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Withdrawal No. 2-16

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Government House
Bermuda

December 22, 1961
9:45 AM - 10:30 AM

U.S.

The President
The Secretary of State
Ambassador Bruce
Ambassador Bohlen
Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Mr. William R. Tyler

U.K.

The Prime Minister
The Foreign Secretary, Lord Home
Ambassador Ormsby Gore
Sir Norman Brook
Sir Evelyn Shuckbrugh
MA ~~Mr~~ Ian Samuel

SUBJECT: Berlin ² (see previous memorandum on same subject dated December 21, 1961)

The modified instructions to Ambassador Thompson were discussed.

The Secretary said we thought it would be good to make a move in the direction of an all-Berlin solution in the first talk, and not foreclose this possibility to the same ^{degree} ~~extent~~ as in the British draft. The Secretary also said that the British proposal envisages a series of talks, while we feel that it would be preferable to move toward a meeting, should this prove possible.

The Prime Minister asked what we would do if we don't find a basis for negotiation. The Secretary said we would try to achieve a ^{radical} ~~pragmatic~~ solution on the basis of recognizing facts on either side.

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on either side. It was important to keep the situation from deteriorating further. Lord Home asked how much latitude Ambassador Thompson would have. Ambassador Bohlen said he would not have much, since the probe would be conducted within the framework of the quadripartite talks in Paris.

The Secretary said the West Germans preferred that we should deal with the East Germans on matters relating to traffic and access, rather than that they should do so themselves. The Prime Minister said that we must move toward negotiations. If the reply from the Russians was very bad and they won't budge, what should we then do? The Secretary said we should ask the Soviets what their intentions are after they have signed a peace treaty with the GDR. The President said that if the Russians are unreasonable and unyielding the question was how do we dramatize the fact that we have done everything we could. He felt that, in such a situation, the Ambassadorial level was not high enough. The Secretary suggested that Gromyko might be asked to come to the UN, where we would turn to the Uniting for Peace resolution. The President commented that the United States should not have to carry the whole burden. The Prime Minister said that should Ambassador

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Thompson fail to arrange a meeting, we must take some action ourselves. In any case, we must justify ourselves to Western opinion. We must not allow ourselves to drift into war. Had appropriate action been taken at the time, World War I could have been avoided. Sir David Ormsby Gore said it was important to distinguish between the Foreign Ministers meeting to negotiate a settlement on the one hand, and a Foreign Ministers meeting to discuss a very serious situation on the other. Lord Home wondered whether Ambassador Thompson would have enough latitude. Would it be desirable to go back to the Ambassadorial group in case he got nowhere? Mr. Bundy commented that Chancellor Adenauer had shown himself to be more flexible than the German position had seemed to be according to Ambassador Grewe. The Prime Minister emphasized the advantages of working out some kind of trusteeship function for the West in West Berlin. The Secretary said he was somewhat leery of the word "trusteeship" but was rather in favor of superimposing an arrangement on top of our rights, which we would not give up.

At this point the Prime Minister raised the question whether it would be a good thing for the UK to send a reply to Khrushchev's recent long letter, and it was agreed that a reply would be
desirable.

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desirable.

There followed some discussion of the British draft reply and certain amendments in the text were proposed. It was agreed that a final paragraph would be added relating the reply to the Ambassadorial talks in Moscow. There should also be some reference to the allies.

The President and the Secretary both said that Ambassador Thompson should, before the end of the year, ask for an appointment. Lord Home asked how it might be possible to use German Ambassador Kroll, and would this be a good thing. The Secretary said he thought it was more important to keep Foreign Minister Schroeder and Grewe informed. Ambassador Bruce added that Kroll is unreliable and hated by his own Foreign Office. The Prime Minister said that it seemed to him that Kroll had all the qualifications for reaching an agreement with the Russians and that he would much rather have the Germans bear the load rather than us.

The President said he did not want the coordination of instructions to rest with the Ambassadorial group, which had proved too slow and obstructive. The Prime Minister said he welcomed the President's comment. The situation was that

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Ambassador Thompson might succeed in the first talk, or that the Russians might say no and go ahead with a separate peace treaty, or they might call for a Foreign Ministers meeting. If the Russians were to say no, what do we do? Just sit around? Lord Home said he thought Gromyko would say that what we had to talk to him about was "very thin". We should be in a position to move further. The Prime Minister said that what we were doing was rather like inviting someone to dinner without telling him just what there would be to eat. We would be saying that there would be soup, probably fish and perhaps a little meat, although the latter was not certain. Lord Home said it might be rather a good thing to let Gromyko take a look at the meat through the kitchen door. The Prime Minister added that Ambassador Kroll might be the person to say to the Russians "By Jove, there's a pretty good stew in there. Of course I'm not supposed to know about it." The President raised the question of how we get the Germans to move. He observed that Adenauer was much more forthcoming when he discussed these matters himself. We might have a discussion with the Germans on the subject of relations with the GDR and access, also West Berlin's ties with the Federal Republic. The President felt we should talk to the Germans about what arrangements might be reached. It was subsequently agreed that it

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might be best for such discussions to be held in Bonn, rather than in the Ambassadorial group, and that Ambassadors Steel and Dowling could talk with Foreign Minister Schroeder.

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