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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

STATE DEPT DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW

- Exempted, EO 12958, 25X _____ (TRANSLATION)
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- Classified by K. G. M. - G. M. - G. M. Date: 11/3/00
- Other Agency Action: _____

LS NO. **R-II**

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Bonn, October 21, 1961

THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR

Dear Mr. President:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Retain class'n Change / classify to _____

With concurrence of _____

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EO 12356, Sec. 1.3 (a) (2)(3)(5) (7)

PPC/HDR by JTC 5-1-1-95

Withdrawal No. 5-31

Thank you very much for your letter of October 14, 1961.

I share your opinion that a frank exchange of views is of utmost importance for the preservation of Western unity. This is especially true in the present critical situation, in which the Soviets are attempting to undermine this unity by a great variety of means.

I am grateful to you and Secretary Rusk for having informed me and my Government about the talks with Mr. Gromyko, and I believe that the time has now come for consultation concerning the conclusions to be drawn from these meetings and whether a basis for formal negotiations already exists. In any event, there is obviously need for clarification as to whether the three powers who together bear the responsibility for Berlin are in agreement on this question.

Like you, I am of the opinion that every effort should be made to settle the problems before us by peaceful and diplomatic means in order not to allow a desperate collision to take place.

For this

His Excellency
John F. Kennedy,
President of the United States of America,
Washington, D. C.

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For this reason I also consider it necessary to continue the talks with the Soviet Foreign Minister, and I hope that we will reach agreement in advance on the aims and limits of such talks.

The limits are where vital interests are affected. In this connection, I should like to state that the Federal Republic identifies itself completely with the vital interests of the Three Western Powers that must be defended by force if necessary; but not everything outside those interests is negotiable.

This is especially true of the security interests of the Federal Republic which I dealt with in my last letter. It is also true of Berlin's political and constitutional ties with the Federal Republic, without which Berlin is not viable and would soon become a dying city in which there would be nothing left to defend but empty houses.

Furthermore, the Federal Republic of Germany cannot depart from the basis laid down in the Paris Treaties of 1954 for a common policy on Germany. Neither can she renounce the contractually agreed principle that the Eastern borders of Germany can only be determined in a peace treaty.

Some of these points have been questioned during the last weeks in the discussions of the ambassadorial group. I must confess that I would consider it dangerous if this tendency were to continue in the discussions.

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After the catastrophe of the Hitler period and the war, the German people put all their hopes on the West, on the Atlantic Alliance, and especially on the United States. They withstood all Soviet blandishments to reunify Germany on the basis of neutralization. In so doing they relied on the promises of their allies to pursue together with us a policy of re-establishment of a Germany unified in freedom and security, although it was clear to all that concrete success of this policy in the near future could not be expected. We must not disappoint this confidence, and we must also not destroy for the Germans behind the Iron Curtain the last glimmer of hope for liberation from their present fate.

I am very grateful to you for your explanation on the subject of "European security."

I agree with you that a special military status for some European countries or even for the Federal Republic of Germany alone is unacceptable; that disengagement cannot be considered; and that the efforts toward disarmament must be taken very seriously.

I should be grateful if--through our Ambassador or through whatever channel you may deem appropriate--I could have a clarification of your idea that the confrontation in Central Europe could perhaps be reduced. My impression has always been that it is not the confrontation which is dangerous but rather the reduction of confrontation. Korea is a good example. But the experience at the Israeli-Arab border also proves it; almost

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all the clashes occurred within the demilitarized or neutralized zones and not where the Israelis and Arabs confronted each other directly. It would, of course, be an advantage if the number of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe could be reduced. But we all know that the Soviets would counter such a proposal with a demand for a proportionate reduction in the number of Western troops.

As to nuclear weapons, the security of the Federal Republic of Germany at present rests on the general NATO agreement that the Bundeswehr, too, will have at its disposal, in case of war, the atomic warheads which in peacetime are in American custody. Inasmuch as the Federal Republic of Germany, at the request of her allies, is the only country in the world to have renounced the production of atomic weapons, she must be able to rely on this fundamental basis of NATO policy. Any agreement with the Soviets which encroaches upon or actually vitiates this basis of our defense policy would endanger the security of the Federal Republic of Germany--and thereby also the security of our allies.

For these reasons Mr. Gromyko's demands in this area must, in my opinion, be rejected.

✓ Measures against surprise attacks could be useful, but they can only be significant today in the form of very extensive zones.

I would welcome a personal discussion with you, Mr. President, on all these questions and on the present situation in general, after

the formation

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the formation of our new government, which will probably
take place next week.

I shall answer your letter of October 19 concerning
Mr. Gilpatrick's visit after his arrival here.

With respectful and cordial regards,

Yours

Adenauer

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