



July 4, 1959

**"Summary of the Talks with the GDR
Party-Governmental Delegation on 18 June 1959. On
the Soviet side, the same people took part as in the
previous meeting, and also A.N. Kosygin and N.S
Patolichev," 4 July 1959**

Citation:

"Summary of the Talks with the GDR Party-Governmental Delegation on 18 June 1959. On the Soviet side, the same people took part as in the previous meeting, and also A.N. Kosygin and N.S Patolichev," 4 July 1959", July 4, 1959, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow, Fond 0742, Opis 4, Portfel' 33, Papka 31, ll. 71-87 for June 9 and ll. 88-102 for June 18; obtained and translated from Russian by Hope M. Harrison.

<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/112012>

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Secret. Notes taken by Beletskii, Kotomkin, Mial'dizin.

Ulbricht: Let me express the gratitude of our delegation for the warm welcome we received in Moscow, Riga, Kiev and Gorki. Our meetings were a significant event in the "development of friendship between the Soviet Union and the GDR. We are all very pleased with the trip, including the students who were also in our delegation. We are very grateful to you for everything, including also for the well-composed program. Regarding the visit to the Exhibition of the Achievements of the National Economy of the USSR (VDNKh), it is completely clear that we could only become acquainted with it in general outline. But already after that, it became clear to us that at home we have an entire series of unresolved problems [economically]. At home we are discussing things, but sometimes they aren't applied quite right. Thus, we ask you to accept a group of our specialists for a more detailed study of your achievements which were shown in the Exhibition. This is particularly so with regard to electronics and chemistry. This will have great political significance also, because it will give our intelligentsia the opportunity to be convinced of the superiority of Soviet science and technology over the West, especially over the Americans and West Germans.

Khrushchev: We will welcome everyone who comes to us with the goal of becoming acquainted with our achievements.

Ulbricht: Maybe we should listen to the report on the prepared communique.

Khrushchev: They gave us the text of the communique late, and we didn't have the opportunity to study it in detail. Thus I propose studying in more detail the draft communique we received and giving our views through our representatives.

Ulbricht: Agreed.

Khrushchev: Now I would like to say a few words on one important question, namely: on a peace treaty.

Or perhaps [should I] acquaint you with the latest information on Geneva?

We recently received a letter from Eisenhower and yesterday we gave an answer. I would like to emphasize that in accordance with our agreement, the exchange of letters took place confidentially.

From Eisenhower's letter, it is clear that we can't expect any great results from the Geneva conference. The Western powers bring everything back to the question of the period of time. They say that our proposal about a time period of 1 year is an ultimatum, although in principle the issue of a time period was put forward by them themselves in the overall plan.

They want to have a meeting with Adenauer, to wreck the agreement on the committee, proposing the principle of proportional representation on the committee. They know, of course, that if they go for the creation of the committee, this would be recognition of the GDR. However, refusing our recent proposals, they at the same time made a series of concessions and proposed limiting the number of troops in West Berlin [and] stopping subversive activity on its territory. But for this they want us to confirm their rights to maintain their occupation in West Berlin forever and to renounce signing a peace treaty.

They are trying to represent our latest proposal as a threat. But that isn't what is a threat to them, the threat to them is our will for peace and [our] readiness to have a partial resolution of issues.

When we speak about the conclusion of a peace treaty, we have in mind the

conclusion of a peace treaty with two or with one German state.

I don't know whether we will bring this issue of the signing of a peace treaty with the GDR to realization[;] however, such a prospect acts in a sobering way on the Western powers and West Germany. This, if you will, is pressure on them, Damocles' sword, which we must hold over them.

Why? Because by the signing of a peace treaty with the GDR they will lose all their rights to West Berlin which come from the fact of the military defeat and the unconditional surrender of Germany. The threat of war from their side is nonsense, it is blackmail, since it is clear that [merely] because of the two and a half-million inhabitants of West Berlin, it would be unreasonable to place under threat the lives of a hundred million people. The more the Western powers know that there is a balance in the area of atomic weapons and rockets, the better it is for us.

