

THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND WORLD AFFAIRS
September 5 - 9, 1961
Stowe, Vermont, USA

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9/9/61

EIGHTH CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND WORLD AFFAIRS

Stowe, Vermont, U.S.A. Sept. 11-16, 1961

Disarmament and World Security

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Conference Paper
(Number to be Assigned)
VIII -

Eighth Conference on
Science and World Affairs

September 11-16, 1961
Stowe, Vermont, U.S.A.

ON THE SO-CALLED BERLIN CRISIS
Leo Szilard

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 sovereign states, 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 the 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.

* * *

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 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.

For the time being, the Soviet Union should 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 today, 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 within a few years an economically prosperous nation under the established government and why it should not become politically about as free as is Poland 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 very 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 rely then 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 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.

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 socialistic 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 percent 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.

* * *

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 issue, except with 50 percent, or more, of the votes of the representatives of East Berlin, and 50 percent, 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 (see below).

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.

* * *

Conference Paper
(Number to be assigned)
VIII -

Eighth Conference on
Science and World Affairs

September 11-16, 1961
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APPENDIX

ON THE SO-CALLED BERLIN CRISIS Leo Szilard

I believe that the Soviet Union would accept the package described below provided that there is first of all a meeting of the minds on the long-term goals in Europe and the package is then derived from these long-term goals on the basis of reasoned arguments. It might not be possible to arrive at such a package through a prolonged process of horsetrading.

(1) Both East Germany and West Germany shall be recognized as sovereign states and there shall be no limitation upon their freedom to federate with each other, with the following exceptions: East Germany may not form part of a military alliance with the United States, and West Germany may not form part of a military alliance with the Soviet Union. Further, East Germany and her representatives may not be a party to the nationalization of private property in West Germany, and West Germany and her representatives may not be a party to the returning to private ownership of publicly owned or controlled property in East Germany.

(2) Both East Germany and West Germany shall become members of the United Nations.

(3) The Soviet Union, the United States, England and France shall recognize the Oder-Neisse Line as the legal boundary of Poland.

(4) East Germany shall shift its capital from East Berlin to, say, Leipzig or Dresden.

(5) Both East Berlin and West Berlin shall be set up as a free city each - with free communications between them. These two cities shall each have the same neutral status as Austria, except that if the majority of each of these two cities should vote in a plebiscite, held under the supervision of the United Nations, for merging these two cities with East Germany, such a merger shall take place. The first such plebiscite shall be held in 10 years and as long as the free cities remain in existence such plebiscite may be held every 10 years, at the request of East Germany.

(6) Migration from East Germany to West Germany or vice versa shall be free -- within limits -- and be based upon an agreed upon quota, for each category of emigrant. Until such time as East Germany and West Germany agree upon the quotas, there shall be set a flat quota of 3 percent per year, for each category of emigrants.

(7) In order to enable East Germany to exercise adequate control of entry of persons, from East Germany to East Berlin,

the relevant railroad junctions located in East Berlin shall be shifted to adjacent East German territory.

(8) The two free cities shall each be permitted to build, if they desire to do so, two elevated highways, one connecting the city with West Germany and the other connecting the city with Poland. Traffic in East Germany shall cross these highways through underpasses. As long as the two free cities remain in existence, East Germany shall yield sovereignty on these highways to the corresponding free city, but East Germany shall retain sovereignty in the underpasses and in the air above the highways.

(9) East Germany, West Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia shall not produce atomic weapons or means specifically adapted for the delivery of such weapons.

(10) The Soviet Union, the United States, England and France shall not transfer atomic weapons or means specifically suitable for the delivery of such weapons to East German, West German, Polish or Czechoslovakian control.

(11) Atomic weapons originating in the United States, as well as the corresponding means for their delivery, shall not be stationed on the continent of Europe except under the physical control of American military units operating under direct American command. Similarly, atomic weapons originating in the Soviet Union, as well as the corresponding means for their delivery, shall not be stationed on the continent of Europe -- outside the territory of the Soviet Union -- except under the direct physical control of Soviet military units under direct Soviet command.

