

Communiqué on Germany (New York, 19 September 1950)

Caption: On 19 September 1950, in New York, Dean Acheson, Ernest Bevin and Robert Schuman, the Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom and France respectively, decide to simplify the occupation statute in Germany and envisage German participation in a European army.

Source: United States-Department of State. Documents on Germany 1944-1985. Washington: Department of State, [s.d.]. 1421 p. (Department of State Publication 9446). p. 341-344.

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Communiqué by the Western Foreign Ministers Outlining Steps for Liberalization of Relations With the Federal Republic of Germany, Issued at New York and Washington, September 19, 1950

The Foreign Ministers have reviewed the situation in Germany and Allied relations with the Federal Republic, in the light of developments since their last meeting in London in May 1950. They have taken into account in their examination the views which have been expressed on recent occasions by the Government of the Federal Republic.

They and their Governments share the desire of the German people for the unification of Germany on a basis which respects the fundamental liberties. Despite their efforts to achieve this end, it will obviously not be realized so long as the Soviet Union continues to ignore proposals for democratic all-German elections, and to stage controlled elections such as the one to be held in the Soviet zone on October 15. Pending the unification of Germany, the three Governments consider the Government of the Federal Republic as the only German Government freely and legitimately constituted and therefore entitled to speak for Germany as the representative of the German people in international affairs.

They reaffirm their desire, of which they have already given many proofs, to integrate the Federal Republic into the community of free nations. They are convinced that the overwhelming majority of the German people want to take part in building the European community, and in strengthening its common civilization. It appears to them that the time has now come to take a new step toward the attainment of these aims.

In the spirit of the new relationship which they wish to establish with the Federal Republic, the three Governments have decided, as soon as action can be taken in all three countries in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements, to take the necessary steps in their domestic legislation to terminate the state of war with Germany.

This action will not affect the rights and status of the three powers in Germany, which rest upon other bases. It will, however, create a firmer foundation for the developing structure of peaceful and friendly relationships and will remove disabilities to which German nationals are subject. It is hoped that other nations will find it possible to take similar action in accordance with their own constitutional practices.

The three Ministers have given serious consideration to the problem of the security of the Federal Republic in both its external and its internal aspects. They recognize the fact that outright military units have been created in the Soviet zone of occupation and this fact together with recent events in Germany and elsewhere have given rise to a situation of great concern.

The Allied Governments consider that their forces in Germany have in addition to their occupation duties also the important role of acting as security forces for the protection and defense of the free world, including the German Federal Republic and the Western sectors of Berlin. To make this protection more effective the Allied Governments will increase and reinforce their forces in Germany. They will treat any attack against the Federal Republic or Berlin from any quarter as an attack upon themselves.

The Ministers are fully agreed that the re-creation of a German national army would not serve the best interests of Germany or Europe. They also believe that this is the view of the great majority of the German people.

The Ministers have taken note however of sentiments recently expressed in Germany and elsewhere in favor of German participation in an integrated force for the defense of European freedom. The questions raised by the problem of the participation of the German Federal Republic in the common defense of Europe are at present the subject of study and exchange of views.

As regards internal security, the Foreign Ministers recognize the necessity for insuring that the German authorities are enabled effectively to deal with possible subversive activities. To this end, the Foreign Ministers have agreed to permit the establishment of mobile police formations organized on a Land basis but

with provisions which would enable the Federal Government to have adequate powers to make effective use of all or part of this force in order fully to meet the exigencies of the present situation. The High Commission and the Allied Forces in Germany will render such assistance as may be feasible in the rapid establishment of this force.

The new phase in the relations between the Allies and the Federal Republic will be marked by major extensions of the authority of the Federal Government. To make this possible, the occupying powers are prepared to amend the Occupation Statute while maintaining the legal basis of the occupation, and the Federal Republic will be expected to undertake certain commitments and other actions consonant with its new responsibilities.

In the field of foreign affairs, the Federal Government will be authorized to establish a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to enter into diplomatic relations with foreign countries in all suitable cases. In other fields, and particularly in relation to internal economic matters, far-reaching reductions will be made in existing controls, and the present system of review of German legislation will be modified. In certain cases, the Allied powers will cease as soon as the Federal Government has given undertakings or taken suitable action. The High Commission will promptly begin discussions with the Federal Government to work out the necessary agreements for such undertakings.

The Foreign Ministers have also agreed that a review of the prohibited and limited industries agreement shall be undertaken in the light of the developing relationships with the Federal Republic. Pending this review the High Commission has been instructed to remove forthwith all restrictions on the size, speed, and number of commercial cargo ships built for export and to allow steel to be produced outside the present limitation where this will facilitate the defense effort of the west.

The three Governments pay tribute to the continued steadfastness of the people of Berlin in the valiant struggle of the city to preserve its freedom. They will continue to oppose aggression in any form against the people of the city, and are taking steps to strengthen Allied forces there. In view of the heavy price Berlin has had to pay to defend its freedom, the Governments will continue their efforts to alleviate its economic situation. They have directed the High Commission to review the statement of principles governing the relationship between the Allied Kommandatura and Berlin, and to liberalize Allied controls in the city to the maximum extent practicable.

These decisions mark an important stage in the normalization of the relations and should contribute toward the creation of an atmosphere of mutual confidence and understanding. They represent a major advance toward the progressive return of Germany to partnership in Western Europe and the consolidation of the western nations in their efforts to establish a firm basis for the future peace of Europe and the world.