Therefore we must directly establish our point of view on a peace treaty in the communique. If we didn't do this, it would be a gift to Adenauer; then they would say: the representatives of the USSR and GDR assembled and were afraid to move away from their old positions. Thus I think that we must continue our line on this issue and reflect our position in the communique. Furthermore, this must be strengthened by new arguments in our speeches also.

Ulbricht: We are in full agreement with you. I would just like to direct your attention to one issue in connection with the communique. Where the recent Soviet proposals are discussed, it says that the Soviet government agrees to the temporary maintenance of the well-known occupation rights of the Western powers in West Berlin. We exchanged opinions on this issue in the delegation. We propose to start not with West Berlin but with the transitional time period (let's say-1 year) during which the commission must agree on a series of questions, that is, to lay special stress on the fact that the Western powers have recommended a limited transition period. This stating of the issue corresponds to the Soviet proposals and at the same time alleviates for the Western powers the transition to this new position. And this facilitates our argumentation.

Khrushchev: Let's not give a time period. A year or a year-and-a-half-this isn't a key issue for us. We are agreed on different time periods, but we aren't agreed on endlessness. Let us act more flexibly on this issue, using a sliding scale of time periods. They are proposing two-and-a-half years, we [are proposing] one year. Maybe we will agree on something in between. Ulbricht: For us, the main thing now is not to drive them into a corner, but to give them the possibility to change their position.

Khrushchev: Maybe I will acquaint you with the contents of Eisenhower's letter and our answer to it. (The text of the letters is read.)

As you see, in principle there is nothing new, only a repetition and elaboration of what has been said earlier. The new thing is just that we are agreed to make a compromise on the issue of a time period. And this we must emphasize in the communique.

I would like to emphasize again that the Western powers aren't interested in a peace treaty, because otherwise they would weaken the threads which are connected with NATO. The present position already weakens NATO, but signing a peace treaty with Germany, this would mean normalizing the situation in Europe. But then how could the Americans keep Denmark, Luxembourg [and] Greece in NATO?

And even the seemingly strong tie of de Gaulle with Adenauer-this is a relative understanding. In France the issue of the removal of American bombers from their

country was raised.

Now a few more words on the peace treaty. When the Western powers want to sign any sort of treaty, they don't think about anything. This was how it was, for example, with the conclusion of the treaty with Japan [which the U.S. signed with Japan in 1951 and didn't include the Soviets]. And they weren't blamed by us for the signing of separate peace treaty. Therefore, in order to unmask them, we must write directly in the communique: we will achieve the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany. But if the reactionary forces will hinder this, then we agree to conclude a peace treaty with two German states. And if the Western powers don't want this, then we will conclude a peace treaty with the GDR.

In concluding a peace treaty with 2 German states or with the GDR, all agreements on the occupation will cease their operation. There is no point in discussing West Berlin separately from the issue of the peace treaty, since this doesn't have equivalent value. These aren't two questions but one question. Berlin is an issue derived from the problem of a peace treaty. But we must clearly speak in the communique about the status of the free city of West Berlin[;] otherwise we will be accused of agreeing to swallow up West Berlin. Clearly we must also speak about guarantees.

Ulbricht: We agree.

We also heard that [U.S. Secretary of State Christian] Herter wants to exclude the German question and agree only on the cessation of the testing of nuclear weapons. He is looking here for a path to a summit conference. As for us, we think that without any reduction of tensions, we cannot move forward including on the German question. Thus, if the Western powers want to talk about disarmament, it wouldn't be bad, because then we would again come to the question of a peace treaty, but from the other side.

I would also like to note that only a part of the German people understand the slogans about a peace treaty. Thus we will put on the main plan those issues of the peace treaty which are more understood by all, such as for example the liquidation of rocket bases and the prohibition of atomic arms in West Germany. Proceeding from this, it is in our interests that the summit conference will be successful on the issue of atomic disarmament.

Khrushchev: That is correct. But the main thing is to fulfill the resolutions of the [SED] 5th congress [of July 1958], to raise the standard of living. Then it will be clear to each German where there is freedom and where there isn't freedom.

