarization of West Germany by the Anglo-American bloc. In conjunction with this and bearing in mind the political changes during the post-war period, we should most decisively move to face those tasks in resolving the German question as a whole which, both in the eyes of peace-loving nations in Europe and in the eyes of the German people, open up the possibility of restoring a united Germany as a truly peace-loving and democratic country.

Thus, our future measures on the German question, rooted above all in the interests of further strengthening the position of the USSR in Europe, must first assist in the steadfast strengthening of the GDR as a peace-loving country and a dependable ally of the USSR, and secondly, in the mutual relations with the three Western powers, must proceed from the expediency of reaching some type of temporary or at least partial agreements on all-German questions. [This is] because such agreements, without contradicting our fundamental precepts, will facilitate the popularization of the USSR's policies on the German question among the peace-loving nations of Europe and among the German people themselves, will hold back or at least create obstacles to the realization of the Anglo-American bloc's aggressive plans in Europe, and will at the same time facilitate the maintenance and strengthening of peace.

I.

The German question and mutual relations between the USSR and the three Western powers

1. In accordance with the Potsdam treaty, the central tenet of the USSR policy toward Germany should be, as before, the question of preventing the rebirth of German militarism and achieving the national reunification of Germany on peace-loving and democratic foundations. Since the matter depends on the concerted actions of the four powers, the resolution of this problem is irrevocably tied to the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany. The restoration of German unity on peace-loving and democratic foundations can be realized only with the conclusion of a peace treaty that provides for the establishment of a German state that will unite the German people on democratic principles, establish solid peaceful relations with its neighbors, and not become in the future a source of new aggression in Europe.

2. [It should be noted also that] The chief aim of the policy of the three powers on the German question is based on completely different tenets that have nothing in common with a peaceful resolution of the German question and the establishment of a peace-loving and democratic German state.

As is clear from the official proposals and corresponding political speeches over the course of the past few years, the policy of the three Western powers on the

German question proceeds not from the problems presented by the restoration of German unity and the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, but from the fundamental political principles that are expressed in the numerous and ever-stronger measures to include West Germany into the so-called "European Defense Community" (the Paris treaty) and, consequently, the North Atlantic aggressive bloc. This policy of the three powers is leading to the enslavement of West Germany and its transformation into a weapon of Anglo-American aggressive plans in Europe with the subordination of the political and economic life of West Germany to the dictates of the Anglo-American bloc (the Bonn treaty) {and, in addition, to the unavoidable exacerbation of contradictions among the nations of the North Atlantic bloc}.

The political meaning of including West Germany in the "European Defense Community" and tying it to the "Bonn treaty" consists in the reinstatement of militaristic and revanchist forces in West Germany, as well as, by incorporating West Germany into the aggressive North Atlantic bloc, in making it thus impossible to restore German unity and conclude a peace treaty with Germany, because the inclusion of West Germany in the North Atlantic grouping of powers precludes the possibility of an agreement on the German question between the USA, England and France on the one side and the USSR on the other side, and because, instead of creating conditions for the unification of East and West Germany into a single peace-loving German state, such a policy leads to the irreconcilable opposition of one part of Germany against the other part of Germany.

Our task is to demonstrate that a real resolution of the German question in the interests of strengthening peace in Europe consists of conducting practical measures directed toward the rapid reinstatement of German unity and the urgent conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, as well as in the active exposure of the aggressive intent of the policies of the three powers that will thus rely on revanchist circles in West Germany. [This intention] will create conditions of redoubled oppression in West Germany through the imposition of a long-term foreign occupation.

3. In order to hide the currently aggressive and oppressive nature of their policy toward the German people, the three Western powers are doing everything to distract the German people's attention from the problems of reinstating German unity and concluding a peace treaty. These purposes are served by the three Western powers' proposal for so-called "free" all-German elections, to which the three powers are attaching several preconditions: the creation of a U.N. commission to determine the existence of conditions for free all-German elections, etc. In practice this means that, by putting forth all sorts of preconditions, the resolution of the question of reinstating German unity and carrying out free all-German elections, as well as the question of concluding a peace treaty with Germany, will be postponed for an indeterminate time, while the unlawful attempts to include the U.N. in the resolution of the German

question also follow intentions that have nothing in common with attempting {to reach} an agreement between the four powers on the German question.

In order to counter and expose the false and demagogic nature of the three powers' proposals regarding the so-called "free" all-German elections, it is necessary to put forth a plan for holding free all-German elections on a truly democratic basis, without allowing any kind of pressure from foreign powers on these elections. In addition, it should be pointed out that truly free elections in Germany cannot be held in the presence of foreign occupation forces, and therefore the USSR stands for holding free all-German elections as soon as possible following the withdrawal of the occupation forces of all powers within German borders.

4. From all of the above it follows that, placing priority on the tasks of struggling against the resurgence of German militarism, and restoration of German unity on peace-loving and democratic grounds, as well as for concluding a peace treaty with Germany, it is essential to consolidate the democratic forces of the German people and of other European nations {in the struggle for a peaceful settlement of the German question,} in the struggle against the Bonn and Paris treaties, and in the opposition of their adoption and ratification {in West Germany as well as in France, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg}. In this regard it is also necessary to increase {in a suitable form} the work of exposing the policies of the three powers, directed toward {transforming West Germany into a source of new aggression in Europe and}, the final eradication of all types of steps to reinstate German unity {on peace-loving and democratic grounds} and to conclude a peace treaty. {As is well known, this policy of theirs is being disguised, among other things, by the proposal for so-called free all-German elections, which in turn are being delayed for an indeterminate time with artificial proposals for all sorts of preconditions, as though these were necessary for the preparation and realization of such elections.}

