

Note from the Soviet Government on the Franco-German Treaty (5 February 1963)

Caption: On 5 February 1963, the Soviet Union sends a note to the French and German Government, expressing its disapproval of the signing of the Franco-German Treaty on 22 January 1963.

Source: Archives Nationales du Luxembourg, Luxembourg. Coopération politique européenne. Questions diverses. Traité franco-allemand du 22 janvier 1963, AE 15449.

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Note of the Soviet Government to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

On February 5, A. A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, received the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Moscow Groepper and handed him the following note of the Soviet Government to the FRG Government in connection with the Franco-West German treaty:

The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics considers it necessary to state the following to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Soviet Union, which alongside the other great powers bears special responsibility for the maintenance of universal peace and by virtue of its position as a power that received the unconditional surrender of Hitler's Germany and which has definite rights and obligations in conformity with the quadripartite Allied agreements, cannot overlook "The Treaty Between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of France Concerning German-French Cooperation," signed in Paris on January 22, 1963. The Treaty formalises a close military-political alliance between Western Germany and France. It provides for consultations concerning stands to be taken on every major question of foreign policy, including relations between the East and the West, and extensive cooperation in the military sphere.

A study of the Treaty shows that it is not merely a document regulating the relations between the two neighbouring states. The Governments of the FRG and France claim to settle, by means of a collusion, things which concern many other countries, to determine the destinies of Europe and nearly of the whole world, which, it stands to reason, cannot be accepted by other countries. In proceeding with its clearly unrealistic policy, contradicting the interests of peace, the Federal Government is attempting to speak on behalf of the entire Germany, whereas alongside the FRG there exists another sovereign German state — German Democratic Republic, and West Berlin which represents actually a separate political entity. As is known, the GDR has by no means authorised the Federal Republic to conclude this treaty on its behalf and condemned it right away as a collusion of the main forces of European reaction against the cause of peace and the relaxation of international tension.

The Soviet Government has paid attention to the Franco-West German Treaty not only because of its enormous pretentiousness but, above all, due to the fact that by its contents it is an act aimed at intensifying international tension and undermining the peace and security of the peoples, above all, in Europe. The question is of a military cooperation between the FRG and France, which embraces all the spheres of preparation for a modern warfare and is being effected on the basis profoundly hostile to other states. These states are not specified in the Treaty. However, there are sufficient indications to them in the speeches by responsible statesmen of both countries made in connection with the preparation and signing of the above Treaty.

For the Soviet Union peace and security in Europe is not a phrase, behind which, as is frequently the case with leaders of NATO countries, there is nothing except the need to pay verbal tribute to the sentiments and demands of the broad masses. The fiery lava of world wars which flared up in the heart of Europe flowed to other continents as well and has never bypassed Russia, the Soviet Union.

That is why for the Soviet Union security in Europe is inseparable both from its own security and the security of the entire world, and the Soviet Government cannot be an indifferent observer of the mounting danger of revanche and aggression. It will do everything in its power to prevent the European continent from becoming an arena of a devastating nuclear-missile war.

The taking of measures to avert the threat of a nuclear conflict and ensure firm conditions of peaceful coexistence between different countries is today as never before, of vital and general interest to mankind. In such times statesmen of all countries without exception — this above all applies to big states — must be

specially far-sighted and weigh carefully their every step.

The facade of bombastic words about the “historic reconciliation”, uttered when the Franco-West German Treaty was concluded, conceals a programme, elaborated in detail, of merging the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany and France. Special provisions envisage joint work already at the stage of elaborating armament projects and plans for their financing, coordination of military research, exchange of instructors and students of military educational establishments and even the dispatch of entire military units from one country to another. A calendar has been drawn up for regular conferences of war ministers and chiefs of military staffs of both countries.

The fact that the treaty deliberately says nothing about the restrictions on the FRG as regards nuclear armaments has attracted special attention everywhere, including the capitals of NATO states. In the context of the statements made by de Gaulle, President of France, at the press conference in Paris on January 14, according to which the Federal Republic of Germany supposedly can itself decide what weapons it will have and what military policy it will pursue — such silence is more than significant. It is rightly assessed as an attempt of the Federal Government, making use of the pliancy of its partner to usurp for itself, contrary to international agreements which have the most direct bearing on the parties to the West German-French Treaty, freedom of action with regard to nuclear weapons and to thwart the efforts of other powers to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons in the world.

It is generally known that the FRG Government has for a number of years been stubbornly fitting keys to open nuclear arsenals. It makes no secret of the fact that it is ready to subscribe to any plan, whether the establishment of so-called “multilateral NATO forces” or atomic partnership on another basis, if only to get nuclear weapons at its disposal. In his day Hitler associated with atomic weapons calculations that he would succeed in reverting the course of the Second World War. He was unable to gain possession of these weapons. It seems that definite circles in Western Germany are very eager to make up for the lost time chance [sic]. To gain possession of nuclear weapons they resort to every means, from attempts to blackmail their present allies to deliberately false assurances and promises.

