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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Mr. Bundy's File Copy*  
*cc to: Henry Kissinger*  
*Mr. Kohler*  
*Mr. Sorensen*  
**33**

C O P Y

September 12, 1961

MEMORANDUM TO

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: Berlin Negotiations

A. As I see it, we reached the following agreements this morning:

(1) The approach of calling a Peace Conference and working toward Parallel Peace Treaties is agreed between us, and you will proceed to have it developed in detail.

(2) We agree that Thompson should open negotiations on this basis with the Soviet Union, and he is to be called back for intensive discussion early next week.

(3) We shall want to plan a careful approach to the Chancellor as soon as is practicable. We did not talk about the man for the job. McCloy? Acheson? I do not think Dowling would do; he reflects Bonn opinion too much to be the man to bend it.

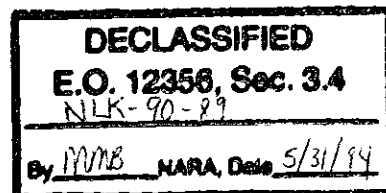
(4) My speech to the UN will contain a statement on Berlin, and Sorensen will attempt a draft that serves all our purposes without giving anything away prematurely.

B. We did not settle clearly some other points and I think we should talk about them with each other again before you get caught up in the Foreign Ministers Meeting. In particular:

(1) You and I may differ on the appropriate distance between an opening proposal and a serious negotiating posture. I really do not want to see us put forward anything like the Western Peace Plan as a basis for serious negotiation. It just does not make sense for us to propose for negotiation an early reunification of Germany or Berlin on the basis of free elections. These are not negotiable proposals; their emptiness in this sense is generally recognized; and we should have to fall back from them promptly. I believe instead that we should keep these ideas forward as those which we prefer, but without any pretense that we believe them acceptable to the Soviet Union at present.

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In that sense, I am prepared to accept a statement of principles, but I must say that the British document you showed me this morning seemed to me still much too much of a detailed discussion of impracticable machinery; it was not so much a statement of principles as an interesting design for the unattainable.

(2) For these reasons, I am strongly opposed to any revised version of the Western Peace Plan. It seems to me the wrong framework for negotiations, and in my own preference for a peace conference with parallel treaties I am talking about a real reconstruction of our negotiating proposals, and not about a modest add-on. I think there may be some diversities between us on this point also.

C. We agreed this morning that we would keep this whole question very close for the present. In the White House only Bundy and Sorensen know about it, and I hope that in the State Department you can keep it restricted to yourself, Kohler, Bohlen, Hillenbrand and Owen. The latter two, as I understand it, are the staff officers who are already familiar with this proposal as one of many, and I think they and all of us should talk about it, when we have to, without reference to the fact that it currently occupies a preferred position.

/s/ JFK