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BERLIN CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENTS - VI

Molotov's proposals for Germany: While it was to be expected that the Soviet Union's opening position on the German problem would contain maximum demands, the failure to include any new proposals that might be attractive to the West suggests that the Kremlin does not expect any significant progress to be made on Germany at Berlin.

The three additions to the treaty proposed in March 1952 support the Soviet claim that West Germany is bearing an economic burden from which East Germany has been freed, add an additional prohibition against German participation in EDC, and define a smaller armed force than originally proposed for Germany. This latter addition may be calculated to have some appeal in France.

Molotov has also clarified somewhat the proposed timetable of elections and treaty preparation. He maintained that the Deputy foreign ministers should start immediately on drafting a treaty, with East and West German participation. This, he says, would facilitate the bringing together of the two German governments and the holding of elections. A peace conference should be held by October. Final adoption of the treaty would require the participation of an elected all-German government.

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State Dept. review completed

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Soviet official hints at desire for USSR-West German relations: The Soviet press chief at Berlin has emphasized remarks made at the 29 January meeting by Molotov on the prospects for improved relations between the USSR and West Germany. He repeated that the absence of official relations between the Soviet Union and West Germany "does not exclude the possibility of appropriate contacts and the inauguration of connections" between the two. Molotov said that although past attempts at trade had been insufficient, new attempts should be made to develop both economic relations and cultural ties.

He made his statement while arguing for East and West German representation at the conference, and American officials in Berlin believe that this line may be used in arguing that reunification is dependent on the active participation of the East and West German governments. American officials also see in the Soviet willingness to recognize the reality of the existence of the West German regime an attempt to set a precedent which it will urge the United States to follow with regard to Communist China.

Bonn Socialists carp at Western line: Although support for the tactics of the Western powers at the Berlin conference remains strong among all political parties in the Bonn Bundestag, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has now found objections to two aspects of the Wests' policies on German unity. Party leaders will not give their unqualified support either to excluding all East German representatives from the conference or to the Allied unity formula presented by British foreign secretary Eden.

Despite the party's opposition to official participation of the East German government in the conference, party leaders indicate that under some circumstances it might be advantageous for representatives of both the East and West German governments to serve as witnesses or experts on German problems. While the SPD is willing to endorse the general outline of the "Eden unity plan," its leaders object to the provision which would permit the co-existence of both governments until a new constitution has been adopted by the unified government.

The Bonn coalition has given its unqualified support to Allied policies at the conference, and in finding ambiguous objections to these policies, the Socialists appear merely to be attempting to fulfill their role as the government opposition. The party has frequently been forced to adopt opposition tactics to the government's foreign policies because the Chancellor has not wanted the opposition to share credit for his foreign policies, and has excluded the opposition from inter-party deliberations.

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