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The Berlin Conference - Its success and failure, 1954.

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THE BERLIN CONFERENCE

Its Success and Failure

February 28, 1954

My dear friends, a very important conference has just been concluded, a conference which was attended by the prime ministers of the four great powers, the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, which was held in Berlin. The people of the world are now taking stock of the outcome, the results of this international political conference. I am inclined to believe that this conference registered certain definite gains, certain successes, and certain definite failures. In the first place, among the definite gains may be put the fact that such a conference was actually held. That is a distinct gain in itself. For more than five years the leaders of these great peoples refused to meet, and the very idea of meeting with the heads or the chief spokesmen of the Soviet government was looked upon as a form of appeasement, frowned upon. Whereas, short of war, conference is the only method of every solving any of the major problems that confront these great powers and all the peoples of the earth, for that matter. There is no other alternative, short of a continuing and progressively worsening cold war. One conference or another, or five such conferences, for that matter, succeeding one another, may fail to achieve their full objectives, probably will, but ultimately, as a result of these conferences some kind of an adjustment will emerge, if only piece-meal settlements, if only indirectly, and if a third world war is to be averted, then it is the formula of conference which much be resorted to continuously.

Some Americans, some people generally, have a peculiar idea of what an international political conference is intended to achieve. Some assume that you go into such a conference to get all that you want, and if you fail to get all that you want, then the conference has been a failure. But this of course is no conference at all, that is a conference among sovereign states. This is unconditional surrender which you

dictate, if you are the victor, to the vanquished people. There were no victors and no vanquished at the Berlin Conference table. There were the spokesmen of four sovereign states which had been allies in a victorious war against a common enemy - four governments which have since fallen out among themselves, have become suspicious, four governments which have their own formulae agreeable to their own major interests for the solution of the unresolved political problems which have been bequeathed to them by the world war. There was no possibility of dictating terms, one side to the other, and progress, if any progress were to be made under such conditions, was possible only on the basis of negotiation - that is, of compromise - that is of give and take. Now there are limits, of course, to such accommodations. You cannot sacrifice what is essential and indispensable to you for the sake of reaching a settlement, but if any nation intends to be adamant, unyielding on all matters brought before such a conference, hoping to get everything - or insisting upon getting everything it wants, and conceding nothing to its opposite member, such a nation should really stay home and not enter into any negotiations. Or if such a nation is afraid of being out-smarted or out-maneuvered at such a conference, it again should not venture out from its imaginary shelter of its isolation and stay at home. By so doing abandon all thought of positive dynamic political leadership in the world. We ought to bear this simple truism in mind when we talk about conferences. Our Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles, and the spokesmen of France and Great Britain were not outsmarted at the Berlin Conference, they were not out-maneuvered at all. The fear that was entertained by many Americans before the United States entered this conference. They held their own ground remarkably well, and the cause of the free world not only was not damaged by this conference, it was, in my judgment, perceptibly advanced. There was no loss of prestige for the west; rather a substantial gain. And there should be no further apprehension among our people about such diplomatic meetings in the future. It has been demonstrated that we can hold our own in such meetings.

Secretary of State Dulles' utterances at the conference table in Berlin were remarkably forceful, logical, forthright, and time and again pricked the forensic bubble of Molotov's propaganda speeches and left him, Molotov, time and again, sorely discomfited. One of the most crushing blows which Secretary Dulles struck came very early at the conference, when Mr. Molotov, holding forth eloquently as the champion of freedom and the enemy of Fascism and of militarism, was reminded by Mr. Dulles that he himself, Molotov, sponsored Russia's alliance with Hitler, and that he himself, Molotov, had characterized the allies' resistance of the dictator Hitler and of Nazis as foolish and criminal. And that takes the steam out of propaganda. And the world listened in, got the full implication of what was said, and learned to evaluate thereafter all that was said by one side or the other. And the French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault and Great Britain's Anthony Eden were not far behind Mr. Dulles in their frank and dignified rebuttals and their clear definitions of issues. And so I believe that the first distinct gain of the Berlin conference was the fact that a conference was held at which, on a well-lit stage, with the whole world as spectators, both the west and the east were compelled to present their case, and in such an argument the free nations of the world will, as a rule, always emerge on the top.

