

Revised Version

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On the So-Called Berlin Crisis

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If one wants to arrive at a constructive approach to the so-called Berlin crisis, one must first of all recognize that in regard to Europe the true long-term interest of the United States and of the Soviet Union is exactly the same. This interest is to have Europe as stable as possible.

Secondly, it is necessary to recognize that there are difficulties which are inherent in the German problem and that we would have to cope with these difficulties even if the Soviet Union were willing to accept any reasonable proposal that we might wish to put forward. In order to analyze these inherent difficulties, I propose to discuss here "solutions" of the German problem, at first, without regard to whether they may or may not be politically acceptable to the Soviet Union.

Let us start off with the premise that East Germany as well as West Germany would be recognized as a sovereign state, and that there would be set up some sort of a federation between them. To start with, this federation might be a very loose one and we may assume that its governing body would be barred from taking action on substantive issues, except with 50 percent, or more, of the East German votes, as well as 50 percent, or more, of the West German votes.

From this starting point on, the development may then go in either of two different directions, depending on whether -

(1) the federation would be kept a loose one and would represent an attempt to perpetuate the division of Germany, or

(2) the federation would be permitted to become step-by-step more tightly knit and to lead to a truly united Germany, in the predictable future.

In the following I propose to examine the dangers to the stability of Europe which are peculiar to, and inherent in, these two "solutions" of the German problem.

(1) If it became apparent that the loose federation of the two German states merely serves the purpose of perpetuating the division of Germany, then it is likely that the unification of Germany would soon emerge as the political goal upon which all Germans may unite. If East Germany, as well as West Germany, were both set up as a sovereign state, with both of them, perhaps, admitted to membership in the United Nations, then an armed uprising in East Germany against the established government might seriously endanger the peace of Europe. In case of such an armed uprising, Soviet troops might cross the border of East Germany in support of the established government and West German troops might intervene in support of the insurgents, and the ensuing international conflict might lead to an all-out war.

(2) If the federation were to lead to a truly united Germany in the near future, more likely than not, the recovery of the territories lost to Poland would emerge as a political objective on which

all Germans may unite.

Guaranteeing the Oder-Neisse Line by America would be almost meaningless, as long as America has to rely on NATO, of which Germany is an integral part. And in a generally disarmed world, America would be in no position to render military assistance to Poland against Germany, even if she were inclined to do so.

Unless the economic integration of Western Germany were accompanied by a far-reaching political integration, neither Britain nor France would be able politically to restrain Germany, nor would they be likely to render military assistance to Poland against Germany, even if they were legally obliged to do so.

As long as Russia remains in possession of atomic and hydrogen bombs, while Germany has no such bombs, she might be in a position to protect Poland. But if Germany became a major atomic power, or if there were general disarmament, then Russia would be no longer able to protect Poland.

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In the face of these difficulties, inherent in any "solution" of the German problem, it will not be possible to devise a political settlement of Europe that would offer ironclad guarantees for the stability of Europe. There is no reason to believe, however, that we would be better off in this regard if we were to postpone the settlement; rather, there is reason to believe that further procrastination would create additional difficulties.

At this point I propose to examine under what conditions we

may expect the Soviet Union to go along with the setting up of a federation between East Germany and West Germany that may lead to a truly united Germany, step-by-step, as the obstacles which today stand in the way of the unification of Germany may one-by-one disappear:

(A) The Soviet Union may be expected to be concerned about the political stability of the established regime of East Germany, if East Germany is federated with West Germany.

After East Germany becomes part of a federated Germany, the Soviet Union should for awhile remain to be free to maintain troops in East Germany, at the request of, and in agreement with, the established government of East Germany, because if the Russian troops were withdrawn too soon, the established government of East Germany might not be able to cope with an uprising.

There is no reason why, if there is a satisfactory political settlement in Europe, East Germany should not become (under the established government) an economically prosperous nation within a few years and why it should not become politically about as free as Poland is at present. The United States ought to be willing to assist East Germany to accomplish economic prosperity and if this were done East Germany could make substantial progress very fast. The Soviet Union would then be able to withdraw her troops from East Germany, because the established government of East Germany could then count on the active support of at least a substantial minority (though perhaps not the majority) of the population and could then rely on the East German police to cope with sporadic nationalistic rebellions.

(B) The Soviet Union may be expected to be concerned that the federation between the two German states might lead to a merger in the field of foreign policy and military policy, while America still leans on NATO and Western Germany still remains an integral part of NATO.

