

Q. Mr. Secretary, is it our position that free elections are the only method of reuniting Germany? In other words, do we say, "No free elections, no reunification"?

A. Well, we never have said that. The formula of reunification by free elections was the agreed formula. It seems to us to be a natural method. But I wouldn't say that it is the only method by which reunification could be accomplished.

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Q. Mr. Secretary, to clarify an earlier answer that you made, you said that "free elections are the natural method for unifying Germany, but it is not the only method." Could you tell us what other methods there might be which could be acceptable to us and the West Germans and our Allies?

A. No, I wouldn't want to speculate about that. There are all kinds of methods whereby countries and peoples draw together, and I merely said that I did not feel that we should treat any one method as an absolutely exclusive one.

Q. Mr. Secretary, when you said that the Soviet plan for Germany is "stupid" because it wouldn't work, in what sense did you mean it wouldn't work? What bad result did you see flowing from it?

A. I believe that if you try to isolate and segregate a great people like the Germans in the center of Europe that they will become a restive and dangerous force; they will attempt to gain advantages to themselves by trying to play off the East against the West. I don't think that you can put the Germans within the kind of a smothering blanket that the Soviet Union has in mind and expect that that will hold. That, in a way, was the approach of the Treaty of Versailles, and it just didn't work. And I don't think it will work again. I think that a so-called "neutralized" and largely demilitarized Germany, attempted to be demilitarized in the middle of Europe, is just something that won't work, and that, instead of trying to isolate Germany the best way is to tie Germany in.

Now, that is the basic thesis of Adenauer. I believe that Adenauer's claim to greatness rests upon his effort to assure that Germany will not again follow the path which Germany followed in 1914 and again in 1939. He is the one who has invented, you might say, this solution. And I believe it is the most practical and sound solution for those who really want to end for all time the kind of danger that has come from Germany in the past.

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Remarks at News Conference by Secretary of State Dulles, on Germany, January 27, 1959¹

[Extracts]

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Q. Mr. Secretary, there are reports that the West German Government is studying the various angles of possible confederation of East and West Germany. Can you tell us whether the State Department

¹ Department of State press release 70, January 27, 1959.

is conducting any studies along that line to see if confederation may be a way which one day would lead to free elections in a reunited Germany?

A. I don't like to use a word like "confederation" which has political connotation. "Confederation" can mean almost anything. To a certain extent it can be said that the present Federal Republic represents a confederation. You can have a confederation of one kind or a confederation of another kind. The general question of how to get Germany reunited is a question which I guess all of us are studying and will continue to study.

Q. Mr. Secretary, what is the procedure now ahead on the Western side in relation to the effort to get some formal negotiations started with the Soviet Union?

A. I suppose the next formal step would be the reply to the notes of January 10. Of course, we have already in the earlier communications, made at the end of December, proposed a meeting which would deal with the subject of German reunification, and European security, and the Soviets have countered with their proposal that we should have a meeting to deal with the question of a German Peace Treaty—made with the two different German States—and with the question of Berlin. There is the question as to whether there could be a meeting which would deal broadly with the German question, and I suppose that the possibilities of that will be considered in connection with the reply to the note of January 10. That will be the next order of business, I suppose.

Q. Well, is it your hope, Sir, that some sort of meeting at the Foreign Ministers level, or at some other level, can be arranged this spring with the Soviet Union on all these questions, in the same "pot" so to speak?

A. I would think that it would be timely to have such a meeting. As I say, a meeting along these lines has already been proposed by the Three Western Powers, and has been approved by NATO. A meeting which is closely limited in its agenda so that it can only talk about one or two of many interrelated problems would not be an acceptable form of meeting. I think we would have to be free to talk about these interconnected problems. And we were quite willing to discuss the problem of Berlin within the framework of also discussing reunification of Germany. And the approach of the Western Allies to this matter is that they are willing and think it timely, to have a further discussion about these problems. And the question is whether the Soviet Union will be willing to have a discussion on a broad-enough base to make it worthwhile, or whether they will try to dictate an agenda which would exclude the discussion of what seemed to us to be interrelated matters.

Q. While Mr. Mikoyan was here, Mr. Secretary, he said that if they could not agree on an agenda there should be talks without an agenda? Would you agree to agendaless talks with the Russians?

A. I would assume there would have to be an agenda—at least, in a sense that we would know whether we were going to talk about Germany or the Far East or the Middle East, or what the general subject was. But, aside from that, I don't think that there is any particular point in trying to refine an agenda.