The second distinct gain as I see it was the remarkable unity of the West in meeting the Soviet diplomatic attack and in working throughout the conference as a unit, in spite of their differing subsidiary interests, because it must not be assumed that in all matters the interests of Great Britain are synonymous with the interests of France and that the interests of Great Britain and France are in all instances synonymous with the interests of the United States. They are not. But they subordinated their specific national interests to the need of maintaining a common front, to defend the major common interests. That was wise statesmanship of the highest order. The Soviet made every effort to disrupt this unity, to play off one against the other, to suggest concessions to France and concessions to Great Britain in the hope of getting

them to agree to a scuttling of the European Defense Community, which Russia desires most of all. Great Britain wants to increase her trade with the Soviet Union. It needs that trade badly in order to improve her own economy. It is a nation which must trade to survive and cannot agree to an arrangement where it will be unable to trade with one fourth of the globe; even while the conference was being held in Berlin a British trade delegation was in Moscow arranging for a billion dollars' worth of trade between the two countries. France wants peace desperately in Indo-China. It has been engaged in a hopeless messy war in Indo-China for seven years now and finds herself in a morass there, sinking ever deeper in a hopeless war which has drained their own financial resources and manpower, and even aided by the United States, which has poured billions into Indo-China in money and in arms. There is no victory in sight there at all. France wants to get out of that terrible situation. And it is generally understood that while Russia is not officially involved in that war, its voice can carry great weight with the Viet Minh, the rebels there, the revolutionists - whatever you call them - or the patriots. It was subtly suggested through the conference in Berlin that Russia might be willing to intervene, to put an end to that war provided France would drop the idea of the European Defense Community. That is the defensive coalition of the West, for which France has no particular affection anyhow because France is afraid of a re-armed Germany. Seemingly the keystone of this entire arch of the European Defense Community is a re-armed western Germany. Now the Soviet played upon the economic interests of Great Britain, the political military emergency interests of France, and if it had succeeded in dividing the allies it would have been a major defeat of the United States foreign policy. This did not happen. The solidarity of the West was demonstrated more forcibly in this conference than at any time in the past in the last five years.

And from that we ought to derive another lesson, we Americans. The allies stood by us in this conference because they believe in coalition diplomacy. We must believe in that too. And coalition diplomacy means that we must sometimes accept the

point of view of the others who are in the coalition and not always insist 100% on our point of view. We must not in our omnipotence or our imaginary omnipotence insist upon dictating to our allies and in our imaginary omniscience (machine difficulty)

There is a third distinct gain emerging from the Berlin Conference: the agreement to hold another political conference in Geneva in April on Korea and also to consider the problem of restoring peace in Indo-China. One conference makes possible another conference. The American government has long wished for such a conference on Korea. The political talks at Panmunjom have been stalled for months now and our Secretary of State saw the wisdom and necessity some months ago, as far back as last September, and recommended the calling of such a conference in Geneva in order to get out of this messy and dangerous situation in Korea, not to permit it to drag on interminably. We have been negotiating with the Chinese representatives at Panmunjom. There is no reason why we could not negotiate with them at Geneva. (Machine difficulty)...that this proposed Geneva Conference should not be interpreted as in any way giving diplomatic recognition to China and by implication paving the way for membership of Red China in the United Nations. This was spelled out in so many words and the agreement reached was accepted by the Soviet Union.

Mr. Molotov may look upon even this qualified invitation to Red China as a gain for his side. Senator Knowland may think so too. But the plain facts are that China was not accepted on an equal footing with the Western Powers at this conference - which Russia asked for - and that the subject matters which are to be discussed at this conference will not give China a voice in the affairs of anything which has to do with Europe or the rest of the world. The agenda is limited exclusively to Korea and to Indo-China.

Mr. Dulles made the position very clear in his address on Wednesday last to the American people, and his statement was very clear and unambiguous. As far back as last September he said, in agreement with President Rhee, "the United States had proposed that the conference be held at Geneva. That proposal had been rejected. We proposed,

also in agreement with President Rhee, that the conference should be composed of Communist China, Soviet Russia, North Korea, and, on the United Nations side, the Republic of Korea and the sixteen United Nations members which had fought in Korea. This proposal had been rejected.

