

~~SECRET--SENSITIVE~~

Monday, March 25, 1968 -- 8:20 a.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT
AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE*Pres file*

Yesterday, March 24, my friend Walther Casper came to lunch, having informed me by telephone the previous evening that he had an urgent message from Chancellor Kiesinger.

His story was as follows:

1. The Chancellor had recently received a circumstantial document (in English) reporting the following as my stated views. The same report also alleges that Nick Katzenbach expressed similar views -- less strongly stated.

2. The views alleged to be mine were these:

-- Meeting between Kiesinger and de Gaulle. Kiesinger "betrayed" the U.S.; behaved in Paris as a de Gaulle "satellite"; made farreaching "secret agreements"; sold out the U.K. on the Common Market.

-- Contacts with the East. German contacts were moving outside "U.S. control"; secret contacts were under way between German Socialists and Communist politicians, with Kiesinger's knowledge; Kiesinger was passing to East Europeans knowledge derived from his contacts with President Johnson; for example, hot line information from the Middle East crisis. In general, the Chancellor had "betrayed" President Johnson.

-- Vietnam. Chancellor Kiesinger had taken a "weak" position on Vietnam; other Germans were stronger in U.S. support; although our strongest supporters were inhibited because they are German Gaullists.

-- Atlantic partnership. Kiesinger was "subverting" the Atlantic partnership by approaches to the East and turning away from the Atlantic Community.

-- NPT. We knew Kiesinger was not for the NPT; but he had to sign it.

-- Kiesinger's future. We didn't care whether he survived or not. There were others in the CDU who could lead Germany if Kiesinger's coalition failed, including a CDU coalition with the FDP.

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3. Casper said the Chancellor was most distressed at the report -- so soon after what he had regarded as my wholly satisfactory exchanges with Barzel. He had spoken about these views -- without associating me with them -- to McGhee and Schaetzel.²⁴ He asked Casper to tell me of these reports directly and explain what his (Kiesinger's) views, in fact, were on all these matters. Casper says he told the Chancellor that he had known me for too long to believe I had expressed such views: an agent provocateur must be involved.

4. Casper, from handwritten notes, went over these allegations and judgments attributed to me, one by one, expressing, on each point, Kiesinger's views in defense, including several matters I had never even heard of:

- the allegation of secret understandings from the last de Gaulle meeting;
- German Socialist contacts with Eastern Communist politicians;
- the possibility of a post-Kiesinger CDU-FDP coalition.

In general, Casper's notes from Kiesinger constituted a defense of his relations with de Gaulle; his Eastern policy; and his loyalty to the Atlantic Community -- including loyalty to President Johnson.

5. I responded as follows:

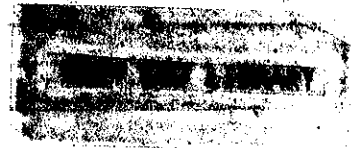
-- The views expressed were not mine. They had not been spoken or thought by me. More important, they were not the views of the U. S. Government. So far as I knew, the one active concern in Washington over German policy was that we face the Stockholm meeting shoulder to shoulder.

-- There were several matters referred to which I was hearing for the first time.

-- The only substantial discussions I had had of German policy lately were with two German visitors: Barzel and Duckwitz, to whom, as he knew, I had expressed quite different views.

-- The report sounded like someone fabricating my views on the assumption that I was an extreme "hard-liner" -- not knowing my long-held views on East-West contacts, etc.

* Casper attached.



6. I asked him if he knew the source of the report. He said he did not; but it was in English and must be American. He implied -- but did not state flatly -- that Gutenberg may have put it into the Chancellor's hands.

7. I concluded by saying:

-- This is dangerous business between our two countries: we must get to the bottom of it.

-- I would immediately inform the President and the Secretary of State.

-- If he is in touch with the Chancellor by telephone during the next days, he should thank him for raising the matter directly and assure him that the reputed views were not mine or those of the U.S. Government.

-- Casper asked if I could drop the Chancellor a note confirming what I had told him. I said I had no hesitation writing what I had told him, but I was not sure of the propriety of my addressing a chief of government. I would suggest to the President, however, that I write a note to you (Casper). A draft is attached.

8. I conclude:

-- Someone, indeed, is trying to foul up U.S. -German relations;

-- Kiesinger has a faintly guilty conscience;

-- We should get to work and find out the source -- if, in fact, it is American.

W.A.R. Rostow

Attachment

97a
Draft -- March 25, 1968

Dear Walther:

It was good to have you in our house again.

I am glad Chancellor Kiesinger took the path of asking you to outline the report of my alleged views directly to me.

You can assure him -- as I assured you -- that the reported views are simply not mine. More important, they do not reflect the attitude of the American Government.

You might tell the Chancellor that in a number of instances the report refers to factual matters or factual allegations of which I was previously quite unaware. It also imputes views to me which even a casual knowledge of my position over the years would prima facie suggest are unlikely; for example, on East-West contacts and the NPT.

I hope the directness and candor with which this matter has been dealt will strengthen the ties between our two governments.

There are few aspects of my work that have been more rewarding than the effort to strengthen the ties between our two nations, in general, and between President Johnson and Chancellor Kiesinger, in particular.

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