

EXCERPTS FROM THE BERLIN (POTSDAM) CONFERENCE REPORT, 2 AUGUST 1945

III. Germany

The Political and Economic Principles to Govern the Treatment of Germany in the Initial Control Period

A. POLITICAL PRINCIPLES

1. In accordance with the Agreement on Control Machinery in Germany, supreme authority in Germany is exercised, on instructions from their respective Governments, by the Commanders-in-Chief of the armed forces of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the French Republic, each in his own zone of occupation, and also jointly, in matters affecting Germany as a whole, in their capacity as members of the Control Council. . . .

B. ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES

11. In order to eliminate Germany's war potential, the production of arms, ammunitions and implements of war as well as all types of aircraft and sea-going ships shall be prohibited and prevented. Production of metals, chemicals, machinery and other items that are directly necessary to a war economy shall be rigidly controlled and restricted. . . .

IV. Reparations From Germany

1. Reparation claims of the USSR shall be met by removals from the zone of Germany occupied by the USSR, and from appropriate German external assets.
2. The USSR undertakes to settle the reparation claims of Poland from its own share of reparations.
3. The reparation claims of the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries entitled to reparations shall be met from the Western Zones and from appropriate German external assets.
4. In addition to the reparations to be taken by the USSR from its own zone of occupation, the USSR shall receive additionally from the Western zones:
 - (a) 15 percent of such usable and complete industrial capital equipment from the metallurgical, chemical and machine manufacturing industries as is unnecessary for the German peace economy and should be removed from the Western Zones of Germany, in exchange for an equivalent value of food, coal, potash, zinc, timber, clay products, petroleum products, and such other commodities as may be agreed upon.
 - (b) 10 percent of such industrial capital equipment as is unnecessary for the German peace economy and should be removed from the Western Zones, to be transferred to the Soviet Government on

reparations account without payment or exchange of any kind in return. . . .

8. The Soviet Government renounces all claims in respect of reparations to shares of German enterprises which are located in the Western Zones of occupation in Germany as well as to German foreign assets in all countries except those specified in paragraph 9 below.
9. The Governments of the UK and USA renounce their claims in respect of reparations to shares of German enterprises which are located in the Eastern Zone of occupation in Germany, as well as to German foreign assets in Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Eastern Austria. . . .

IX. Poland

- A. We have taken note with pleasure of the agreement reached among representative Poles from Poland and abroad which has made possible the formation, in accordance with the decisions reached at the Crimea Conference, of a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity recognized by the Three Powers. The establishment by the British and the United States Governments of diplomatic relations with the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity has resulted in the withdrawal of their recognition from the former Polish Government in London, which no longer exists. . . .

The Three Powers note that the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, in accordance with the decisions of the Crimea Conference, has agreed to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot in which all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates, and that the representatives of the Allied press shall enjoy full freedom to report to the world upon developments in Poland before and during the elections.

- B. The following agreement was reached on the western frontier of Poland:

In conformity with the agreement on Poland reached at the Crimea Conference the Three Heads of Government have sought the opinion of the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity in regard to the accession of territory in the north and west which Poland should receive. . . .

The Three Heads of Government agree that, pending the final determination of Poland's western frontier, the former German territories east of a line running from the Baltic Sea immediately west of Swinemunde, and thence along the Oder River to the confluence of the western Neisse River and along the western Neisse to the Czechoslovak frontier . . . shall be under the administration of the Polish State and for such purposes should not be considered as part of the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany. . . .

XIII. Orderly Transfer of German Populations
The Three Governments . . . recognize that the transfer to Germany of German populations, or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, will have to be undertaken. They agree that any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner. . . .

Discussion Questions

1. What factors might have encouraged the members of the Grand Alliance to continue working together at Potsdam despite their differences?
2. Who was assigned supreme authority in occupied Germany? Why was this done?
3. Why were the Soviets determined to receive industrial reparations from defeated Germany?
4. Why did the Americans insist that the USSR could take reparations only from the Soviet-occupied zone and not from the rest of Germany?
5. Why did the Western leaders agree to the new Polish-German borders favored by Moscow?
6. Why did they agree to transfer to Germany the German populations remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary?
7. In what ways did the Potsdam agreements set the stage for the future division of Europe into Eastern and Western blocs?

3

The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima, August 1945

ON 6 AUGUST 1945 THE UNITED STATES dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima in Japan, obliterating that city and inaugurating the Atomic Age. This bomb, and the one dropped on Nagasaki three days later, helped bring the Pacific War to an expeditious end, without the need for an

Allied invasion of Japan. It also thus prevented the Soviets, who, on 8 August, declared war on Japan in accordance with their Yalta commitment, from invading and occupying part of Japan. And it left them scrambling to catch up with the Americans in atomic weaponry.

The impact of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on Soviet-American relations was profound. The Truman administration, delighted with its new weapon, became less willing to compromise with Moscow; as Truman put it to his secretary of state in early 1946, "I'm tired of babying the Soviets." Stalin promptly diverted massive Soviet resources, desperately needed to repair the devastation caused by the German invasion, to an all-out program to build a comparable bomb as quickly as possible. After the Soviet bomb was tested successfully in 1949, Truman made the decision to begin development of a much more powerful hydrogen-fusion (or thermonuclear) bomb; the Soviets followed suit, and the nuclear arms race was on. The resulting Cold War would be far more dangerous to the ultimate survival of the human race than any "hot war" in history.

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT TRUMAN, 6 AUGUST 1945

Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima, an important Japanese Army base. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of T.N.T. It had more than two thousand times the blast power of the British "Grand Slam," which is the largest bomb ever yet used in the history of warfare.

The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold. And the end is not yet. With this bomb we have now added a new and revolutionary increase in destruction to supplement the growing power of our armed forces. In their present forms these bombs are now in production and even more powerful forms are in development.

It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East.

Before 1939, it was the accepted belief of scientists that it was theoretically possible to release atomic energy. But no one knew any practical method of doing it. By 1942, however, we knew that the Germans were working feverishly to find a way to add atomic energy to the other engines of war with which they hoped to enslave the world. But they failed. We may be grateful to Providence that the Germans got the V-1's and the V-2's late and in limited quantities and even more grateful that they did not get the atomic bomb at all.