The Communists insisted that a group of Asian "neutrals" should be present and that Soviet Russia would be among these "neutrals" and so not bound by conference decisions.

We were able at Berlin to settle all these matters. It was agreed that a conference will be held at Geneva, as we had long ago proposed, and that the composition will be precisely that which the United States, the Republic of Korea and the United Nations General Assembly had sought. There will be no Asian "neutrals" there.

Some profess to fear that the holding of this conference will imply United States recognition of Communist China. That fear is without basis. Those throughout the world who suggest that the prospective Geneva conference implies recognition are giving the Communists a success which they could not win at Berlin. The resolution adopted at Berlin explicitly provides - I shall read the text - "it is understood that neither the invitation to, nor the holding of, the above-mentioned conference shall be deemed to imply diplomatic recognition in any case where it has not already been accorded."

I had told Mr. Molotov, flatly, that I would not agree to meet with the Chinese Communists unless it was expressly agreed and put in writing that no United States recognition would be involved.

Mr. Molotov resisted that provision to the last. He sought by every artifice and device, directly and through our allies, to tempt us to meet with Communist China as one of the five great powers. We refused, and our British and French allies stood with us. When we went into the final session last Thursday afternoon, I did not know what Mr. Molotov's final position would be. So far, he had not accepted my position. We were to adjourn at 7 o'clock. At 6 o'clock - just sixty minutes before the final adjournment - Mr. Molotov announced that he would accept our non-recognition proviso."

And Mr. Dulles makes this additional observation in his address: "I recognize, of course, that the Soviet Union would not have accepted 100 per cent our terms for the Korean political conference, unless it expected to benefit thereby. But so do we.

I can think of some Soviet benefits that we would not like and should prevent. But I do not wholly exclude the idea that the Soviet Union might in fact want peace in Asia.

We can hope so, and we shall see. In the meantime, we shall keep on our guard."

I am pleased that this conference will be held in Geneva to discuss Korea and here I would go a step further repeating a position which I took some time ago on this subject and which I see no reason to change. If at this conference Communist China shows its willingness to cooperate in a spirit of good will with the Western people, there is no reason at all why we should not recognize Communist China and why Communist China should not in the course of time be admitted to the United Nations. And I hope that our statesmen and those who determine American foreign policy will not keep a closed mind on this subject. The United States cannot indefinitely base its foreign policy in that important part of the world, Asia, which has always been so tremendously important for our country - I say it cannot base its foreign policy indefinitely on that broken-down, corrupt and discredited Chan Kai Shek government of Formosa. It is unrealistic; it is preposterous that this continue indefinitely.

We have learned to get along with Communist Yugoslavia. Great Britain has learned to recognize Communist China. There is no reason why the United States, upon evidence of good faith, cannot do so likewise. The Chinese people are friends of the United States - always have been, traditionally. There is no reason why that friendship cannot be re-kindled, and why China, regardless of its form of government, cannot turn to Washington in the days to come rather than to Kremlin.

There was also some other progress made at Berlin in advancing President Eisenhower's atomic energy plan. There was agreement of the next step to be taken in the procedure leading up to agreements. There was also an agreement to exchange views on the limitation of armament as contemplated by the United Nations resolution.

I have spoken of the successes; there have been failures at this conference - monumental failures. Failures on the two main items in the agenda for which the conference was called - Germany and Austria. The future status of Germany was not settled, nor was a peace settlement agreed on as far as Austria is concerned. No progress here at all was made. If agreement had been reached on the status of Germany, agreement would have quickly followed on the peace treaty for Austria.

The allies wanted a Germany which will be part of their defense system against the Soviet. The Soviet wanted a Germany under its own political influence or at least one that will not be in a position to cooperate with the rest against it in a military showdown. On these irreconcilable objectives the conference broke up. All of them, of course, spoke of a united Germany - both the west and the east - but they all meant united on their side.

