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COMMITTEE OF POLITICAL ADVISERS

REACTIONS IN ASIAN AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO THE
WESTERN PEACE PLAN

Note by the German Delegation

The German authorities have undertaken a survey of reactions to the Western Peace Plan in Asian and African countries. The results of the survey, which was concluded on 15th June, 1959, are set out below.

- I. The reaction to the Western Peace Plan is to a considerable extent determined by the level of political education in the countries concerned and on their attitude towards the West in general and the Federal Republic in particular. Moreover, the interest in the Western Peace Plan and in the East-West negotiations on the German problem are, of course, greatly influenced by the extent to which public attention in the various countries may be occupied by problems closer to their own world. Summing up the situation in general, it is obvious that the Western Peace Plan, in its complexity, has not been understood by the public and sometimes even the Governments seem to have failed to understand it, or even to study its details. Except for India and Japan, where both government and public opinion expressed their reactions in varying shades, reaction has in general been limited to vague expressions of sympathy vis-à-vis the Western proposals, or to an indifferent neutral scepticism - according to the fundamental political attitude of the country concerned.
- II. Reactions in individual countries (short summary):

Japan

Japanese public opinion on the whole approves the material content of the plan, but criticises the tying-up of the European security question with a phased reunification of Germany.

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The Japanese Government, too, believes that the Western package deal, whose contents it fully approves, will be eventually untied.

South Korea

While South Korean public opinion appears to be disinterested, the Government condemns, as a matter of principle, any attempt on the Western side to negotiate with the Soviets. It fears, in addition, that the project of an All-German Committee contained in the Western Peace Plan may prejudice its own reunification thesis based on the unconditional surrender of the Communist North.

Philippines

Neither the Government nor public opinion have shown much interest in the Berlin question and the German problem. Since the Press obtains its information almost exclusively from United States news agencies, most of its rare reports on these subjects have a pro-Western tenor.

Vietnam

The Western Peace Plan was published by the Press without editorial comment. The Government, rather reserved in its judgement, considers the Plan as constructive but sees in the proposed gradual reunification a premature readiness to make concessions. It believes that this has led to a stiffening of the Soviet attitude.

Federation of Malay States

The Government continues to adhere to the opinion expressed in its Note to Bulgaria in 1958 that the German reunification problem can only be solved on the basis of free elections. But both Government and public opinion are too much wrapped up in their own problems to take much interest in the Western Peace Plan.

Thailand

The press of Thailand supports the Western point of view, but voices a cautious pessimism with regard to the chances of the Western Peace Plan being accepted by the Soviets.

Although the Government has not yet made known its official attitude towards the Western Plan, there is no doubt that in view of its pro-Western trends this attitude will be favourable.

Burma

Neither the Government nor the Press have expressed an opinion on the Western Peace Plan.

Ceylon

The Government, and even more so, public opinion, know little more about the Western Plan than that it represents a "package deal". Since there is, however, a general desire for a détente, Germany is expected to make "certain sacrifices" which are not specified in detail.

India

While the Indian Government has been extremely reserved in expressing its views on the Western Peace Plan, and appears to maintain this reserve as long as world peace is not immediately menaced, public opinion and the Press have engaged in lively discussion. The highly differentiating views may be summed up as follows: the material provisions, although considered to be maximum demands, are considered reasonable while the "package deal" aspect meets with much criticism since no result is expected as long as the package has not been opened and the various proposals dealt with one by one.

Pakistan

So far as the Western Plan has been examined at all, comments were favourable.

Afghanistan

Governed by the policy of strict neutrality adhered to by Afghanistan, Government and Press exercise great reserve in their reaction to the Geneva Conference. The Press re-printed both the Western and the Soviet Plan without comment.

Iran

Government and Press have reacted favourably to the Western Peace Plan.

Irak

While Press and Radio comments on the Western Plan have been exclusively negative, some of the higher Government officials are inclined to show a certain amount of understanding, although they cannot, under the present conditions, voice such views in public.

UAR

The Press, which reports continually and in a friendly manner on the Western position in Geneva, has printed the Western Peace Plan in its entirety but without comment. The Government has refrained from discussing details. The reaction to the Western Plan in general is influenced by the recent tension in the relations between the UAR and the Soviet Union. Despite a general scepticism vis-à-vis the policy of the Western powers, an attempt is now made to interpret Soviet policy as aiming at the extension of the Soviet zone of influence.

Jordan

While public opinion has merely a vague idea of the Western Peace Plan, the plan is fully supported by the King and the Government.

Saudi Arabia

The attitude of the anti-Communist Government and of public opinion towards Germany is friendly, but governed by their declared policy of "true neutrality", which is being strictly observed.

Lebanon

Government and political circles consider the Western Peace Plan to be "constructive" while the Press refrains from any comments of its own.

Ethiopia

Despite a very sympathetic attitude on the part of both the Government and public opinion with regard to German reunification in freedom, the Western Peace Plan, owing to its complexity, has hardly been grasped in its essentials.

Libya

The Government's reaction to the Western Peace Plan has, on the whole, been favourable. Public opinion follows the Geneva talks with attention.

Tunisia

The Foreign Ministry has received the Western Plan with a certain amount of scepticism, but is prepared to recognise its obvious advantages as compared with the Soviet proposals. Tunisian public opinion considers it as a welcome attempt to relieve some of the international tensions but the Algerian problem takes, of course, the first place in all discussions.

Morocco

Neither Government nor public opinion, both of which are preoccupied with internal policy to the exclusion of everything else, have voiced any clearly defined views on the Western Peace Plan.

Sudan

Neither Government nor public opinion have commented on the Western Plan.

Liberia

Public opinion is disinterested. The influential head of the Liberian Information Service, who is well acquainted with the Berlin question, has stated that Liberia sided with the Western democracies and therefore supported the Western Plan.

Ghana

In line with its attitude of neutrality vis-à-vis both sides in the East-West conflict, the Accra Government has remained more or less silent. Public opinion is on the whole disinterested.

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