Foreign Office memorandum on the future of UK policy in Germany, 2 April 1949

TOP SECRET

FUTURE POLICY IN GERMANY

You will have seen Washington Telegram Nos.1887 and 1888[[1]](#footnote-1) in which the Foreign Secretary reports his further conversations in regard to the Russian approach to Mr. Jessup[[2]](#footnote-2). Three main points of some importance seem to emerge.

1. M. Schuman seems alive to the dangers of hasty and ill-considered action. This is satisfactory.

2. The Foreign Secretary has laid emphasis on one particularly objectionable feature of the American Draft Statement in Telegram No.1888, namely, paragraph 4, which by its language not only implies that we would not go ahead with the Constitution of a Western German Government, but that our plans for establishing one are so immature that they could not be completed for some months. In point of fact if the three Foreign Ministers in Washington can reach agreement on three points, there is no reason why a Western German Government should not be in the saddle by the end of June.

3. The Americans do not seem to have apprehended clearly that it is very unlikely that we should be able to do both things at once, that is to say, negotiate with the Russians at a Conference of Foreign Ministers, and pursue our plans for a Western German Government. But once it is known that a Conference of Foreign Ministers has been agreed, the Western German politicians as M. Schuman pointed out, are naturally likely to throw in their hands. It would be difficult once they had done so to revive the project of a Western German Government in the event of a break-down of a Conference of Foreign Ministers.

I have no doubt that the Foreign Secretary has all these considerations very much in mind. Moreover, it does not seem yet certain that Mr. Dean Acheson, who has doubtless been under the influence of the forceful personality of Dr. Jessup, will maintain his view. If, however, he does so, and the United States administration decide to come down in favour of pursuing the conversations with the Russians on the lines of the American draft, suitably amended, it seems to me that we shall be placed in a difficult position. Whatever the merits of the case, the British Government in the last resort could scarcely stand out against resuming negotiations with the Russians at a time when the U.S. Government were anxious to do so; and our purpose should be to see that negotiations were resumed on the most favourable conditions.

Copies of these Washington telegrams have been circulated to all the Ministers concerned, since I am informed that you intend to summon a meeting of Ministers on Monday to consider them.

[TNA, FO 800/467]

Keywords: Inter-allied relations, Post-war Germany

1. Bevin was in Washington attending the Conference of Foreign Ministers and for the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. See US Department of State / Foreign relations of the United States, 1949. Western Europe, Volume IV (1949), 270-281. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Jessup, Dr Philip (1897 - 1986) - US diplomat and scholar. US Ambassador at Large and delegate to the United Nations (1949 - 1953). The ‘approach’ referenced here is probably in relation to conversations between Jessup and Yakov Malik, Soviet representative to the United Nations, between March and May 1949, documented in *Foreign relations of the United States, 1949. Council of Foreign Ministers; Germany and Austria*, Volume III (1949), 355-377. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)