Russia is afraid of a re-armed Germany and of a western Germany participating in a European Defense Community, and our offer for free German elections to leave it to Germany then to decide whether she wants to join the west or not proved unacceptable to Russia. And Russia's offer to agree to a European peace pact guaranteeing peace to all the nations of Europe for a period of fifty years or more provided the European Defense Community was abandoned, presumably also NATO abandoned, with America withdrawing to its own shores, abandoning its bases in Europe and so forth, that plan too, of course, was rejected because it meant to all intents and purposes a Sovietizing of the continent of Europe.

There was the impasse. There the impasse will continue, for there is no solution to this problem other than the one which some of us dared to suggest some time ago, other than the one that had been agreed on at Potsdam by the United States and Great Britain and France and the Soviet Union, namely to demilitarize Germany and neutralize it completely. A re-armed Germany in our humble judgment can be a menace to the world. Those who believe that the contemplated arrangement of including the German divisions within an all-European army system, that will avert the possibility of a revived German militarism which will set out again to conquer the world, are fooling themselves,

are beguiling themselves with wishful thinking. There can be peace in Europe only, in my judgment, if Germany is re-united because I do not believe in a permanently divided Germany - we cannot break up a people into two parts and expect that condition to remain stable - a re-united Germany but a demilitarized Germany and a neutralized Germany. Then there may be hopes - prospects - of peace in Europe. And it is therefore on that score, I believe, that the United States policy will some day have to change.

✓ It is unrealistic, have to be revised. Or - the other alternative of Germany remaining permanently divided - eastern Germany under the domination of the Soviet and western Germany in cooperation with the West. I might also say that as long as Germany remains divided, there is no prospect of war in Europe.

I believe that perhaps the best summary of the Berlin conference is the following which I read in one of the newspapers a few days ago, a sober and conservative estimate: "Berlin," says this article, "indicated that the East-West balance of power is about equal and that no country is thinking of turning the scale by war. That is gain both ways, even if the attempt to use diplomatic leverage has not been very successful. The West has not lost in the first test, moreover, and Berlin has taught us that in a convulsed world we must be satisfied for a long time to come with the snail-like progress of the "conference method." We must be patient, we must continue (machine difficulty)...great or small. Perhaps in the course of the years all nations will come to understand that they have to find a way of living together on this one road. That one cannot destroy the other; that it is too costly and too stupid to continue indefinitely a condition of cold war. When that realization dawns upon the peoples of the world, upon the leaders of the great powers of the world, then ways will be found because ways have always been found to work out an arrangement which will make it possible for all peoples following their own likes, their own economic and political preferences nevertheless to live together in this one world. May there be many more conferences, many more efforts at peace, and may the statesman of our country be inspired as they have been heretofore with a desire both to maintain freedom and to achieve cooperation.

1). That a conf. was held. - A distinct fair-

- For more > 5 yrs. - leaders refused to meet -

- Very idea of conf. with Soviet - a form of appeasement -

Whereas, short of war, it is only method of solving problems -

- One conf. or another - or five other conf. may fail to achieve -

but ultimately, some ~~of~~ adjustments will be achieved, if
only price-meat, a wide better, - less to be achieved - if
3rd world - has - is to be averted.

2/ Same times - have a peculiar idea, what an interest. ppl.
conf. - is intended to achieve.

corp. - is intended to relieve.
They assume that you go to work for corp. to get all
that you want. - less - failure
to all that you want - than the corp.

16 you fail to get all
is a failure.

is a failure.
But this is not a conf- aming sovereign state. This
is unconditional unimpaired dictated by the victors & is
ungranted.

Vaugnished:

there were no victors and no vanquished at the Berlin
Conference — ~~all are~~ 4 sov. states — all allies in
war against a common enemy, who have since
taken out among themselves, have become suspicious —
and have their ~~own~~ ^{agreements to their own interests} formulated for the solution of the
unresolved post-war problems suggested by the war —
there was no possibility of dictating terms — to any one.

Progress, under such conditions, is possible only on the basis of cooperation, & confidence, & spirit and table-
docking mutually satisfactory for under.