{With these aims, it is necessary to direct greatest attention in the political platform of the German question to resolving the following fundamental questions:

a) not permitting the reestablishment of German militarism in West Germany and exposing the aggressive plans of West German revanchists;}

The broader and more organized, the more active and conscientious the struggle both in Germany itself and in neighboring countries, as well as in other European countries, and the greater and more massive the breadth of the struggle for denying the reestablishment of West German militarism and exposing the aggressive plans of West German revanchists--the more will be accomplished in the support and strengthening of peace in Europe. And in connection with this, the following fundamental tasks should be put forth as the

first order of the agenda in the mutual relations of the USSR and the three Western powers:

a) the restoration of German national unity on peace-loving and democratic grounds, and the formation of an all-German democratic government for that purpose;

b) the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and convening of a peace conference for that purpose;

c) the holding of free all-German elections and, to insure this, the withdrawal of occupation forces within German borders by all foreign powers;

d) the reduction of all German financial and economic obligations, established in the aftermath of the war, to the USA, England, France and USSR.

These tasks are inseparably linked with the further development and expansion of criticism of the Bonn and Paris treaties, the practical implementation of which must be blocked with every available means of political struggle and diplomatic activity.

5. In order not to delay the implementation of measures directed toward German unification and to finally take the first step toward restoring the united German state, a proposal should be put forth for the creation of a Provisional All-German Government by the parliaments of the GDR and West Germany and with the participation of representatives from democratic parties, free labor unions, and other large democratic organizations. This task can be realized through both an agreement between Germans of East and West Germany regarding the procedure by which the two currently existing governments of the GDR and West Germany are replaced by a single, peace-loving and democratic All-German Provisional Government, and an agreement on the preservation of both of these governments until such time as the interested German sides agree that only the all-German government should exist.

The significance of the proposal to create a peace-loving and democratic Provisional All-German Government, even while preserving the currently existing governments of the GDR and West Germany, consists in the fact that the creation of such an All-German Government can be realized without further delays and that for this purpose it is sufficient to have a corresponding agreement between both parts of Germany. Moreover, all interference in this matter on the part of foreign occupation authorities must certainly be precluded. It is possible that such an All-German Government would possess only limited functions during the first stage, but its establishment would be a real step forward on the path of German unification, which must be consummated with the establishment of an all-German government on the basis of truly free all-

German elections.

6. The fundamental tasks for the peace-loving and democratic All-German Provisional Government consist in the following:

a) preparing for and carrying out free all-German democratic elections, which must be carried out following the withdrawal of occupation forces by all foreign powers from Germany;

b) working out democratic all-German election laws based on the election laws of the GDR and West Germany, while keeping in mind the election laws of the Weimar Republic. In addition, if it deems it necessary, the All-German Provisional Government will consider determining the existence of conditions in Germany for carrying out democratic all-German elections and adopting measures for creating the conditions necessary to hold such elections;

c) representing German interests during negotiations for the preparation and conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany;

d) not permitting German inclusion in coalitions or military alliances directed against any power that used its armed forces in the war against Germany;

e) examining and resolving pressing questions pertaining to general German interests, in particular: German representation in international organizations, questions of German citizenship, trade between the GDR and West Germany, postal and telegraph links, railroad and water connections, and other questions of an all-German nature;

f) examining and resolving questions regarding the reduction or liquidation of inter-zonal restrictions, so as to make the movement of people and the development of economic and other ties between East and West Germany easier, as well as resolving questions pertaining to adjusting the composition and size of police units.

7. Since Germany has fulfilled a significant part of the financial and economic obligations placed on it in the aftermath of the war, it should be recognized as necessary to limit, for the period of 1953-1955, Germany's annual financial and economic obligations to foreign states to those levels that were set for 1953. This limit of German financial and economic obligations extends also to occupation expenses, with the exception that these latter obligations may expire earlier if a quadripartite agreement is reached for an earlier withdrawal of occupation forces of the foreign powers from within German borders.

In accordance with this, it is necessary to recognize that, beginning with 1956, Germany must be completely released from the payment of all foreign debts,

reparations and other financial obligations, which were placed on it in the aftermath of the war.

8. In connection with the above, in May of this year corresponding notes should be sent from the Soviet government to the governments of the USA, England and France and a proposal should be made to convene a conference on the German question with representatives from the four powers.

Copies of the notes should be sent to the governments of the GDR and West Germany.

II.

Mutual relations between the Soviet Union and the GDR

9. Towards the aim of further strengthening friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic and promoting the authority of the GDR as the bases for reestablishing German unity on peace-loving and democratic grounds, it should be recognized as necessary to carry out the following measures:

In the political arena:

a) abolish the Soviet occupation authorities' control of GDR government organs and, in connection with this, liquidate the Soviet Control Commission in Germany and its central and branch organizations;

b) agree with the GDR government on the establishment of a USSR Embassy in Berlin and a GDR Embassy in Moscow;

c) implement an amnesty and repatriation of former German prisoners of war held in USSR prisons, except for those persons who had committed particularly heinous crimes.

In the economic arena:

a) limit for the period of 1953-1955 {all} the GDR's the [sic] annual financial and economic obligations to the Soviet Union established in the aftermath of the war to those payment levels that were set for 1953;

b) transfer in full all Soviet industrial enterprises within the territory of the GDR to the German Democratic Republic;

c) inform the GDR government that, starting with 1956, the USSR Government will hold the German Democratic Republic free from all financial and economic

obligations established in the aftermath of the war, and with regard to occupation payments, these could be ceased prior to 1956, if there is an agreement reached between the four powers to withdraw occupation forces from within German borders prior to this date.

10. It should be recognized as necessary that in June of this year, a GDR government delegation headed by Comrades Grotewohl and Ulbricht travel to Moscow in order to demonstrate the further strengthening of political and economic ties between the USSR and the GDR.