Q. Would a discussion of European security in general in your view include a discussion of the Rapacki Plan, for example, in your opinion, if the Soviets want that?

A. If they wanted to bring that up in that heading, it would be quite permissible for them to do so.

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Q. Mr. Secretary at your last press conference you said in reply to a question that free elections were not the only means by which Germany might be reunified. There was a great deal of subsequent differences of opinion as to just what you meant by this remark. In fact the Department tended to knock it down to some degree, some of the interpretations. Looking back on it, can you tell us what you had in mind?

A. Well, I think to ascertain what I had in mind, it's necessary to recall precisely what the question was. I had said earlier that reunification by free elections was the normal method and the agreed method and represented United States policy. Then I was asked the question, "Does that mean that no free elections, no reunification?" and I said, no, we could not take the position that we would reject reunification merely because it came about by means other than free elections. But I also said later on in answer to another question that we did not at the moment have any alternative means in mind.

Now, anybody who knows history—and the American history is a good example—knows that unifications and reunifications can come about by means other than free elections. The original unification of this country came about through legislative action of the States, not by any general elections. The reunification that occurred in '65 did not come about through free elections. And in the case of the unification of Alaska into our Union, there were general elections in Alaska but there were not general elections held in the United States on that subject.

So our own history illustrates a variety of ways by which unification and reunification can occur. And nobody can say that free elections are the only means by which there can be reunification. I would say that we would all be delighted if you would get a reunification of Germany, an effective reunification of Germany, by any means. But whether there are other means than free elections, I don't know. But you will recall that free elections is the agreed method. That was agreed to at the "Summit" conference.

Q. Well, Mr. Secretary, in the context of the known public Soviet position and the known Western position, is it a fair interpretation to say that you're willing to sit down with the Soviets and discuss all possible ways that they may suggest or we may suggest which might bring about reunification—free elections or otherwise?

A. The essential point, the heart of the matter, is reunification. The method is less essential, as long as it is a method which achieves the result and assures that the result is obviously desired by the people. You don't want to impose anything against the people's will. But the main thing is to get reunification of Germany in freedom, as it has sometimes been put. It was agreed at the "Summit" that the reunification should be brought about by means of free elections. And the Soviet Union agreed to that. That was a tough negotiation. I have never sat through a tougher negotiation than

the secret session at which finally that was agreed to by the Soviet Union, including Mr. Khrushchev himself.

Now, if they want to suggest another method than the method they have already agreed to, it is I think primarily up to them to suggest the alternative and not up to us. We do not relinquish the agreement that we have merely in order to have what may be a kind of a wild goose chase looking for another method. We stand on the agreement that we have. If the Soviets have another method and say, "We don't want to have reunification by free elections but we are willing to have it some other way", we could of course listen to any proposal that they make. But it seems to me the primary responsibility to suggest an alternative rests upon the nation which wants to get out of its present agreement, which is an agreement to do it by means of free elections.

Q. Well, does that mean, Sir, that you do not consider their apparent qualified disposition toward confederation as a new alternative?

A. No, I do not. Quite to the contrary. Both the proposals for confederation and the proposal for a peace treaty with two Germanies are obviously designed not to bring about reunification but to perpetuate the partition, the division of Germany and to formalize it for an indefinite period of time. In other words, I consider them as proposals not for reunification but as proposals for permanent partition.

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Q. Mr. Secretary, you said that the confederation idea, as advanced by the Russians, is unacceptable. Would you consider the confederation idea as constituting an item of negotiation if it were under a different form and there were different safeguards leading to reunification?

A. Well, I said in answer to an earlier question that the word "confederation" covers a very wide variety of political relationships. It can be a relationship between two utterly dissimilar and unrelated areas which tends to perpetuate their division, perhaps only having a surface unity with respect to certain particular matters. Or you can have a confederation which is, in fact, of very considerable progress toward reunification. I said in a sense you can call the present Federal Republic of Germany a confederation. Now I don't like, as I said, to use the word particularly because it has become a word around which emotions revolve. But the matter of finding ways which, in fact, will promote reunification is a matter which, I think, can be and should be studied as resourcefully as possible.

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Statement by Secretary of State Dulles Before House Foreign Affairs Committee, January 28, 1959¹

[Extract]

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* * * In 1944-45 there were agreements between the principal Western allies and the Soviet Union on the zones of occupation of

¹ Department of State press release 71, January 28, 1959.