

July 14, 1953

**Letter from President Eisenhower to Field Marshall
Montgomery of Alamein**

Citation:

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Summary:

In a personal letter to the Field Marshall regarding to his assumptions made in a memoranda, President Eisenhower presents an opposing view that the successful integration of West Germany into Western Europe would increase pressure within East Germany for reunification.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English
Translation - English

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

PERSONAL AND TOP SECRET

July 14, 1953

I have read both your memoranda. [...]

With regard to your second memorandum, I think you make certain assumptions that are not necessarily true. The most important of these is that integration of West Germany into a Western concert of nations necessarily defeats the purpose of the peaceful unification of Germany.

I feel that if the integration should take place and progress successfully, then we will see a steady social, political, military and economic advance in Western Germany. This will greatly increase the pressure inside Eastern Germany for joining up with the other part of Germany. It might even become impossible for the Communists to hold the place by force.

While out of this situation there might develop conditions that could be almost provocative to a general war, this would come about only if the East--that is, Russia--conducted such a campaign of reprisal, repression, and cruelty that the whole Eastern world would break into flames.

However, this could not possibly come about until the West, with the great advantages of EDC, and with greater unification of Western Europe, would have achieved a position of strength that would certainly have a sobering effect on any Russian plan for risking a global war.

As I recently put it when discussing this matter at a press conference, I do not believe there is anything incompatible between German unification and German participation in the EDC, since my view [of] EDC, like NATO and the UN, is a peaceful concept and need be feared only by any nation that would attack the West.

You understand that I am commenting on your memoranda only because of my former personal and intimate connection with the military phases of NATO. I am not answering them as the official pronouncement of an individual in my present office--consequently, I must request that you consider this letter completely confidential, to be revealed to no other person. I write it merely to give you, as my friend, my personal thoughts on your memoranda.

With warm regard,

Field Marshall The Viscount
Montgomery of Alamein,
K.G., G.C.B., D.S.O.,
Allied Powers Europe,
Paris, France.

THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON PERSONAL AND TOP SECRET July 14, 1953 I have read both your memoranda. [...] With regard to your second memorandum, I think you make certain assumptions that are not necessarily true. The most important of these is that integration of West Germany into a Western concert of nations necessarily defeats the purpose of the peaceful unification of Germany. I feel that if the integration should take place and progress successfully, then we will see a steady social, political, military and economic advance in Western Germany. This will greatly increase the pressure inside Eastern Germany for joining up with the other part of Germany. It might even become impossible for the Communists to hold the place by force. While out of this situation there might develop conditions that could be almost provocative to a general war, this would come about only if the East--that is, Russia--conducted such a campaign of reprisal, repression, and cruelty that the whole Eastern world would break into flames. However, this could not possibly come about until the West, with the great advantages of EDC, and with greater unification of Western Europe, would have achieved a position of strength that would certainly have a sobering effect on any Russian plan for risking a global war. As I recently put it when discussing this matter at a press conference, I do not believe there is anything incompatible between German unification and German participation in the EDC, since my view [of] EDC, like NATO and the UN, is a peaceful concept and need be feared only by any nation that would attack the West. You understand that I am commenting on your memoranda only because of my former personal and intimate connection with the military phases of NATO. I am not answering them as the official pronouncement of an individual in my present office--consequently, I must request that you consider this letter completely confidential, to be revealed to no other person. I write it merely to give you, as my friend, my personal thoughts on your memoranda. With warm regard, Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, K.G., G.C.B., D.S.O., Allied Powers Europe, Paris, France. [Source: Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 3.]