

Prime Minister³FROM: R F Cooper
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I think you
will find
this of
interest.

PS/PUS

TRILATERAL CONFERENCE ON OSTPOLITIK: 12 & 13 JANUARY

1. This Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung conference was supposed to be about Eastern Europe. In practice it was about Germany.
2. The strong German team, which included Teltschik, and people responsible for inner-German relations from the Chancellor's office and the Federal Ministry, all expected that a decisive move towards German unity would take place in the course of this year. If events followed an orderly course a pro-unification government would be elected in the GDR on 6 May and would seek unification under the Federal Constitution shortly thereafter. The Germans were concerned about the possibility of a disorderly course to union: if the exodus from the GDR continued at its current pace (1,500 to 2,000 per day) pressures to do something could become irresistible on both sides of the border. People in the GDR were losing confidence in the government there; increasingly the only thing they believed in was the FRG. A clear decision for union might be the only thing that would keep them in the GDR.
3. No one mentioned confederation. I asked several of those most closely involved what precisely would happen if a GDR government was to apply for unification (under Article 28?). They assumed that the Federal Government would pronounce itself favourable in principle and would begin a process of consultation, on the one hand with the Four Powers and on the other hand with the GDR authorities. There would have to be a transitional period (Teltschik mentioned 5 years) to sort out technical problems of which social security would be the most formidable. This would also provide a breathing space to deal with questions of security and Community membership.
4. The Polish Border question came up any number of times. The official Germans referred to the FRG/Polish treaty and the Helsinki agreement (though one also drew attention to the passage in the Final Act that provides for peaceful change of borders). They argued that on the one hand Kohl had made clear that no one had anything to fear and on the other hand that he could not be as clear as the Poles would wish because of his problems with the Republican Party. The unofficial Germans appeared to share the general wish for an unequivocal statement.

5. Many of the participants, Germans in particular but also British, expressed regret that the UK Government views on German unification were so equivocal. Most assumed that the Prime Minister personally was against.

6. All the Germans at the conference, but not many of the French, assumed that the Community would one day embrace Eastern Europe. Teltschik at one point said that the Polish border would in any case lose relevance since under EC rules Sylesian exiles would be able to return if they wished. Mr Kerr's thesis that once the GDR was in the Community the Germans would be against any further enlargement did not look plausible.

7. For anyone who wishes to see it I am dictating a more detailed record. The conference took place under Chatham House rules and remarks made at it should not be quoted.

R Cooper.

R F Cooper

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