

Results of the Kohl-Gorbachev Talks (July 17, 1990)

Abstract

With U.S. support, Chancellor Kohl and Secretary General Gorbachev reached a compromise during personal talks in the Caucasus Mountains in July 1990. The compromise allowed Germany to retain its NATO membership. In exchange, it agreed to drastic disarmament and offered considerable economic aid to the Soviet Union. After his return, Kohl gave the following statement to the press on July 17, 1990.

Source

Kohl on His Caucasus Meeting with Gorbachev on July 15/16, 1990

[...]

Thanks to intensive, candid talks and consultation at all levels – unprecedented in their number and frequency – we can now speak of a breakthrough in regulating the external aspects of German unification. We also begin to see clearly the contours of a future European architecture. [...]

Today I can announce to all Germans the good news that all other external aspects have been agreed upon by the Soviet Union and ourselves.

We want forward-looking agreements, extensive cooperation, trust, and, last but not least, a broad-based meeting of our peoples, particularly the younger generation.

We also want this to be a contribution to lasting, peaceful development in Europe.

This provides a model – and on this point, President Gorbachev and I are in full agreement – for a comprehensive treaty of cooperation between united Germany and the Soviet Union, to be concluded as soon as possible following unification.

This treaty will be based on a solid foundation and in the mutual understanding that German-Soviet cooperation, together with our firm position in the West, will provide an essential contribution to stability in Central Europe and beyond.

Based upon these common philosophies – as President Gorbachev also stated – we have resolved the practical problems that still lie ahead on the path to German unification.

I would like to review the most important points here:

- 1) The unification of Germany includes the FRG, the GDR, and all of Berlin.
- 2) With unification of Germany, the rights and responsibilities of the Four Powers with respect to Germany as a whole and Berlin will be terminated. Starting at the time of unification, united Germany will receive total and unrestricted sovereignty.
- 3) United Germany, in exercising its total and unrestricted sovereignty, can freely and autonomously decide whether and to which alliance it wishes to belong. This corresponds to the spirit and text of the CSCE final acts.

I have declared the view of the federal government that united Germany would like membership in

NATO, and I know that this corresponds to the wishes of the GDR. Minister President de Maizière made this clear in his comments yesterday. We reconfirmed our decision in this respect when we spoke early this morning.

4) United Germany will conclude a reciprocal treaty with the Soviet Union on the withdrawal of troops from the GDR. The Soviet leadership has declared that the withdrawal process will be completed within three to four years.

What I have just so simply announced, “three to four years,” ladies and gentlemen, means that Soviet troops will have left German territory by 1994 at the latest. And I would like to emphasize this once more: this means that, 50 years from the day on which Soviet troops first set foot on what was then territory of the German Reich, during World War II, the last Soviet soldiers will have left Germany.

Further, a transitional treaty on the effects of the introduction of the West German mark will be concluded for this period.

5) As long as Soviet troops are still present on the territory of the present GDR, no NATO structures will expand into this area. As of the time of unification, Articles 5 and 6 of the NATO treaty will apply to the entire territory of united Germany.

6) Starting immediately upon unification, nonintegrated units of the Bundeswehr, i.e., territorial defense units, will be permitted to be stationed within the territory of the present GDR and Berlin.

7) As long as Soviet troops are still present on territory of the present GDR, we feel that troops of the three Western powers should remain in Berlin. The federal government will request this of the three Western powers, proposing an appropriate treaty. A legal basis for the presence of Western troops must be created by treaty between the government of the united Germany and the Three Powers. We assume that the amount of troops and equipment will, of course, not exceed its present level.

8) Upon withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the territory of the present GDR and Berlin, NATO troops will also be permitted to be stationed in this area of Germany, though no launching facilities for nuclear weapons will be permitted. Foreign troops and nuclear weapons may not be moved there.

9) The federal government is willing to submit a declaration during the Vienna talks currently in progress, [which obliges it] to reduce the size of the army of a united Germany to 370,000 troops within three to four years. This reduction will begin when the first Vienna Agreement takes effect. This means that the military of united Germany will have 45 percent fewer troops than the combined authorized size of the Bundeswehr and the Nationale Volksarmee.

10) United Germany will not produce, own, or possess ABC weapons, and will remain a member of the nonproliferation treaty.

I assume, of course, that the three Western powers as well as the government of the GDR, whose representative, the Minister President, I have already spoken to today, will also support these ideas for unification. Ladies and gentlemen, a further focus of my talks with President Gorbachev, and of the talks between [German] Federal Finance Minister Theodor Waigel and his Soviet counterpart, was forward-looking economic and financial cooperation. [...]

As you have noticed, I have not mentioned another very important date: namely, that of the Bundestag elections, the all-German elections to take place in December. I assume that it will be the first Sunday in December, according to current discussion. You will certainly understand when I close by expressing my intention to win this election.

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