The United States ought to give assurances that she would not be a party to such a premature merger of the two German states in the field of foreign policy and military policy. Later on if there should be general disarmament the issue of whether a united Germany would be militarily allied to the United States or not may no longer be relevant.

(C) The Soviet Union may be expected to be concerned about atomic weapons, as well as means suitable for their delivery, being placed under the physical control of Germans, who serve either under NATO command or under a direct German command.

As long as it is deemed necessary to have weapons of this kind, which originate in the United States, stationed in combat readiness on the continent of Europe, the United States ought to be willing to place all such equipment, and to keep all such equipment, under the physical control of American troops, with military units which are under direct American command, rather than NATO command.

(D) The Soviet Union may be expected to be concerned that the socialist economy might be dismantled in East Germany, after East Germany becomes part of a federated Germany.

The treaty setting up a federation between West Germany and East Germany could contain a provision that would guarantee that the means of production in ^{East} ~~West~~ Germany would continue to be owned and controlled by the East German state. Such a "paper guarantee" would, however, hardly offer sufficient assurances to the Soviet Union. Only if labor and industry in Western Germany were made to understand the nature of this problem and would then reach the conclusion that they would be willing to have state ownership in Eastern Germany endure, even after a far-reaching unification of Germany has taken place, would it be possible to give the Soviet Union the kind of assurances that would fully satisfy her.

Private citizens concerned with this problem ought to hold, at this juncture, private conversations in Western Germany with the leadership of the steel industry and the trade unions. There are a number of arguments why both the steel industry and the Social Democratic Party of Germany ought to look with favor upon maintaining East Germany as a socialist sector, within a united Germany, while Western Germany would continue to operate on the basis of a free market economy. If industry and labor in West Germany were responsive to these arguments then the United States ought to give her blessing to the indefinite maintenance of the socialist economy within the East German state of a federated Germany.

(E) The Soviet Union may be expected to be concerned about the possibility of excessive migration from East Germany to West Germany, particularly within certain professional categories.

This problem could be solved by legalizing migration between East Germany and West Germany on the basis of an agreed upon quota, for instance, a flat quota of 3% per year, for each category of migrant.

(F) The Soviet Union may be expected to be concerned about East Germany losing control of migration between East Germany and West Germany, if free communication between East Berlin and West Berlin were re-established.

If East Germany were to move her capital to, say, Dresden or Leipzig and if certain railroad junctions in East Berlin were moved to adjacent East German territory, then it would become possible to control migration going through Berlin, by effectively controlling the entry of persons from East Germany to East Berlin, as well as from East Germany directly to West Berlin.

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If an adequate political settlement were reached which is acceptable to the Soviet Union, because it takes into account the points listed above, then the problem of Berlin becomes capable of a satisfactory solution also. If, as is suggested under (F), East Germany were to shift her capital from East Berlin to Dresden or Leipzig, it would then be possible to set up both East Berlin and West Berlin each as a free city, with free communication between them. East Berlin and West Berlin could form a loose federation and we may assume that -- to start with -- the governing body of this federation would be barred from taking action on any substantive issues except with 50%, or more, of the votes of the representatives of East

Berlin, and 50%, or more, of the votes of the representatives of West Berlin. In spite of such a limitation this governing body could adopt a number of measures, which could greatly improve the living conditions in Berlin and greatly raise the status of the city of Berlin.

About three years ago I spent several months in West Berlin. There was no telephone communication between East Berlin and West Berlin at that time. People could freely cross over from one half of the city to the other, but taxicabs could not cross the dividing line. There was good theater both in East Berlin and West Berlin, and people crossed the line in order to go to the theater. It was very difficult, however, to find out in West Berlin what was playing in the theaters of East Berlin, because the West Berlin papers did not carry this information and there were no posters on display. I imagine the situation in East Berlin was quite similar.

Once the two Berlins cease to be pawns in the cold war, Berlin could again become a great cultural center; its theaters and concert halls might once more attract visitors from all over the world, as they did for a short time between the two world wars.

The status of both East Berlin and West Berlin should be very similar to the "neutral" status of Austria, but there should be an agreed upon procedure (see below) through which East Berlin and West Berlin could legally merge with East Germany, when the federation between East Germany and West Germany becomes sufficiently closely knit (*Handwritten: AAEV/20/20m*).

The issue of stationing foreign troops in the free cities need not arise -- just as the issue of stationing foreign troops in Austria has never arisen -- if there is a political settlement which both the Soviet Union and the United States would wish to keep in force.

Since the two free cities are located within East German territory, there is a possible conflict between "free access" to them and ~~the~~ East German "sovereignty". This conflict might be resolved in a way which is indicated below.

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