Grotewohl: From a general estimation, I agree with what has been said here. I just have one reservation. It seems to me that the comparison with Japan appears a bit formal. Signing a peace treaty with Germany and with Japan are two different things. Japan was a single state at the moment of the signing of the treaty, but Germany is divided. If we sign a peace treaty, the good conditions will be complicated. However, in the West, they will try to present the signing of a peace treaty with the GDR as the deepening of the division of the country. If there is a peace treaty signed with the GDR, this would mean that there would be written into it something about the acceleration of militarism in the GDR, whereas the problem lies in the acceleration of militarism in West Germany. Since at the current time we can't count on the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany or with two German states, then, obviously, this national problem-stopping the arming of (p. 7) West Germany must be resolved now by other means, by the fulfillment of the resolutions of the 5th Congress. We cannot separate these issues.

What we need to study now, what we need to resolve is to determine our relations to the occupying powers and to the occupying authorities. The Western powers currently are formulating their entire policy on the principle that they are allegedly defending freedom and Western culture. They declare that for the defense of this freedom they must maintain the occupation of West Berlin. This explains the fact that they are fighting persistently for their formulation of preserving their rights of occupation.

Thus N.S. Khrushchev's proposal not to give a concrete time period in the communique is correct. This will make our position more flexible. Proceeding from this, we must find such a formulation in the communique which will present the liquidation of the occupation regime as a necessary process of development in order to make that understandable to everyone.

The most decisive thing in all the negotiations is to win time, and time can be won only through negotiations. So, I agree with you.

Ebert: I would like to speak about the issue of a peace treaty and about Berlin. I agree that a peace treaty and Berlin are one issue. But for our activity in Berlin, it is important to emphasize that by preserving the current situation, we can find a way to normalize the situation in Berlin (pushing off from their concessions to bring about the stopping of subversive activity, propaganda, etc.). Their proposals on this are already a step towards the normalization of the situation. I must emphasize that normalization is possible not only on technical issues (connections, transport, etc.) but also in political relations. The normalization of life in the city is the basis of our proposals on Berlin. Thus we must obtain such a normalization more persistently and as soon as possible, since this will be understood by the whole population.

Khrushchev: I think that the comments made by Comrade Ebert are correct and they must be taken into account in preparing the communique.

Bach: We were very surprised that the last proposal of the Soviet Union in Geneva² was seen as an ultimatum by the Western powers. What Comrade Khrushchev said regarding the answer to Eisenhower is a question of diplomatic tactics. We all agree with these tactics. Comrade Khrushchev emphasized that even if we don't speak of time periods, the main issues remain in force.

Khrushchev: Yes.

Bach: We take this into account in our communique. If I understood correctly, we should write [in the communique] that, in case at Geneva there is no principled agreement reached regarding the signing of a peace treaty with Germany, the USSR is ready to sign a separate peace treaty with the GDR.

Khrushchev: We will not call that treaty separate. We must show that not only the USSR, but all countries which are ready for it can sign a peace treaty with the GDR. A number of countries have already declared their agreement to sign such a treaty with the German Democratic Republic.

Homann: On the question of the methods of the realization of our principles, we are ready to compromise, but on the main issues we must remain unbending. The main thing is that what we have said here must be reflected in the communique, since this will strengthen the certainty of those who are fighting for peace in Germany.

It is important to write this down, since we evaluated here developments in Germany and the progress of the conference in Geneva. And a basis would be established for

further movement forward on the German question.

Scholz: I would like to emphasize that a peace treaty with the GDR is not only a means of pressure on the Western powers, but it also has great significance for the domestic political situation in the GDR. For a long time, we have mobilized the people of the Republic under this slogan. We made a series of concessions, but we must now emphasize that our position remains unchanged on basic issues.

However, it is necessary to emphasize this in the communique, but without naming a concrete time period. We already have experience with the date May 27 [the deadline for Khrushchev's 27 November 1958 ultimatum]. As is well-known, on that day everyone in the GDR expected that something would happen. Therefore, it is better not to decree a concrete date, but to preserve freedom of movement for oneself. It will alleviate our political work, although it may also seem that we are not consistent.