In 1957, Chancellor Adenauer officially stated, in reply to a representation of the Soviet Government, that the FRG had no designs on atomic weapons whatsoever and made no requests for such weapons. At that time he also stated publicly that the “Government of the FRG consciously renounces the arming of the Bundeswehr with atomic weapons.” It took less than a year for this assurance to be cast aside and in March 1958 a resolution was railroaded through the West German Bundestag on arming the Bundeswehr with nuclear-missile weapons. In so doing the leaders of the FRG Government assiduously propagated the thesis that “tactical” nuclear weapons supposedly were merely an “improved type of artillery.” Shortly afterwards, the atomic arming of the FRG was, already without any reservations, proclaimed an “urgent necessity” and possession of nuclear weapons was presented as practically a criterion of the sovereignty, equality and independence of the Federal Republic.

The Soviet Government deems it necessary to state that to give access to nuclear weapons to the Bundeswehr, regardless of the form of such access — and it is the form of access that is now intensively debated in the West — would very gravely exacerbate the situation in Europe. Regardless of the way in which nuclear weapons would land into the hands of the Bundeswehr, directly or indirectly, the Soviet Union would consider this an immediate threat to its vital national interests and would be compelled at once to take the necessary measures dictated by such a situation. No one should have the slightest doubts as regards the resolve of the Soviet Union to exercise its rights which follow from the victory over Germany for which it paid the price of millions of human lives and from its solemn obligations assumed after the Second World War to prevent new German aggression.

The Soviet Government has already more than once warned the Federal Government of what danger it invites on its country by seeking to equip the Bundeswehr with nuclear-missile weapons. It is not difficult to imagine that should matters reach a thermonuclear war, powerful and concentrated blows of nuclear-missile weapons would inevitably fall upon West Germany. It will not survive a third world war. The future of the Federal Republic of Germany is at the plough and the lathe, in peaceful labour. There is no other alternative

for preserving the present generation of Germans and giving life to new generations.

The provision in the West German-French treaty which envisages the elaboration of a common strategy and tactics with the object approximating the military doctrines of both countries, attracts special attention. The FRG's Defence Minister von Hassel stated that this approximation is conceived on the basis of the "strategy of forward movement" elaborated by the Bundeswehr generals. What is this strategy, what is its real content?

It is not very difficult, at least on the basis of only official statements by Bundeswehr leaders, to note that the policy of unleashing a total thermonuclear war and involving in it the principal NATO members on the side of Federal Germany is the alpha and omega of the military doctrine of the FRG. This doctrine is spearheaded against the Soviet Union and the other peace loving countries. The purpose of the planned war is to satisfy the territorial claims of the FRG, to restore the frontiers of the Nazi Reich. The doctrine puts forward the "blitz" carrying out of military operations with the use of all types of mass destruction weapons as the only way for evading the destruction in this war of the West German state which has a relatively small territory and is located on the very border with the socialist countries.

In this case too, the Soviet Government considers it necessary to draw attention to the total fallacy and adventurous character of this doctrine, even from a purely military standpoint. The German generals have always thought that the doctrines and war plans worked out within the recesses of the German General Staff are the apex of military strategy and tactical planning.

And although history has more than once taught Germany cruel lessons, those who survived the latest defeat again took to their old tricks, justifying their miscalculations and crimes in their memoirs. But if the "Schliffen plan" brought Germany to Versailles, if the "blitzkrieg" and "total war" doctrine turned out in reality to be a road to numberless cemeteries of German soldiers and officers and the unconditional capitulation of Hitler Germany, the doctrine aiming at the unleashing of a world thermonuclear war can have only one end: he who intends to kindle the nuclear war fire will be burned up in it.

Closely linked up with the military clauses of the treaty are the clauses under which any decision on all important foreign policy questions will be adopted by the governments of the F.R.G. and France after consultation with each other in order to arrive at an "analogous position." Along what channel the foreign policy activity of the two governments is to be directed, is already seen from the fact that the problem of general and complete disarmament, of the non-spreading of nuclear armaments, of the cessation of the testing of these weapons, i.e., everything that preemptorily demands a settlement by negotiation, if a policy of consolidating the peace instead of preparing for thermonuclear war is to be pursued, has already been thrown overboard by the treaty. One would think that the Federal Republic of Germany, whose population is still forced to live under conditions when the remnants of World War II and the occupation have not yet been completely eliminated from Germany's soil, would feel with particular intensity and recognise the need for achieving the German peace settlement. However, one would seek in vain, in the treaty or in the declarations of the statesmen of the F.R.G. and France annexed to it, any mention of this problem, which is of vital importance to all Germans.

The Soviet Government considers it necessary to dwell particularly on that part of the French-West German treaty which provides for the extension of its operation to West Berlin. This clause cannot be regarded as anything but deliberately provocative.

As has already repeatedly been underlined by the Soviet Government, in the messages of the Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers N.S.Khrushchov to the Federal Chancellor K.Adenauer, in particular West Berlin is not and cannot be part of the territory of the F.R.G. The jurisdiction of the F.R.G. authorities does not and cannot extend to this city, and the Federal Government has no right to speak on behalf of West Berlin in international affairs. This clearly follows from the respective international agreements between the four powers on the German question which are obligatory for the F.R.G, too. This is also attested by the official declarations of the governments of the Western powers, including the government of France, made, in particular, at the 1959 Geneva conference in which both German states participated.

