**‘Two States, One Nation’**

**(Speech by FRG Chancellor Willy Brandt – 28 October 1969)**

Ladies and Gentlemen! This government proceeds from the assumption that the questions that have arisen for the German people as a result of the Second World War and the national betrayal by the Hitler regime can only be conclusively answered in a European peace order. No one, however, can dissuade us that the Germans have a right to self-determination, just like all other peoples.

The job of practical politics in the years lying ahead of us is to maintain the unity of the nation by easing the current tensions in the relationship between the two parts of Germany. Germans are not only linked by their language and their history – with all its glory and its misery; Germany is home to all of us. We also have common duties and a common responsibility: to secure peace among ourselves and in Europe. Twenty years after the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR, we must prevent a further drifting apart of the German nation; in other words, we must try to progress first by way of orderly coexistence to togetherness. This is not only a German objective, for it also has significance for peace in Europe and for the East-West relationship. Our attitude and that of our friends toward the GDR’s international relations depends, not least of all, on the position of East Berlin itself. Incidentally, we do not want to diminish the benefits our compatriots get from international trade and cultural exchange.

The federal government is continuing the policy started by Federal Chancellor Kiesinger and his government and is renewing its offer to the Council of Ministers of the GDR for mutual and non-discriminatory negotiations at the government level leading to cooperation based on treaty agreements. Recognition of the GDR according to international law by the federal government cannot be considered. Even if two states exist in Germany, they are not foreign countries. Their relations with each other can only be of a special kind.

Continuing the policy of its predecessor, the current federal government declares that its readiness to enter into binding agreements on mutual renunciation of the use or threat of force also applies to the GDR.

The federal government will advise the USA, Great Britain, and France to continue energetically the discussions that are underway with the Soviet Union on easing and improving the situation of Berlin. The status of the city of Berlin under the special charge of the Four Powers must remain untouched. This should not hinder the search for ways to ease traffic within and into Berlin. We will continue to secure the viability of Berlin. West Berlin needs to have the opportunity to contribute toward improving political, economic, and cultural relations between the two halves of Germany.

[ . . . ]

Ladies and Gentlemen, the North Atlantic Alliance, which, in its twenty-year existence, has stood the test of time, will also guarantee our security in the future. Its tight cohesion is the precondition for the common effort toward détente in Europe. Whichever side of the security policy we consider – whether it is our serious and persistent attempt at simultaneous and evenly matched arms limitation and arms control, or whether it is guaranteeing an adequate defense for the Federal Republic of Germany, the federal government regards its security policy, from both points of view, as a policy of equilibrium and for safeguarding peace. And, in the same way, it understands both aspects of our state’s external security as a function of the alliance to which we belong, and as part of which we will contribute to the equilibrium of forces between West and East.

[ . . . ]

The federal government, together with its allies, will consistently support reducing military confrontation in Europe. Together with them, it will work toward simultaneous and balanced arms limitation and troop reduction in East and West.

[ . . . ]

Our national interest does not permit us to stand between the West and the East. Our country needs cooperation and coordination with the West and understanding with the East.

But against this backdrop, I say emphatically: the German people need peace in the full sense of the word with the peoples of the Soviet Union, and with all the peoples of the European East.

We are ready for an honest attempt at understanding, so that the consequences of the harm inflicted on Europe by a criminal clique can be overcome.

We are not abandoning ourselves here to any deceptive hopes: interests, power relations, and societal differences can neither be dialectically dissolved, nor hidden beneath a cloud of smoke. But our partners also need to know this: the right to self-determination as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations also applies to the German people.

This right and the will to assert it cannot be subject to negotiation.

We are free from illusions that the work of reconciliation will be easy or quickly accomplished. We are dealing with a process, but it is time to move this process forward.

**‘Where We Would Be’**

**(Article in FRG newspaper *Der Spiegel* – 23 March 1970)**

From the moment the West German head of government stepped onto the red carpet in Erfurt, at the very latest, the GDR was no longer anything special – no phenomenon, no zone, but instead just a country like all others. There came someone who did not use quotation marks and who, through his mere presence, offered reverence to the GDR. His respect of the protocol, flags, hymns, and soldiers was a sign of acknowledgement.