Mikoian: I would like to respond to Comrade Grotewohl regarding the analogy between the peace treaty with Germany and the peace treaty with Japan. Of course, there is a difference between a peace treaty with Germany and a peace treaty with Japan. But in this case, the issue is different. The analogy with Japan helps us. The Western powers fought against Japan together with us and signed an act on its capitulation. And we all should have signed a peace treaty with Japan together. But they themselves violated that principle. It is a very serious argument in our hands against them.

They think that so long as there isn't a peace treaty, all conditions connected with the capitulation are still active, and the occupation rights remain in force. When we proposed concluding a peace treaty with Germany, it was a correct and strong approach from our side. This proposal cut the ground out from under their feet. Before they didn't want to talk about Berlin at all, but now they are forced to carry out negotiations with us on it.

We would like to sign a peace treaty with a united Germany. We propose to give a certain time period for achieving agreement on this issue between the German states. If such an agreement is not reached, then we are ready to conclude a peace treaty with two German states. If the Western powers won't agree to this either, then we will sign a treaty with the GDR.

But they don't want the signing of a peace treaty at all. Therefore, if they will be afraid that there will be a peace treaty signed with the GDR, which would deprive them of their occupation rights, then they will be forced to find a new path for agreement. The threat of signing a peace treaty will force them to carry out negotiations with us.

I think that Comrade Scholz was right when he talked about the great significance of a peace treaty also for the GDR. It is important for the GDR, because it would raise its significance in the eyes of world public opinion.

Khrushchev: We could take examples from history. When, for example, the revolution occurred in Russia and the Soviet representatives carried out negotiations with Germany in Brest in early 1918, the German government signed a peace treaty with [Simon] Petliura and turned their troops on Ukraine, and not only on Ukraine, but all the way to Rostov. And Russia waged war with Germany being a united state.

Or take the example of Vietnam. In Geneva in 1954 the great powers agreed on the carrying out of free elections in Vietnam [after] a two year period. Were there elections? There weren't. Who fought against holding these elections? Mainly, the USA fought against this. It wasn't advantageous to them, and so they didn't even

think about elections.

It appears that capitalistic morals go like the wind blows-they do what is advantageous for them. When it is advantageous to them, they find the necessary arguments.

Now about proportional representation. They say, for example, that the GDR is one-third of Germany, and the FRG is two-thirds. But if we take China, 600 million people live in the PRC [People's Republic of China], and 10 million people live on Taiwan. And who do the Americans recognize, whose representative sits in the UN?

Such are the morals of a blockhead.

Or Guatemala. With the help of rough forces, the USA expelled the democratic government [of Jacob Arbenz in 1954] which they didn't like, because it was advantageous to them [to do so].

Furthermore, the Americans maintain, for example, that Franco's Spain is a free country, and they want to accept it in NATO.

Therefore we must always understand with whom we are dealing. They are bandits. If we were weak, they would long ago have resolved the German question to their advantage.

Adenauer decided to remain chancellor in order to carry out a "policy of strength" better than Dulles himself did.

So we must not forget that if we let down our guard, they will swallow us up.

However, we have the means to scratch them slightly on the throat.

Our cause is just. They will not start a war, and we all the more [won't].

Developments are going in our favor. This is true not only for the USSR, but all for the socialist countries, including also

the GDR. The GDR must exert socialist influence on the entire West. We have everything we need to do this.

Look at how the situation changed in 1956. They didn't want to shake hands with us. And now Macmillan himself came to us. And soon [U.S. Vice President] Nixon and [Averell] Harriman will come travel around our country. And it is because a difficult situation has been created for them, and it will become more difficult.

If they accused us earlier of resolving social problems by force, now everyone can be convinced that we decide these issues by the force of the example of socialist organization.

Thus our communique will have great significance. It will also reflect our peace-loving firmness.

Ulbricht: Thank you very much for your explanation.

Khrushchev: We are very glad that our points of views coincide. This is especially important for such a pointed issue as the German one. Speaking of our united views, I

have in mind the representatives of all the parties of the National Front of Democratic Germany.

