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**Rough Notes from a Conversation (Gromyko,
Khrushchev, and Gomulka) on the International
Situation, n.d. [October 1961]**

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Comrade Gromyko: In talks with [U.S. Secretary of State Dean] Rusk, [U.K. Foreign Minister Lord Alec] Home, [U.S. President John F.] Kennedy and [U.K. Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan, it struck me above all else how they conducted them in a friendly tone, which has not always been the case. We concluded that they are trying to find ways to achieve an understanding on the question of Germany and West Berlin. During the exchange of views, every major issue was touched upon. Nevertheless, it was stressed in the conversations that this is only a preliminary exchange of views before official talks.

From the very beginning, Rusk¹, Macmillan and Kennedy declared that we should discuss on the basis of the actual situation what would be acceptable to the Western countries. It has to do with access to West Berlin. Rusk emphasized that we should guarantee free access to West Berlin. We utilized Comrade Khrushchev's discussion with [Belgian Premier Paul-Henri] Spaak² and tried to justify ourselves by emphasizing that the GDR and the USSR have declared that they will respect the general order of the people of West Berlin. Our position was very understandable to them.

The question of access to West Berlin: Regarding this question, there have not been any statements. They are of the opinion that some new legal changes will have to be introduced or else the occupation regime will have to be maintained.

Regarding Germany's borders: Rusk declared with Kennedy's approval that the government of the USA is prepared to recognize the borders of Germany de facto and de jure (the border on the Oder-Neisse). With regard to Czechoslovakia's borders, they are thinking over some form of commitment to recognize that country's borders. They are prepared to recognize the border between the GDR and West Germany de facto.

Comrade Khrushchev: Everything that we say here must remain top secret because our position corresponds to their position.

The West Germans are afraid that the USA will say more than it should about Germany's borders.

In the third discussion, Rusk also touched upon the following questions: security in Europe -(1) the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Home also spoke about this. (2) Rusk declared that the USA is in favor [of the idea] that the GDR and West Germany should not produce nuclear weapons and that other countries should not supply these countries with such weapons. (3) The USA declared itself in favor of reducing the size of armies on both sides of the front in the heart of Europe.

The first two matters should be resolved simultaneously. With regard to the other matter, the prevention of sudden aggression - that matter will have to be resolved at a later date.

Conclusion: They consider the question of security in Europe a concession to our advantage.

With regard to the sovereignty of the GDR, there were no statements. They did ask us, however, how we understand [the issue of] respecting the GDR's sovereignty.

The situation is favorable for us.

The USA proposed that we continue the exchange of views. We voiced our approval.

The exchange of views will be continued with the USA's ambassador in Moscow.

The basis for further discussions is not bad.

Comrade Khrushchev: The USA requested that we not force the issue of a peace treaty with Germany, that we wait 4-6 weeks so that it can work out its own position. Comrade Khrushchev spoke further about the incidents on the border to West Berlin, about how access was suspended to West Berlin, which has become an island.

He spoke further about the incident with the tanks [i.e., the tank standoff at Checkpoint Charlie on October 27] and how the police are checking every route leading to Berlin.

In a conversation with Comrade Khrushchev, Kennedy always stressed that we are a great country and that we should respect each other.

There will not be a war, but signing a peace treaty with the GDR might exacerbate the situation.

Berlin is a closed city, without prospects /statement of American journalists/.

Although there will be no war, we should not exacerbate the situation. We must continue our game.

We are not afraid, but we do not want war. We can agree with Kennedy: What's Berlin to you? - before you there are enormous possibilities, history is working to your advantage.

What will we gain and what will we lose by concluding a peace treaty with the GDR[?]

We will lose: The Americans, the English, the French might declare an economic blockade against the USSR and the socialist countries. Regarding the USSR, these are empty platitudes, but the other countries - the GDR, Poland, Hungary and to a lesser extent, Romania - might suffer if they do that. We should wait for 4-6 weeks, like they asked, to conclude a treaty.

We are of the opinion that we should continue with our [current] line, should keep applying pressure and exploit the weaknesses of the enemy. We should strive to remove the official representatives from West Berlin and liquidate Adenauer's pretensions to West Berlin....

The economic situation of the USSR is outstanding, We should not force the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, but continue to move forward....

We should not pass any resolutions. The game continues, we should keep applying pressure. We should coordinate our position with Comrade Ulbricht. We should carry on salami tactics with regard to the rights of the Western countries....

We have to pick our way through, divide them, exploit all the possibilities.

Our situation is good, but if we do not apply pressure, then we will have to give up on signing a peace treaty with the GDR.

We cannot permit the reunification of Germany.

Why does [Konrad] Adenauer want to remain [West German] Chancellor? Because, he says, if we want to make contacts in the future with the Soviet Union, I can do it best.

Nobody supports West Germany in its desire for reunification.

I think that Adenauer is better than [West Berlin Mayor Willy] Brandt.

West Germany's ambassador [Hans Kroll] thinks that Adenauer should meet with Comrade Khrushchev.

We should set a meeting place....

Notes:

1. From this point forth in the document, Rusk's name was rendered as "Rask."
2. Spaak visited Moscow on September 19. Khrushchev apparently suggested that he had never "placed a deadline on Western acceptance of Soviet demands for a German peace treaty and free-city status for West Berlin." Slusser, *The Berlin Crisis of 1961*, 229-30. "