

Soviet Draft of a German Peace Treaty – First “Stalin Note” (March 10, 1952)

Abstract

At the end of the Second World War, tensions between the Western powers and the Soviet Union began gradually intensifying, and in 1950 Korea became the scene of the Cold War's first military confrontation. The Western powers quickly exhibited a greater willingness to abandon their original goal of the permanent demilitarization of the Federal Republic and began favoring a West German defensive contribution within a European framework. For the Federal Republic, this meant a chance to overcome essential restrictions on its own state sovereignty. But the move to firmly embed the Federal Republic within Western security structures also entailed the growing threat of a permanent division of Germany.

In March 1952, two months before the signing of the European Defense Community, the Soviet Union tried to block this development. Stalin proposed that the four victorious powers meet with a newly formed all-German government to negotiate the peace treaty called for in the Potsdam Agreement of 1945. The price for the prospect of German unity and admission into the United Nations was the country's political and military neutrality. This was reflected in the demand that all foreign troops be withdrawn and that Germany forgo joining the military alliance.

Source

Note from the Soviet Foreign Ministry to the American Embassy, Enclosing a Draft for a German Peace Treaty, March 10, 1952

The Soviet Government considers it necessary to direct the attention of the Government of the United States of America to the fact that although about seven years have passed since the end of the war in Europe a peace treaty with Germany is not yet concluded.

With the aim of eliminating such an abnormal situation the Soviet Government, supporting the communication of the Government of the German Democratic Republic to the Four Powers requesting that conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany be expedited, on its part addresses itself to the Government of the United States and also to the Governments of Great Britain and France with the proposal to urgently discuss the question of a peace treaty with Germany with a view to preparing in the nearest future an agreed draft peace treaty and present it for examination by an appropriate international conference with the participation of all interested governments.

It is understood that such a peace treaty must be worked out with the direct participation of Germany in the form of an all-German Government. From this it follows that the U.S.S.R., U.S.A., England, and France who are fulfilling control functions in Germany must also consider the question of conditions favoring the earliest formation of an all-German Government expressing the will of the German people.

With the aim of facilitating the preparation of a draft peace treaty the Soviet Government on its part proposes for the consideration of the Governments of the U.S.A., Great Britain and France the attached draft as a basis of a peace treaty with Germany.

In proposing consideration of this draft the Soviet Government at the same time expressed its readiness also to consider other possible proposals on this question.

The Government of the U.S.S.R. expects to receive the reply of the Government of the U.S.A. to the mentioned proposal at the earliest possible time.

Similar notes have also been sent by the Soviet Government to the Governments of Great Britain and France.

Draft of Soviet Government of Peace Treaty with Germany

Almost seven years have passed since the end of the war with Germany but Germany still does not have a peace treaty, finds itself divided, continues to remain in an unequal situation as regards other governments. It is necessary to end such an abnormal situation. This responds to the aspirations of all peace loving peoples. It is impossible to assure a just status to the legal national interests of the German people without the earliest conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany.

Conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany has an important significance for the strengthening of peace in Europe. A peace treaty with Germany will permit final decision of questions which have arisen as a consequence of the Second World War. The European states which have suffered from German aggression, particularly the neighbors of Germany, have a vital interest in the solution of these questions. Conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany will aid improvement of the international situation as a whole and at the same time aid the establishment of a lasting peace.

The necessity of hastening the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany is required by the fact that the danger of re-establishment of German militarism which has twice unleashed world wars has not been eliminated in as much as appropriate provisions of the Potsdam conference still remain unfilled. A peace treaty with Germany must guarantee elimination of the possibility of a rebirth of German militarism and German aggression.

Conclusion of the peace treaty with Germany will establish for the German people permanent conditions of peace, will aid the development of Germany as a unified democratic and peace-loving government in accordance with the Potsdam provisions and will assure to the German people the possibility of peaceful cooperation with other peoples.

As a result of this, the Governments of the Soviet Union, the United States of America, Great Britain and France have decided urgently to set about working out a peace treaty with Germany.

The Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Great Britain and France consider that preparations of the peace treaty should be accomplished with the participation of Germany in the form of an all-German Government and that the peace treaty with Germany should be formed on the following basis:

Basis of Peace Treaty with Germany

Participants

Great Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States of America, France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland and other governments which participated with their armed forces in the war against Germany.

Political provisions

(1) Germany is re-established as a unified state, thereby an end is put to the division of Germany and a unified Germany has a possibility of development as an independent democratic peace-loving state.

(2) All armed forces of the occupying powers must be withdrawn from Germany not later than one year from the date of entry into force of the peace treaty. Simultaneously all foreign military bases on the

territory of Germany must be liquidated.

(3) Democratic rights must be guaranteed to the German people to the end that all persons under German jurisdiction without regard to race, sex, language or religion enjoy the rights of man and basic freedoms including freedom of speech, press, religious persuasion, political conviction and assembly.

(4) Free activity of democratic parties and organizations must be guaranteed in Germany with the right of freedom to decide their own internal affairs, to conduct meetings and assembly, to enjoy freedom of press and publication.

(5) The existence of organizations inimical to democracy and to the maintenance of peace must not be permitted on the territory of Germany.

(6) Civil and political rights equal to all other German citizens for participation in the building of peace-loving democratic Germany must be made available to all former members of the German army, including officers and generals, all former Nazis, excluding those who are serving court sentences for commission of crimes.

(7) Germany obligates itself not to enter into any kind of coalition or military alliance directed against any power which took part with its armed forces in the war against Germany.

Territory

The territory of Germany is defined by the borders established by the provisions of the Potsdam Conference of the Great Powers.

Economic Provisions

No kind of limitations are imposed on Germany as to development of its peaceful economy, which must contribute to the growth of the welfare of the German people.

Likewise, Germany will have no kind of limitation as regards trade with other countries, navigation and access to world markets.

Military Provisions

(1) Germany will be permitted to have its own national armed forces (land, air, and sea) which are necessary for the defense of the country.

(2) Germany is permitted to produce war materials and equipment, the quantity and type of which must not exceed the limitations required for the armed forces established for Germany by the peace treaty.

Germany and the United Nations Organization

The governments concluding a peace treaty with Germany will support the application of Germany for acceptance as a member of the United Nations Organization.

Source: Note from the Soviet Foreign Ministry to the American Embassy, Enclosing a Draft for a German Peace Treaty, March 10, 1952; reprinted in *Documents on Germany, 1944–1959: Background Documents on Germany, 1944–1959, and a Chronology of Political Developments affecting Berlin, 1945–1956*. Washington, DC: General Printing Office, 1959, pp. 85–87.

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