

Nr. 173  
Schreiben des Außenministers Baker an Bundeskanzler Kohl  
10. Februar 1990

BK, 212 – 35400 De 39 NA 1 Bd. 2. – Mit Briefkopf: „The Secretary of State, Washington“.

Dear Mr. Chancellor:<sup>1</sup>

In light of your meeting with President Gorbachev, the President wanted me to brief you on the talks I've had in Moscow.<sup>2</sup> These were wide-ranging talks, concerning all parts of the US-Soviet agenda. I believe we've made significant progress in all parts of that agenda – arms control, regional issues, bilateral questions, human rights, and transnational matters. I'll have Ambassador Walters brief you on the details of our progress and the character of my extensive discussions with President Gorbachev and Minister Shevardnadze on the recent Plenum and the course of perestroika.

For now, I want to report to you about our discussions on German unification. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze were eager to raise this issue with me. I know it won't surprise you that they have concerns. While now accepting unification as inevitable, they outlined a number of concerns:

- They feared unification could create instability and uncertainty in Europe.
- They wondered about the depth of the German commitment to current borders, noting the German court's decision on the border question.
- They evidenced unease over the effect unification would have on any German leadership, saying reassuring statements from FRG leaders in the current setting might mean little in the context of a unified Germany.
- They emphasized that unification had to be managed and take account of its effects on European security, and that the lessons of history required that the Soviet Union not be passive observers of this process.

I responded that you were sensitive to their concerns, but that no one except the Germans could decide the fate of Germany. I told them that I agreed that unification was inevitable and that events were moving very rapidly in this regard. Indeed, that I expected the internal aspects of unification to proceed very quickly after the March 18 elections<sup>3</sup>.

I suggested that the internal elements of unification were strictly a German matter. I observed, as you have, that external aspects of unification were a different matter, and that it was important to take into account the security concerns of others.

To that end, I suggested that a framework or mechanism should be developed to address the external aspects of unification. I said the „Four Powers“ was an inappropriate mechanism because the Germans could never accept it.

Similarly, CSCE was far too unwieldy and cumbersome to constitute a timely mechanism for addressing the issue. (CSCE could, of course, sanction the result of the unification process, but couldn't be a near-term practical mechanism for helping to shape it.)

As a preliminary idea, I noted that a Two Plus Four arrangement – e.g., the two Germans plus the four powers – might be the most realistic way to proceed. I said such a mechanism

1 Botschafter Blech übergab das Schreiben bei der Ankunft von Bundeskanzler Kohl in Moskau (Kohl, „Ich wollte Deutschlands Einheit“, 268f.; vgl. Baker, *Drei Jahre, die die Welt veränderten*, 184).

2 Außenminister Baker hielt sich vom 7.–10. Februar 1990 zu Gesprächen mit Außenminister Schewardnadze in Moskau auf (zu den Ergebnissen: Gemeinsame amerikanisch-sowjetische Erklärung, 10. Februar 1990, in: *Amerika Dienst*, Nr. 6. 14. Februar 1990, 6 S.). Am letzten Tag seines Aufenthalts traf er mit Generalsekretär Gorbatschow zusammen (Baker, *Drei Jahre, die die Welt veränderten*, 183f.; Gorbatschow, *Erinnerungen*, 715f.).

3 Dazu Nr. 145 Anm. 12.

could begin only after the March 18 elections, only after the process on the internal aspects of unification has begun, and only if the Germans accept it. I mentioned that I had discussed this with Genscher,<sup>4</sup> and he had said it was worth thinking about. I said I had not had a chance to discuss it personally with you, but you had been briefed on the idea.

Gorbachev evidenced some interest in this approach, even suggesting that he thought it might be „suitable for the situation“. There was clearly no commitment on his part, and he may be inclined to raise either a variant of this idea or an entirely different approach with you. Whatever he chooses to do with you, I thought it important to outline his response to me.

There's one other point I raised with him, and here again his response was interesting. I told him that the FRG's leadership was strongly in favor of a unified Germany remaining in NATO and not being neutral. I explained that we agreed with this, and thought the Soviets should not reject such an outcome. In this regard, I mentioned that it was unrealistic to assume that a big, economically significant country like Germany could be neutral. And then I put the following question to him. Would you prefer to see a unified Germany outside of NATO, independent and with no US forces or would you prefer a unified Germany to be tied to NATO, with assurances that NATO's jurisdiction would not shift one inch eastward from its present position?

He answered that the Soviet leadership was giving real thought to all such options, and would be discussing them soon „in a kind of seminar“. He then added: „Certainly any extension of the zone of NATO would be unacceptable.“ (By implication, NATO in its current zone might be acceptable.)

In short, I believe we had a very interesting exchange and one that suggests Gorbachev, at least, is not locked-in. While he clearly has real concerns about German unification – some of which may be related to the passions this issue evokes in the Soviet Union – he may well be willing to go along with a sensible approach that gives him some cover or explanation for his actions. I suspect that the combination of a Two Plus Four mechanism and a broader CSCE framework might do that. But it is obviously too early to know, and we'll have to see how the Soviet position evolves.

In any case, we will need to coordinate very closely. I'll look forward to comparing notes with you after your meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Jim

James A. Baker, III



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