

December 14, 1957

John Foster Dulles, Memorandum of Conversation with Chancellor Adenauer

Citation:

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Summary:

Conversation between John Foster Dulles and Chancellor Adenauer at a NATO meeting. Dulles learned from Adenauer that the French-West German project on nuclear weapons research would soon come to include Italy, to which Dulles expressed reservations and suggested a broader arrangement including the U.S. and the U.K.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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THE SECRETARY Paris
Bristol Hotel
December 14, 1957
5:00 p.m.

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
WITH CHANCELLOR ADENAUER
(Mr. Weber present as interpreter.)

The Chancellor said that he was confident that his Parliament would approve of the storage of nuclear weapons and the establishment of nuclear sites in the Federal Republic but that it would be necessary to go through the process of parliamentary debate.

I spoke of the Soviet proposal and of Macmillan's idea that perhaps it would be a good thing to agree that there should not be missile sites in the Federal Republic, East Germany, Poland or Czechoslovakia. I said that while as a military matter it might not be desirable or important to have such sites east of the Rhine, I had some question as to whether or not it would be good to give all of the Federal Republic a special status in this regard. It might be a move toward neutralization. The Chancellor said that he agreed with that point of view and that the Federal Republic would not be equated with East Germany.

The Chancellor expressed the fear that there might be a change of US sentiment due to the fact that it would come under fire from Soviet ICBMs. He feared also that this might lead to the US exercising its right to withdraw from NATO. I said I did not think that there was any cause for concern on these points. I said that we had already assumed that Soviet bombers with megaton weapons would be able to inflict massive destruction on the US even though many of them were shot down and that whether or not this destruction was caused by the bombers that got through or by missiles did not particularly alter the situation.

The Chancellor referred to the proposal that research on nuclear weapons be done by France, Germany and Italy. He said he did not know whether we had been officially and adequately advised about this, but he wanted us to know and would see to it that we were properly informed. He thought that if they started such a joint project, it should be open to other states also to join. I said that we knew about this in a general way but would be glad to know more. I said that I, on a personal basis, was

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wondering whether it might not be desirable to try to create something like a nuclear weapons authority which would include the three states mentioned plus the US and UK. It seemed as though something like this might be the best way to keep the situation under control as regards the undue spreading of nuclear weapons. I emphasized that this was purely a personal thought and that it had not been explored. The Chancellor's reaction to this was one of hearty approbation.

The Chancellor said that he felt that the decision on use of nuclear weapons should most properly rest with the President although he felt that some formula should be devised which would give a measure of concurrence to the French, for example, if they had the weapons. I said I had suggested to the UK that there be some measure of joint control with the understanding in advance that it should be exercised in accordance with the NATO principle that an attack upon one is an attack upon all. The Chancellor said he thought this was a good idea.

The Chancellor expressed the hope that we could in our speeches, particularly the public speech of the President, emphasize the importance of peace. I said that this was in the President's mind but that I would carry to the President the Chancellor's exhortation in this respect.

The Chancellor said that he felt chagrined that although the US and indeed German military people really had knowledge of the Soviet advances in the way of missiles they had not adequately reacted. I said perhaps this was because the information went primarily to the Air Force and the Air Force tended to depreciate developments that might end up by putting them out of business.

The Chancellor said that General Heusinger had felt that the command structure of NATO was so complicated that it would never work. He suggested that I should ask General Norstad to talk to the Chancellor and General Heusinger about this if there was an opportunity. I said I would try to communicate that thought to General Norstad this evening.

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John Foster Dulles

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