

~~TOP SECRET~~
Personal and Private

September 16, 1954

1917

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION AFTER DINNER WITH
 CHANCELLOR ADENAUER (BONN)
 (with only the interpreter additionally
 present)

I asked the Chancellor to give me frankly his estimate of Mendes-France. The Chancellor said that he thought that he was a man wholly without scruples, and that while he thought that he would try to get all the advantage he could out of playing with the Communists, he was doing this as a matter of expediency and not because he was himself a believer in Communism or a tool of the Communists. He thought that we should bear in mind that while Mendes-France was quite ready to double cross us, he would be equally ready to double cross the Communists. He had no doubt that Mendes-France had made a number of commitments or reached understandings with Molotov at Geneva, but that he did not think that Mendes-France would necessarily carry them out. He said that one element to be taken into account was that Mendes-France was very sensitive personally, and that he had in this respect certain of the Jewish characteristics. He emphasized that in saying this he did not want to imply that he himself had any anti-Jewish prejudice. Quite the contrary, he had been helped and befriended, he said, by certain Jews in his earlier days. He thought that Mendes-France was primarily susceptible to economic pressures.

I said that the question of financial relations with France would probably be coming to a head very shortly as far as the United States was concerned, and at the time of the International Bank meeting, Faure and others would be in Washington, and that we were debating what line to take. I asked the Chancellor what his own ideas were. He recommended that we should not give the French economy too serious a shock by a total cut-off of aid. He felt that in this event Mendes-France might feel that he had no recourse but to go entirely into the Communist camp. The Chancellor said we should turn the spigot so as to reduce the flow, but that there still should be a flow which Mendes-France would realize would be increased or decreased according to his own behavior.

I asked the Chancellor whether he thought I was doing right by not going to Paris. He said he was convinced that this was the right step. He said it was a rather bold

DULLES, JOHN FOSTER: PAPERS 1951-53

DECLASSIFIED WITH DELETIONS	
Agency Case	CIA 695-0899
NLE Case	95-1129
By	MLD
	NLE Date 10/13/88

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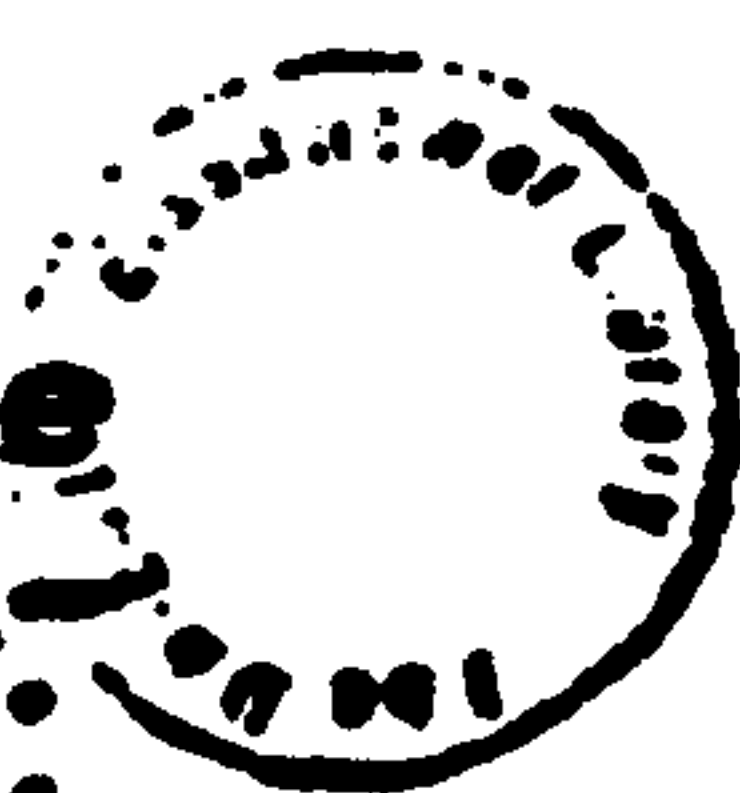
SUBJECT SERIES

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and courageous step and he felt that in the long run it would probably do good rather than harm, although probably Mendes-France would feel that there was something personal directed against him.

I asked the Chancellor what his impression was of Eden's visit and whether he got any impression that Eden was trying to build up a "third force" as between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Chancellor said he gained no such impression, but on the contrary got from Eden the impression that Eden was very much worried about the Soviet threat and the importance of building a solid resistance against it. He said that Eden had ~~implied~~ that Churchill's plans to meet with the Russians were now definitely off and he did not think that the "coexistence" theme would be developed by the British capital.

The Chancellor, in a way which was to me somewhat obscure and devious, said that he had had reports
..... to the effect that the High Commissioner was making bad reports to Washington about his, Adenauer's, Government. He said that this had worried him very much. I said that what he said meant nothing at all to me; that I was not aware of anything of the kind nor could I imagine what it was that had thus been brought to Adenauer's attention.
.....
.....



The Chancellor several times referred to the 1956 elections in France as an event to which he attached much hope in the belief that at that time there would be returned a much smaller number of Communists and de Gaullists, and that there would then really be a chance to consummate European integration as long as we could keep the idea alive in the interval so that it would be an issue in the French 1956 elections.

The Chancellor referred in the warmest terms to my coming. He said that I had been to him an "angel from heaven". It had helped a good deal in handling and minimizing the John case, and in general had been greatly welcomed by the German people. He contrasted the turnout and warmth in the reception he had observed as I drove from the airport to Bonn and said that this

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was very different from Eden's arrival. He said that everything was spontaneous and that nothing had been prearranged.

The Chancellor referred to the great importance he attached to what he referred to as "interim measures" looking toward German rearmament. He said that he had been very much concerned over the report brought back to him by Hallstein and Blankenhorn as a result of their talk with Mr. Merchant and Mr. Bowie. They had reported to the Chancellor that we would not do anything along these lines unless the French concurred and that we accepted the French power of veto over any interim measures. I said I thought there must be some misunderstanding. At this point, I asked that Mr. Merchant be brought into the talks. Mr. Merchant then appeared.

Mr. Merchant stated that in the conversation he and Mr. Bowie had had before dinner with Hallstein, the point which he had tried to make was that in the past the United States had suffered its disappointments in making certain commitments and taking certain actions in advance of French ratification, and that he did not believe, assuming an agreement on German entry into NATO was reached with France, that the United States should necessarily be the first to ratify. This point was not related to the matter of interim measures.

It was confirmed to the Chancellor that on the assumption the French agreed to the general program which had been discussed for restoration of German sovereignty and rearmament, there would be no problem concerning embarking at once on so-called interim measures in so far as the United States was concerned. On the other hand, if the French refused to agree to this program, then the United States was prepared, together with the British, to restore sovereignty to Germany to the extent it lay within their power, and to start immediately jointly with the British the interim measures looking toward rearmament.

Hallstein immediately asked whether or not the United States would be prepared to embark on interim measures if the French agreed in principle to the program, but objected specifically to taking any interim action prior to approval of the program by the French Assembly. In reply, he was told that, under the situation which he described, the United States would be prepared nevertheless to inaugurate the interim measures jointly with the British.

The Chancellor and Hallstein seemed relieved and extremely pleased with this explanation of our intentions.

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