

# Foreign Ministers Conference, Geneva 1959 ; Berlin question 1959 ; Outer sp...

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Berlin - 1959

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25 March

Text of letter from Cabot Lodge to D.H.  
delivered by L.E. Thompson, American Embassy  
in Moscow, to D.H.



Secret

THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SECRET

American Embassy,  
Moscow,  
March 25, 1959.

My dear Mr. Secretary-General:

I have today received a telegram containing the text of a letter to you from Ambassador Cabot Lodge reading as follows:

"From Lodge to Hammarskjold

"In keeping with our conversations before your departure from New York, here is the latest available information about the Berlin problem.

"The major development at the meetings over the past weekend with Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Lloyd was agreement on the text of a draft reply to the Soviet note of March 2. The full text of the note as agreed between the United Kingdom and the U.S. is enclosed. This text represents general agreement on the formulation of substantive paragraphs, although the language will not be exactly identical in our respective replies. It was further agreed that the preamble and general arrangement can vary as each government desires.

"The text was transmitted to the French and German governments on Saturday March 21, for concurrence. As soon as that has been obtained, the text will be given to NATO for consideration. It is hoped we can deliver the note in Moscow by the end of this week.

"It should be noted that the language used to formulate our agenda proposals is borrowed from the Macmillan-Khrushchev communique in Moscow, which we believe will make it acceptable to the Soviets.

"The interest of the Czechs and Poles in a settlement of the German question is acknowledged, but our preference for limiting meetings, at least initially to the Four Powers responsible for Germany, plus German advisers, is again stressed. On the basis of recent developments, you will perceive that prospects have improved

His Excellency  
Dag Hammarskjold,  
Moscow

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for the holding of negotiations. There is one major danger, however, which I am sure you recognize. That is, if the U.S.S.R. undertakes any unilateral action to change present arrangements concerning Berlin (and this would include the signing of a peace treaty with the East Germans) this would be considered as a deliberate act of sabotage of the negotiations. The Soviet Union cannot reasonably expect the Western powers to negotiate under an ultimatum, and any unilateral action by the U.S.S.R. while negotiations are pending would do irreparable harm to prospects of successful negotiations.

"You may also be interested to learn that the President's television broadcast last week on Berlin received enthusiastic bipartisan support through the country. This is further evidence that the American public recognizes the danger inherent in the Berlin situation and fully supports the position of the Government that it will not retreat from its duty. The U.S. obviously has no intrinsic interest in prolonging the occupation of Berlin. We do, however, have a deep moral commitment to the population of West Berlin and are not willing to consider any proposal which would jeopardize their freedom or security. Other than that, our main interest in Berlin is to see that it eventually resumes its rightful place as the capital of a reunified Germany.

"For these reasons, the U.S. and its allies are not nearly so interested in the wide variety of proposals for interim solutions to the Berlin problem as we are in seeking a satisfactory solution to the problem of Germany as a whole.

"As I am sure you understand, Berlin itself is not the basic source of tension. The Berlin crisis was artificially created by the U.S.S.R., and no temporary arrangement affecting the status of Berlin alone will provide assurance against future crises of the same genesis. The prolonged division of Germany is the fundamental source of tension, and it is upon this problem that we must focus primary attention.

"We hope the foregoing information will help you in your discussions, and that these discussions will enable the Soviet leaders to gain a better understanding of the problems and risks involved. In this connection, the United States hopes there will be no implication that the U.N. is seeking a role of mediator or other intervention in the situation at this time. It seems here that such activities now would defeat their own purpose.

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"I trust you are having a pleasant trip and look forward to seeing you on your return. Sincerely yours, Cabot."

Sincerely yours,

*Llewellyn Thompson*

Llewellyn E. Thompson

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The Government of the United States refers to the note of the Government of the USSR of March 2, 1959, in response to the United States note of February 16 proposing a conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of France, USSR, UK and US.

The United States Government has consistently favored meetings of interested powers that could provide opportunities for conducting serious discussions of major problems and could be an effective means of reaching agreement on significant subjects. It was for this reason that the United States Government in its note of February 16 proposed a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of France, USSR, UK and US. The United States Government notes with satisfaction the Soviet Government's agreement to such a meeting.

Specifically the United States Government proposes that a meeting of France, USSR, UK and the US at the Foreign Minister level be convened in Geneva on May 11, 1959, to consider questions relating to Germany, including a peace treaty with Germany and the question of Berlin. The purpose of the Foreign Ministers meeting should be to reach positive agreements over as wide a field as possible, and in any case to narrow the differences between the respective points of view and to prepare constructive proposals for consideration by a conference of heads of government later in the summer.

On this understanding and as soon as developments in the Foreign Ministers meeting justify holding a summit conference, the United States Government would be ready to participate in such a conference. The date, place and agenda for such a conference would be proposed by the meeting of Foreign Ministers. The conference of heads of government could consider and if possible resolve some wider problems such as those referred to in the Soviet Government's note of March 2 and in previous communications from the United States Government and where necessary establish machinery for further negotiation on these problems.

The United States Government fully recognizes that Poland and Czechoslovakia, like a number of other countries, have a legitimate and direct interest in matters connected with the settlement of problems relating to Germany. The possibility of the participation of other countries at a certain stage in negotiations could therefore be contemplated. However, the United States Government believes that the proposed meeting should at least at the outset involve only the four powers

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responsible for Germany. The United States Government also notes that the Soviet Government agrees with the proposal made in its note of February 16 that German advisors should be invited to the meeting on May 11 and be consulted.

The Government of the United States in proposing a Foreign Ministers meeting on May 11 understands that the Soviet Government would find Geneva a suitable location. The Government of the United States will therefore inquire of the Government of Switzerland to determine if this place and time would be convenient and also of the Secretary General of the United Nations to ascertain if the facilities of the United Nations in Geneva can be made available.

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