So it was indeed an “hour of truth,” as chief SED commentator Karl Eduard von Schnitzler said. An hour, certainly, in which the GDR regime, always assured of its own sovereignty, had this sovereignty authorized by its German neighbor. It was an hour in which the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, once the home paper of the proponents of Bonn’s sole representation of Germany, discovered “two established, self-assured, normal countries” on German soil and wrote that it was “now irretrievably lost: the unity of state in the forms we are familiar with.”

Really: Never before in the two decades of German discord had the GDR come so close to achieving its goal of being fully recognized by Bonn, and thus being accepted internationally. But also never before – and to this extent as well Erfurt might have been an hour of truth – was this country so directly confronted with the problem of how to avoid the risks that seem inevitable when, in a world of change, the fronts between East and West start to move.

Not that the GDR would start to totter if its citizens start calling the other Willy to come to the window, as did happen in Erfurt. And not that the Soviet Union would lose its interest in the westernmost pillar of its empire and let it fall.

Instead, it is the imponderabilities that constitute the risk: such as the question to what extent – as détente grows stronger – the self-interests of the brother nations in the socialist bloc could collide with the interests of the GDR; or the question to what extent the step out of protective isolation that comes with contact to the Western world threatens to expose the GDR to undesirable foreign influences; and finally the question of how this development might influence not only the consciousness of the people in the GDR, but also the thinking of the SED functionary corps.

Certainly not totally unaware of these – in the long term irrefutable – dangers, the GDR leadership was focused on one main goal that day in Erfurt and afterwards: full recognition of the GDR under international law by the Federal Republic, and thus the contractual safeguarding of the existing situation (the status quo) in Germany and Europe.

GDR minister president Willi Stoph on the evening after the meeting with Willy Brandt: “There is no way to take a detour around establishing normal, equal relations between our two countries on the basis of international law and around recognizing the European borders and the outcome of the Second World War.”

Walter Ulbricht, chairman of the GDR Council of State and head of the SED, on the following day in the Thuringian city of Suhl, said: “This is why the people of the German Democratic Republic urgently, and with total justification, demand of its state leadership that agreements on partial aspects of the normalization be assured by means of an internationally valid treaty of basic principles on equal, nondiscriminatory relations.”

Not until such a treaty is concluded, according to Ulbricht, “will we without a doubt be willing to engage in discussion on some partial issues and find agreement with regard to many concerns.” It remains open, however, whether he interprets that the same way that Bonn would like to have it understood (ranging from humanitarian travel relief to a pan-German soccer tournament) or possibly raises the demand that Bonn would have to pay 100 billion marks compensation for refugee migration in the years before the Wall was built.

**Joint Resolution of the Central Committee of the SED, the national executive board of the FDGB [Free German Trade Union Federation], and the Council of Ministers of the GDR on sociopolitical measures in carrying out the main tasks of the Five-Year Plan**

**(Resolved at the Eighth Party Congress of the SED – 28 April 1972)**

The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the national executive board of the Free German Trade Union Federation, and the Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic hereby resolve:

* to raise the pensions and social welfare of 3.4 million citizens;
* to implement measures to support working mothers, young married couples, and birthrate development;
* to create improved living conditions for workers and employees and to adjust rents for apartments in new [i.e. postwar] housing so that they better correspond to income.

These decisions continue the path that was set by the main task of the Five-Year Plan from 1971 to 1975. The path consists of further raising the material and cultural living standard of the people on the basis of a high rate of development of socialist production, increased effectivity, scientific and technological progress, and the growth of work productivity.

The successful implementation of the resolutions of the 8th Party Congress, the progress made in the continuous and stable development of our national economy, the reduction of existing disparities, and the vigorous struggle to satisfy the plan – all of this makes us certain that our socialist economy will continue to develop well; and therefore it is now possible to carry out an extensive part of the social policy program of the 8th Party Congress. This shows the workers of the GDR that commitment and diligence pay off.

The measures now adopted demand a great expenditure of financial and material resources, which must be continually reacquired. Without a doubt, these measures will serve as an incentive to the working class, collective farmers, members of the intelligentsia, and all other workers to further increase the economic strength of our country through good work and creative initiative, and, with their high achievements in socialist competition, to contribute to the general strengthening of the GDR through socialist rationalization and increased work productivity. The workers themselves are carrying out the principle: The resolutions of the 8th Party Congress will come to pass!

These significant measures show how the main task of the Five-Year Plan that was decided by the 8th Party Congress will be implemented, how everything possible is being done for the well-being and happiness of the people, and for the interests of the working class and all workers.

**SED 11th Party Congress in Berlin**

**(April 1986)**