September 15, 1961

PROPOSAL FOR A STATEMENT TO BE ISSUED
BY THE CONFERENCE
by Leo Szilard

I propose that the meeting consider the advisability of instructing the committee to draft a statement which may run somewhat along the following lines:

"The Conference on Disarmament and World Security which has taken place in Stowe, Vermont, U.S.A. from September 11 to September 16, 1961, was attended by 43 scientists from 11 countries. Their names are given in the attached list. All participants in the Conference shared the common concern for the establishment of a stable peace which has been previously expressed in the Vienna Declaration of September 1958. Problems related to disarmament and world security were discussed at the Conference in a spirit of friendship, and guided by a desire for mutual understanding.

"The obstacles which today stand in the path of general and complete disarmament would be largely removed if the nations involved were to reach a meeting of the minds on how peace may be secured in a disarmed world and on the means through which the nations could convince each other that there are no major secret evasions of the disarmament agreement.

"In addition to these and other issues, the Conference discussed a number of issues relevant to the problems of disarmament by stages. A variety of views were expressed on some of these issues and frequently the division of opinion was not along national lines.

"Different subcommittees dealt with different issues. A number of the subcommittees reached a meeting of the minds and submitted tentative proposals which will serve as a basis for further study.

"The Conference was held at a time when the international situation had greatly deteriorated. The Conference examined the causes for this deterioration which led to the resumption of bomb tests, but no consensus was reached in this regard.

"The participants of the Conference were agreed in their appraisal that there would be a serious danger that a war may break out that none of the nations want, were the situation to deteriorate much further. It was, therefore, considered imperative that the governments involved act without delay to prevent further deterioration. It would be above all desirable to arrive at a political settlement concerning Europe that would open the door to the adoption of a constructive approach to the problem of disarmament and the securing of the peace in a disarmed world."

Happy to sign this

Hans Bethe

September 15, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR A STATEMENT TO BE ISSUED
BY THE COMMISSION
by Leo Szilard

Varnz

I propose that the meeting consider the advisability of in-
strating the committee to draft a statement which may have some
what along the following lines:

"The Conference on Disarmament and World Security which has
taken place in Stowe, Vermont, U.S.A. from September 11 to
September 15, 1961, was attended by 43 representatives from 11 coun-
tries. Their names are given in the attached list. All partici-
pants in the Conference shared the common concern for the
establishment of a stable peace which has been previously ex-
pressed in the Vienna Declaration of September 1958. Initiatives
related to disarmament and world security were discussed at the
Conference in a spirit of friendship, and guided by a desire for
mutual understanding.

"The obstacles which today stand in the path of general and
complete disarmament would be largely removed if the nations in-
volved were to reach a meeting of the minds on how best to be
secured in a disarmed world and on the means through which the
nations could convince each other that there are no alternative
options of the disarmament agreement.

"In addition to these and other factors, the Conference discussed
a number of issues relevant to the problem of disarmament by
stages. A variety of views were expressed on some of the issues
and frequently the division of opinion was very pronounced. A number
of the subjects were discussed in a friendly and a friendly
fashion, and it is hoped that the results of the Conference will
be a basis for further work in the future.

"The Conference was held at a time when the international
situation has greatly deteriorated. The Conference examined the
causes for this deterioration, which led to the resumption of hosti-
lities, but no consensus was reached in this regard.

"The participants of the Conference were deeply
convinced that there would be a general danger that the way
break out that some of the nations would be able to do so
without further delay. It was the hope of the participants
that the governments involved would be able to reach a
decision. It would be a great relief to the world if a
political solution could be reached that would lead to the
to the adoption of a comprehensive and a general
disarmament and the cessation of the arms race in a general sense."

Conference Paper

Eighth Conference on
Science and World Affairs

September 11-16, 1961
Stowe, Vermont, U.S.A.

