

**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*).

Quite recently, in his prepared statement of 13 June of this year, the Secretary of State of the United States called German reunification "a major objective of the West" and stressed the conviction "that the attitude of the West toward the Soviet Union should be determined by the endeavor to promote the reunification of Germany in freedom." On 17 June 1956, the President of the United States said in his message to the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, "The ending of the division of Germany is essential to the development of friendly and cooperative relations between the Western nations and the Soviet Union." Finally, the President of the United States, in his letter of 4 August this year to the Soviet Prime Minister, Marshal Bulganin, recalled the agreement reached at Geneva by the Heads of Government on the reunification of Germany and expressed concern that no action had been taken. The Federal Government noted these statements with great satisfaction. It is in complete agreement with them, particularly on the count of German reunification not being merely a question of German national interests but a question of comprehensive and decisive importance to the future relations between West and East and consequently to the maintenance of world peace. The Federal Government sees in those statements an indication of the serious desire of the United States to take practical, effective steps to reestablish the unity of Germany.

Since several attempts to reach an agreement on this matter by means of large conferences have failed, the Federal Government does not consider it expedient to suggest that another conference be convened at the present moment. It is of the opinion that a new conference should be convened only when a well-founded prospect has been created through normal diplomatic channels that such a conference may lead to success.

The Federal Government urgently appeals to the Government of the United States of America to resume energetically its efforts to advance the matter along these lines.

The Federal Government takes the liberty of making its own contribution to such efforts in the form of a memorandum addressed to the Government of the U.S.S.R. It considers this procedure useful in view of the fact that it has for some time past been engaged in an exchange of views with the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and France and has happily reached agreement with those Governments. On the other hand, it has so far had no opportunity of entering into detailed discussion with the Government of the U.S.S.R. on the question of reunification.

In view of the fact that, although the question of reunification can be dealt with to some purpose in bilateral exchanges of views, it can be solved, by reason of its legal nature, only jointly with all four governments, the Federal Government takes the liberty of forwarding to the United States Government the text of the memorandum addressed by it to the Government of the U.S.S.R.