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There are limits, I - ~~concern~~ ^{concern} to such mutual accommodations -
you cannot specify ^{what} essential and indispensable to you - for the
sake of reaching ~~an agreement~~ a settlement.

But, if a nation is intended to be relaxant and capitulating
on all matters - hoping to get everything it wants - and
conceding nothing that its present member wants - it
better stay home - and not enter any negotiations.

Or, if it is afraid of being out-manoeuvred or out-manoeuvred
at such a conf. - it should not venture out from the
imaginary ~~security~~ ^{security} of shelter of its isolation and
stay there - abandoning all thought of dynamic pol.
leadership in the world.

Our Secy. / Itah - and the spokesman, France of G.B. - were
not art-manoeuvred or art-manoeuvred at Berlin.

They held their own ground remarkably well. The
cause, the free world was not only not ^{damaged} ~~damaged~~. It
was professably advanced. - ~~the~~ ^{there} was no loss
of prestige - rather a ^{significant} ~~desired~~ gain.

There should be no further apprehension among our people
about such diplomatic meetings in the future. It
has been demonstrated that we can hold our own.

3/ Secy. Dulles' utterances at the conf. table were remarkably
faisful, keen, logical and forth-right, which time and
again frustrated the present barbs of unilateral propaganda
speakers and left him sorely to be envied.

By the most crushing blows - came early in the conf. -
When Winston - holding forth eloquently as the champion
of freedom and the enemy of ~~the enemies of the world~~ ^{+ in regard to the enemies of the world} ~~the enemies of the world~~ ^{by a free world} ~~the enemies of the world~~ ^{by a free world}
reminded that he himself sponsored Russia's alliance with
Hitler, and characterized the Allied resistance to Hitler
Germany - as foolish and criminal.

And the F. Foreign Ministry, Georges Bidault, and J.B. Eden - were not far behind Mr. Dulles - in their frank and
degraded rebuttals - and their clear definitions of the issues.

4/1. The 2nd distinct point, accordingly, may be said to be the unity
of the West - in meeting the Soviet differentiation attack,
and in working throughout as a unit - even though it is but
their differing subsidiary interests. - They subordinated
their specific, national interests to a need of creating
a common front - to defend the major common
objection.

Soviet made every effort to disrupt this unity - to play
off one against the other - to suggest concessions
to France or S.B. - in the hope of scattering the European
Defense Community - which is the thing it fears most.

S.B. wants increased trade with the Soviet Union - needs
it badly - to improve its own economy - Even while
the Conf. was meeting in Berlin - a British Trade delegation
was in Moscow - a Russian

France - wants peace definitely in Indo-China. - 7 years -

Drain - more - Belcher we have joined - ones -
no victory and no end in sight
It ~~was~~ is generally understood that, while Russia is not properly
involved in the war - it will not carry great weight
with the Viet Minh rebels - enthusiastic, or patrons -
It was subtly suggested that Russia might be widely
provided - E. D. Community - defensive coaching the West
- France is abroad & re-armed for - to see for E.D. C.
This would have been a major defeat for U.S. foreign policy.

This did not happen. - Solidarity, West - democratic & Soviet
- But if we are to continue this desirable "coalition effort" - desirable
of 4 3rd distinct pari: the agreement to hold a conf in Geneva
to consider the problem of ending the Korean problem and also
to consider the problem of ending the Indo-China problem.
The Amer. Govt. has long wished for such a conf. on Korea. The
present talks at Panmunjom have been stalled for
months. It has become clear that without Russia these
talks will get no where. To get Russia to agree to
such a conf. - we had to make a concession which to
Russia is very vital - that communist China be invited
to join General Conf - to see Dulles had seen the wisdom
of the meeting for such a conf but highly powerful to do this was not
so easy as it seems in Korea - is not
to do as in dependence - we were already negotiating with the
Chinese communist at Panmunjom - how could we decline
to negotiate with them at Geneva!

As a matter of principle, however, we stipulated that our
meeting with them in Geneva should not be interpreted ^{as any sign of}
recognition of them, and by implication an implied approval of its
membership in the V.N. This was ~~as~~ ^{is} a ~~well~~ ^{well} ~~known~~ ^{known} art, and
accepted by the Soviet.

