

PRIME MINISTER

GERMAN UNIFICATION: NATO AND SECURITY ASPECTS

The Foreign Secretary yesterday promised to let you have two FCO papers on aspects of German unification. The first looks at the issues likely to come up early on in the Four Plus Two Group, particularly on defence: the second deals with the defence of a unified Germany. Both have been written at departmental level, and have been sent to you more to show that detailed work is in hand, than because policy decisions are required. I have underlined the points which seem to me important.

Generally I think they are on the right lines, recognising the importance of keeping Germany in NATO, of keeping US forces in Germany, and of taking adequate account of Soviet security interests. One point which puzzles me is the reluctance to see these wider defence issues settled in the Four Plus Two Group. The FCO think they should be negotiated in a new framework, involving the main NATO and Warsaw Pact countries present on the Central Front. I see risks in the proliferation of negotiating frameworks.

I think the papers are right in suggesting that we should support likely Soviet insistence that the size of Germany's armed forces should be limited, and acquisition of nuclear or chemical weapons renounced. Three points of potential difficulty are rightly identified:

- the Russians will probably try to secure withdrawal of all stationed forces in West Germany in return for their own eventual total withdrawal from East Germany. We should not accept such a parallelism. But it is notable that German public statements tend to refer only to retaining American forces in the FRG, not British and French. This may foreshadow a wish to see our forces withdrawn. We shall need to think very carefully about that: it would reduce our influence and our ability to play a part in keeping a unified Germany in check. While we should certainly aim to reduce our forces in Germany, it seems to me that it would

be right to keep a certain number there.

- partly in response to this problem, the FCO papers revert to the idea of multinational units in Germany, as a means of sweetening the pill for the Germans. I continue to believe that this means putting politics ahead of defence - a very dubious route to go.
- we are likely to face difficulties if the Russians try to insist - as they will - on de-nuclearisation of Germany. So far, President Bush has been very robust on this, but German opinion will be much less so. The suggestion in the paper is in effect that we should concede to the Germans that there will be no LANCE modernisation, in return for which they would agree to retain dual-capable aircraft in Germany.

The second paper correctly suggests that we must pin down the Germans on exactly what defence arrangements they envisage for the former GDR within a united Germany. We cannot tolerate a situation in which NATO accepts responsibility for its defence but is deprived of the means of defending it (which is the practical consequence of the position taken by Genscher). The defence arrangements for East Germany will have a direct effect on the security of our own forces in West Germany, and we need to be involved in settling them. NATO must be able to develop operational plans for the defence of former East German territory, which would be implemented in time of crisis.

Further work is being done on all these issues. I think the main purpose of sending these papers is simply to reassure you that it is in hand. There is no need to read them in full.

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