

**Letter from President Eisenhower to Premier Bulganin, on
Reduction of Foreign Forces in Germany, August 4, 1956¹**

[Extract]

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You refer in your letter [of June 6, 1956] to a possible reduction of our respective forces in Germany. Obviously the problem of forces in Germany cannot be dealt with as an isolated matter. In this respect, I must confess that I am greatly disturbed by the developments which have occurred since we met at Geneva last year. We there agreed that the reunification of Germany was a common responsibility of the four Governments at Geneva, and we also agreed that Germany should be reunified by means of free elections carried out in conformity with the national interests of the German people and the interests of European security.² Not only has this not happened, but I hear of statements from your side which seem to imply that your Government is determined to maintain indefinitely the division of Germany.

I must confess that I am perplexed as to how we can work together constructively if agreements which are negotiated at the highest level after the most thorough exploration do not seem dependable.

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**Note from the German Ambassador to the Secretary of State,
Transmitting a Memorandum from the Federal Republic of
Germany to the Soviet Union, September 2, 1956³**

The Heads of Government of the United States of America, France, the United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics reached agreement at the first Geneva conference in July 1955 that the settlement of the German question and of the question of reunification should be accomplished by means of free elections, "carried out in conformity with the national interests of the German people and the interests of European security." At the second Geneva conference, in October and November 1955, it unfortunately proved impossible to agree on ways and means of putting this resolution into effect. And now more than half of 1956 has elapsed without any progress having been achieved in this matter.

The German Federal Government feels constrained to call the attention of the Government of the United States of America to the gravity of this fact.

All four Powers have at all times recognized the responsibility incumbent on them with regard to the reestablishment of Germany's unity as one state. This responsibility is not adequately discharged by mere assent to the principle of reunification without any agreements being reached regarding practical ways and means of realizing it.

¹ White House news release, August 7, 1956. See also Premier Bulganin's letter of June 6, 1956 (*supra*).

² See Geneva Directive of July 23, 1955 (*supra*).

³ *Department of State Bulletin*, September 24, 1956, pp. 485-486. Ambassador Krekeler handed the note to Secretary Dulles on September 7, 1956; on the same day similar notes were delivered to the British and French Governments, and the memorandum (*infra*) was delivered to the Soviet Government. See also American notes of October 9 to the German Federal Government and of October 10 to the Soviet Government (*infra*).