Ulbricht: Comrade Khrushchev emphasized that the most decisive issue for us is the issue of the fulfillment of the main economic tasks. We, on our side, are doing all to realize these tasks. Therefore we have set ourselves the goal of surpassing the FRG. This will have great significance also for the resolution of the Berlin issue. It isn't accidental therefore that [Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt recently said that the question of the struggle for Berlin is a question of the struggle of two systems.

However, for realizing the tasks before us, we ask you to give us help. Comrade Leuschner informed us about the talks which took place on this issue. We thank you for giving us help.

Khrushchev: Are we finished with the question of the communique? Let the responsible officials definitively edit the text of the communique keeping in mind also the comments of Comrade Ebert about how we are ready to eliminate in parts the phenomena which are interfering with the reduction of tensions, although it can't be done immediately. This would be a good beginning on the matter of the reduction of tensions, [and] it would lay the way for reaching agreement on the German question.

If there aren't other comments, let us move to economic issues.

Maybe the comrades who carried out negotiations on economic issues could inform us of the results.

Ulbricht: Maybe we could listen to Comrade Leuschner.

Leuschner: We conducted the negotiations on the basis of the lists which were presented by the German side. During the negotiations, Comrade [N.] Patolichev [Minister of Foreign Trade] noted that the Soviet Union acquires a series of goods for us which we need from the capitalist market.

We understood Comrade Patolichev such that the Soviet Union is prepared to grant us credit in 1960 in the amount of 250 million rubles, for which will be acquired wool, cocoa, coffee, southern fruits, leather, etc. (we asked for 400 million rubles); 200 million rubles in 1961 for the same goods (we asked for 400 million rubles); and in 1962 120 million rubles (we asked for 300 million rubles).

Regarding the payment for this, Comrade Patolichev suggested to fix that in the annual talks. We agreed with this proposal.

Now we can return to working on the seven-year plan. In September, Comrade Ulbricht submitted the draft seven-year plan to the Volkskammer [the GDR parliament], and we will have the opportunity to work with a clear perspective. Now all issues which were open for us have been resolved.

It is true that we didn't completely reach the level of demand in the FRG in certain goods. But that isn't the main thing. Our plan is strained, but we will apply all our forces to fulfill it.

Khrushchev: We already have some experience with talks with the union republics on the composition of plans. Usually they always ask for two-three times more.

Leuschner: We didn't have in mind giving lists for negotiations, and we haven't raised

too high demands.

Khrushchev: I had in mind here our workers. Aside from this, you must bear in mind that developments sometimes go better than we plan. Thus you must keep in mind that as for us, you can open additional possibilities which will facilitate the resolution of the problems before us.

Mikoian: The comrades pointed here to the necessity of buying southern fruits. These products could be acquired for the GDR from the lesser developed states of the East in exchange for their products, all the more since these countries are experiencing difficulties in selling fruits. This would also improve the political weight of the GDR in these countries.

Khrushchev: The GDR must study these markets and adapt to them.

Mikoian: From our side, we can help you with your foreign trade apparatus, and Yugoslavia can also give you this help.

I would like to make another proposal, if there aren't objections from your side, namely: to prepare in the next one-two months a plan of foreign trade exchange for seven years between our countries.

Ulbricht: That is a very good proposal. It would be desirable to sign an agreement on it before the meeting of the Volkskammer, that is, in August. Maybe Leuschner and Patolichev could agree on the basic conditions of this treaty still before the departure of the delegation?

Khrushchev: Good.

Ulbricht: In the name of the delegation, I would like to express great satisfaction with the results of the talks which have shown complete agreement on all questions. The business discussion during the negotiations showed that cooperation between our countries deepens more and more. We heartily thank you.

Khrushchev: And we would like to thank you and also express the hope that our meeting will serve the deepening friendship not only between our governments, but also with the entire German people. On the issue of how relations are turning out between the USSR and the GDR, not only are our countries interested, but all peace-loving peoples are also.

Notes:

1. For Eisenhower's letter to Khrushchev dated 15 June 1959 and Khrushchev's response of June 17, see Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Vol. VIII, pp. 901-903 and 913-917, respectively.
2. At which time the Soviet Union gave the all-German commission 18 months to work things out.