

November 10, 1989

Verbal Message from Mikhail Gorbachev to Helmut Kohl

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Summary:

Verbal message from Mikhail Gorbachev to Helmut Kohl regarding the GDR's decision to allow unrestricted travel to the FRG

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

As you, of course, know, the GDR leadership made the decision to allow the citizens of East Germany unrestricted travel to West Berlin and the FRG.[1] It is understandable, that this decision was not an easy one for the new leadership of the GDR. At the same time, the decision underlines the fact that deep and fundamental changes are taking place in East Germany. The leadership is acting in a concerted and dynamic manner in the interests of its people, and they are opening a dialog with various groups and levels of society.

Statements from the FRG made against this political and psychological background, designed to stimulate a denial of the existence of two German states and encourage emotional reactions, can have no other goal than destabilizing the situation in the GDR and subverting the ongoing processes of democratization and the renewal of all areas of society.

We have received notice that a meeting will take place today in West Berlin, in which official representatives of the FRG and West Berlin will participate. A meeting is planned in the capital of the GDR at the same time.

With the current situation of de facto open borders and huge numbers of people moving in both directions, a chaotic situation could easily develop that might have unforeseen consequences.

In light of the time pressure and the seriousness of the situation, I thought it necessary to ask you, in the spirit of openness and realism, to take the extremely pressing steps necessary to prevent a complication and destabilization of the situation.

[1] The Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Yuli Kvizinski, presented the verbal message from Gorbachev to Kohl's advisor Horst Teltschik during the program in front of the Schöneberg Town Hall in Berlin. See Yuli Kvizinski, *Vor dem Sturm* (Berlin: Siedler, 1993), p. 15; see also Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage*. The SED leadership received the written version of this message from the Soviet embassy in East Berlin with the date of 13 November 1989.