

RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

EAST EUROPE

This material was prepared for the use of the editors and policy staff of Radio Free Europe.

Poland/4
16 January 1970

SITUATION REPORT

1. Chancellor Brandt's Speech and the Reaction to It

1. Chancellor Brandt's Speech and the Reaction to It

In his expose on the state of the nation on January 14, FRG Chancellor Willy Brandt reiterated that "the federal government has the intention to start shortly (demnaechst) an exchange of views with the People's Republic of Poland." These talks, like those with the Soviet Union already begun, will be, 'owing to their nature,' confidential.

Next day, during the debate on Brandt's speech, Foreign Minister Walter Scheel told the Bundestag that, in the forthcoming talks, both the FRG and Poland agreed to discuss all questions outstanding between the two countries. 'We know that we cannot begin the important political talks with Poland with nice, non-committal statements,' Scheel said. Discussions on the Oder-Neisse problem 'would have to come at the start,' he stated.

The Oder-Neisse problem was dealt with by Brandt only in connection with his polemics with the GDR. The respective passage of the speech read as follows:

The GDR government declares that, as early as 20 years ago, it recognized the Oder-Neisse Line as a final frontier of peace, and it does so -- to quote verbatim (wie es woertlich heisst) -- 'in the name of all Germans, hence also in the name of the West German population.' I do not know whether this declaration rang pleasantly in the ears of the Polish government. Its logical conclusion would be that the Polish western frontier is no concern of ours (fuer uns kein Thema zu sein hat). As far as I know, the People's Republic of Poland is not of this opinion.

16 January 1970

It may be true that neither the preamble to, nor the actual text of, the treaty of Zgorzelec (Goerlitz), concluded between the GDR and Poland on 6 July 1950, contained the passage Brandt quoted in his speech. However, the quotation is correct and it was Walter Ulbricht who, at the 12th Plenum of the SED CC on 12-13 December 1969, insisted that the Zgorzelec treaty had been concluded 'in the name of all Germans'... (cf. Neues Deutschland, 14 December 1969).

Be that as it may, Brandt did not say anything which would indicate any change in his stand on the touchy subject of the Oder-Neisse. He thus did not manage to avoid criticism either from the Poles or from his fellow politicians. Speaking in the Bundestag on January 15, the leader of the CDU/CSU opposition, Kurt Georg Kiesinger, insisted:

The renunciation of force cannot be a basis for the solution of the issue of the Oder-Neisse line. This issue can be solved only in a peace treaty....

... I have to insist that there is no substitute for the final solution of this issue in a peace treaty, which has to be concluded by the representatives of the entire true, sovereign German people.

On the other hand, the Poles called the argument of the final peace treaty 'a used-up commonplace' and expressed satisfaction at the fact that Brandt had not returned to it. However, they complained that 'Brandt and his government still owe (Poland) a clear and unequivocal answer,' and that -- in spite of his rather general remarks about the readiness to talk with Poland -- he 'did not say anything which would indicate any change in this field.'

The above comment -- thus far the most extensive -- comes from Janusz Roszkowski, deputy editor-in-chief (deputy director) of the Polish Press Agency (PAP), and was broadcast by Radio Warsaw at 0640 hours, January 16. Considering the position of Roszkowski and the fact that the comment appeared almost two days after Brandt's speech -- a safe assumption being that it had been checked and rechecked at a high level -- there seems to be little doubt that it is the authoritative voice of the Polish Political leadership.

An analysis of what Brandt said, Roszkowski continued, leads to a 'feeling of disillusionment.' Brandt clearly remains within the limits defined in his government declaration of 28 October 1969. At that time, Roszkowski admitted, 'we and worldwide public opinion' greeted that declaration as containing 'new and positive' accents.

16 January 1970

Now, 'contrary to expectations and possibilities,' Brandt has not moved forward, he has remained 'within such limits of activity as those which could be accepted by the Christian Democratic opposition.' This is particularly evident, Roszkowski said, in the case of the GDR, the existence of which as a sovereign state Brandt admitted but did not recognize de jure. Having said that much, Roszkowski seemed to be doing his best to sound objective and to find some justification for Brandt's restraint. 'It is difficult to say today what is behind this stand of the government coalition in Bonn, what the sources of restraint and reserve are,' Roszkowski said. 'The recent crisis within the FDP, brought about by the activation of the right wing of that party, might have made Brandt realize how narrow are the margins within which he can maneuver,' the PAP editor continued. His conclusion was typical of the official Polish line, expressed in countless press comments thus far: deeds count. Said Roszkowski:

Only the activities (dzialania) of the Brandt government, his concrete deeds - not declarations -- will offer us a basis for a realistic appraisal of the character of the new authorities in the GFR. In this respect, Brandt's Wednesday expose hardly contains an optimistic accent.

Earlier Polish comments, notably those carried by Trybuna Ludu (January 15) and Radio Warsaw, stressed Brandt's 'inconsistency' in recognizing the actual existence of the GDR but failing to do so de jure. However, the Trybuna Ludu correspondent in Bonn, Stanislaw Albinowski, stressed that Brandt did not repeat the following 'Kiesinger theses': 1) that the FRG claims the right to sole representation of the German nation; 2) that the purpose of the present policy of the FRG is the reunification of Germany; 3) that the Oder-Neisse border can be recognized only in a peace treaty.

Radio Warsaw quoted a Western observer as concluding that Brandt makes such small steps forward that one is forced to measure them with a magnifying glass.