Mrs. Molotov may look upon even this qualified invitation
to China as a gain for his side. Sen. Knowland may
think so too. - but the facts are that China was not accepted
on an equal footing with Western Powers - and which Russia
asked for - and that the subject matter which the Geneva Conf.
will discuss - in which China will have a voice - are limited
to Asia - Korea and Indo-China -

Mrs. Dulles - report to Am. people - as Wed. last - was a
clear ~~fact~~ ^{and} unambiguous presentation of the fact - (Truth).

6/ I am pleased that Conf. will be held in Geneva - to discuss
~~For~~ Korea & Indo-China

If at this Conf. Communist China - is cooperative -
and demonstrates good-will towards the West - then is no
reason - why China should not be recognized by us -
as she has been by P.B. & France - and admitted to O.N.

7/ V.J. - demand continues - indf. to lose it for good
in Asia - on the broken down, corrupt & decadent
Chen-Kai-shek in Formosa.

81 There was, presumably, also some progress made about advancing
Pres. E. atomic energy plan. - There was agreement on
the next procedural steps. There was also agreement
on to exchange views on limitations of armament as
contemplated by a U.N. resolution last November.



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West Germany in a European Army.
Yet, openly and in the presence of the
Germans, Molotov in Berlin did every-
thing possible to create a resentment
that cannot but prove dangerous to
Russia when Germany regains her in-
dependence. Even Russian "noes"
cannot delay forever that fatal day,
and it might be that when it dawns
Moscow will find that her tactics
have built up a wall of hate between
Soviet Europe and the free Europe
she plans to dominate.

Berlin indicated that the East-West
balance of power is about equal and
that no country is thinking of turn-
ing the scale by war. That is gain
both ways, even if the attempt to use
diplomatic leverage has not been very
successful. The West has not lost in
the first test, moreover, and Berlin
has taught us that in a convulsed
world we must be satisfied for a long
time to come with the snail-like prog-
ress of the "conference method."

a great
teachers.

I don't
college fa-
bled than
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well; all

Bliss P-
delightful
from a lin-
Teach."

...has a special position in Indo-China.

Aware of Soviet Hopes

I recognize, of course, that the Soviet Union would not have accepted, 100 per cent, our terms for the Korean political conference, unless it expected to benefit thereby. But so do we.

I can think of some Soviet benefits that we would not like and should prevent. But I do not wholly exclude the idea that the Soviet Union might in fact want peace in Asia.

We can hope so, and we shall see. In the meantime, we shall keep on our guard.

There is, however, no reason why we should refuse to seek

...many are tempted to trade principles of justice for some sense of momentary respite.

Our ultimate reliance is not dollars, is not guided missiles, is not weapons of mass destruction. The ultimate weapon is moral principle.

George Washington, in his farewell address, called upon our nation to observe justice toward all others. "It will," he said, "be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation to give to mankind the too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice. The experiment, at least, is recommended."

That recommendation has, in fact guided us throughout most of our national life and we have

As far back as last September, in agreement with President Rhee of Korea, the United States had proposed that the conference be held at Geneva. That proposal had been rejected. We proposed, also in agreement with President Rhee, that the conference should be composed of Communist China, Soviet Russia, North Korea, and, on the United Nations side, the Republic of Korea and the sixteen United Nations members which had fought in Korea. This proposal had been rejected.

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I had told Mr. Molotov, flatly, that I would not agree to meet with the Chinese Communists unless it was expressly agreed and put in writing that no United States recognition would be involved.

Move Resisted by Molotov

Mr. Molotov resisted that provision to the last. He sought by every artifice and device, directly and through our allies, to tempt us to meet with Communist China as one of the five great powers. We refused, and our British and French allies stood with us. When we went into the final session last Thursday afternoon, I did not know what Mr. Molotov's final position would be. So far, he had not accepted my position. We were to adjourn at 7 o'clock. At 6 o'clock—just sixty minutes before the final adjournment—Mr. Molotov announced that he would accept our non-recognition proviso.

A Soviet concession of that order ought not to be ignored. My basic position with refer

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But the