STATEMENT

Leo Szilard

A threat of war has arisen out of the dispute over ~~the~~ ^a ~~political settlement in Europe.~~ ^{so-called Berlin issue} I believe that the United States and the Soviet Union ^{have} pursue the same ~~true~~ goal in Europe; this goal is to have Europe politically as stable as possible. If America and Russia threaten to go to war with each other over Berlin, they are threatening to go to war over the issue of what is the best means to secure the peace in Europe.

I do not think that either America or Russia would deliberately start a war over ~~such an~~ ^{any such} issue, but the threats and counterthreats which are being made are creating a situation in which a war might break out that neither America ~~nor~~ Russia wants. Once war breaks out, it may be difficult to arrange for a cessation of hostilities and the war might end in a virtually total destruction of the countries involved.

Some of the cities might be spared by tacit agreement. Thus if Russia did not bomb Washington and New York, presumably America would not bomb Moscow and Leningrad. So to speak "natural" tacit agreements of this sort would not, however, be sufficient to prevent the wholesale destruction of cities on both sides, even if both sides were trying to keep destruction at a minimum and bring the war to an end as fast as possible.

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It is not clear whether America and Russia would be willing to enter into an agreement not to bomb each other's cities. But even if such an agreement were reached, it would represent merely a first line of defense against all-out destruction because if a few American or Russian cities were destroyed, for instance as ^{the result of} an accidental attack or an attack not authorized by the ~~head~~ ^{government} of the state, the agreement would become void.

America and Russia could erect a second line of defense, by reaching an understanding that if an American city were destroyed by Russia and if America were to retaliate, it would destroy one, and only one, Russian city, of about the same size. ^{in order to be authorized by both nations} This would cease to work, however, if in the course of the war ^{in 1945} central civilian control breaks down--as it well may--in either America or Russia.

Therefore, it would seem advisable to erect a third line of defense against all-out destruction in case of war. In order to have such a third line of defense, the American and Russian governments ought to collaborate in drawing up a set of lists of cities--about 10 such lists perhaps. The name of every American city and the name of every Russian city of over 100,000 population would appear on one, and just one, of these lists. Each such list would contain a group of American cities as well as a group of Russian cities each with an aggregate population representing the same fraction, say from 5%, 10% or 15%, of the total of those who live in cities of over 100,000.

Either America or Russia could then make a unilateral pledge that she would not intentionally bomb any city contained in a given list, as long as the other nation did not bomb any of the cities contained in the same list. It would be understood that if a city were bombed that is located in the vicinity of a strategic bomber or rocket base--within a radius of 50 miles--this would not lift the immunity of the other cities included in the same list.

On each list the two groups of cities ought to be balanced not only with respect to their population but also with respect to their industrial production.

This set of lists is meant to play the same role as the subdivision of a ship into compartments, which are installed for the purpose of enabling the ship to remain afloat even if some of the compartments become waterlogged.

If a war breaks out which neither America or Russia wanted, perhaps as a result of an unauthorized attack on cities, the government of the attacked nation might not be able to withhold retaliation but both governments would presumably try to limit the amount of destruction and try to arrange for a cessation of hostilities, as soon as they recovered control over the situation. There is little doubt that in such a case both governments would want to honor the lists of cities which were drafted prior to the outbreak of the hostilities.

Because for a period of time the civilian governments might not be able to control the conduct of the war, these lists

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ought to be made available to all local commanders of strategic striking forces and the significance of these lists ought to be explained to them.

It might take some time before the American and Russian governments have an opportunity to work out a set of well balanced lists of cities and I have therefore drawn up a provisional set of lists. I propose that a set of lists be considered as valid, until such time as a more balanced set of lists is worked out by the two governments involved.

Below are given the names of all American and Russian cities of over 100,000. Each of these cities belongs to one list and one list only and the number which precedes the name of the city designates the list to which that city belongs.