An attempt to bring West Berlin, which is situated on the territory of the other German state, the German Democratic Republic, within the sphere of the French-West German treaty cannot, of course, have any legal international force. But the fact that such an attempt is being made provides added proof that the F.R.G. government is seeking allies not for peace, but for complicity to meet its expansionist claims, for preparation for revenge. There is all evidence to show that the F.R.G. government has not only itself adopted the hazardous course of non-fulfilment of its obligations arising out of the fact of Germany's defeat in World War II, but is seeking to break up with France's hands the basic agreements of the powers of the anti-Hitler coalition in which the peoples justly saw a pledge of peace and security in Europe.

The French-West German treaty, as its contents shows, aims at further complicating the international situation, at stirring up contradictions around West Berlin and other seats of possible conflict, at undermining the approaches to the problems which have long been ripe for solution and which other states are seeking to solve.

A quarter of a century ago the German militarists built up the military-political axis which at once became a tool for the preparation and unleashing of World War II. Today again a military political axis is being created under a different name, the axis of Bonn-Paris. It has been bred by the old unquenchable thirst for domination of other states and nations, for recarving the map of the world after their own pattern. This used to be called in the past plans to establish a "new order," it is called now "integration of Europe up to the Urals." The treaty on French-West German cooperation is disguised by talk about reconciliation between two neighbouring nations, discontinuation of the age-old hostility between them, securing the future of the youth. Prior to World War II sham fraternising between the aggressive forces of the West European states and those abetting them was staged, and this was represented as a reconciliation of the nations, concern for the youth was trumped up while it was in reality being prepared for cannon fodder. Hitler, too, declared that he had "one ambitious desire" "to have a monument erected sometime for him as the man who reconciled France and Germany." Then, too, they spoke of defence, but later declared that the best defence is attack.

The authors and defenders of the French-West German treaty try to present the matter as though the issue is of friendship between France and West Germany or hostility between them. In reality the issue is not friendship or hostility, but what direction the treaty imparts to the development of events in Europe, and not only in Europe — towards war or towards peace. What is being done now is done for a war, moreover a devastating, thermonuclear war.

If we are to speak of reconciliation between France and the Federal Republic of Germany, genuine reconciliation between European states in the interest of peace, something else is required: to seek the consolidation of the security of states through an easing of international tension, settlement of disputed international questions at the negotiation table and the establishment of relations of confidence and cooperation between European countries, regardless of their social system. The fact that the F.R.G. government, 18 years after the end of the Second World War, does not have even normal diplomatic relations with many states of Eastern Europe, including Poland and Czechoslovakia which were the first victims of Nazi rapine, merely underscores the entire falsity of the assurances regarding the desire of the F.R.G. for reconciliation with the peoples of states, former enemies of Germany in the war.

It goes without saying that the Soviet Government is not against good relations between France and the F.R.G. The Soviet Union itself favours good relations with the Federal Republic of Germany, just as with other states, irrespective of differences in the social and economic system.

The Soviet Government — and this is well known to the F.R.G. government — has more than once proposed to the Federal Republic to step across this mistrust engendered by the past. It has urged, and is urging, the Federal Government to march in step with the states which guide themselves in international affairs by the principles of peaceful coexistence, all-round cooperation and peaceful settlement of disputed questions. But the F.R.G. government unfortunately lends a deaf ear to these calls.

The treaty on Franco-West German cooperation is a kind of a battering ram poised for striking at the edifice

of European peace which has no firm foundation as it is. This is not a treaty of peace, but a treaty of war, in view of which no people, no government aware of its responsibility for the future of Europe can refrain from raising its voice in warning and protest against the dangerous policy which brought this treaty into being.

Since the leaders of the F.R.G. and France want Europe to live like two military camps bristling with military missiles against each other, in these conditions the Soviet Union, together with its allies, countries of the socialist camp, will be forced to draw the corresponding conclusions and take measures to strengthen further their defences. The Soviet Union has no other way out except responding appropriately and effectively to the armaments pitted against it and its allies.

The Soviet Government would like to hope that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, in determining its further actions, will weigh all the possible consequences for the Federal Republic, for its security above all, so that nothing irreparable should be committed.

It is the deep conviction of the Soviet Government that the resolving of the crisis in the Caribbean, which revealed to mankind the full depth of the danger fraught in further leaving major international issues unsettled, has put with especial poignancy on the order of the day the achievement of an agreement on the conclusion of a German peace treaty and the normalisation, on this basis, of the situation in West Berlin, discontinuation of nuclear weapon tests, the non-dissemination of these weapons and on general and complete disarmament. Military compacts and attempts to turn back the development of international relations will not compel the Soviet Union to fold up the banner of struggle for peaceful coexistence, for peace, the strengthening of which, today as never before, must become the cause of all states and peoples.

Moscow February 5, 1963

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The Ambassador of the F.R.G. H.Groepper stated that he would forward the text of the note to his government.

(Izvestia. In full.)

THE END