

Address given by Willy Brandt (3 September 1971)

Caption: On 3 September 1971, the German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, gives a televised address in which he outlines to his fellow countrymen the scope of the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin which guarantees in particular civilian communications between West Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

Source: The Berlin settlement, The quadripartite agreement on Berlin and the supplementary arrangements. Bonn: Press and Information Office of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1972. 206 p. p. 35-37.

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Address of the Federal Chancellor about the Signing of the Quadripartite Agreement

On the occasion of the signing of the Quadripartite Agreement Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt gave the following address via all radio and television stations:

Dear Countrymen,

Many of you will ask what is the true meaning of the Agreement that was signed in Berlin today.

Well, I think its true meaning lies in the fact that there are to be no Berlin crises in future. That would be a great deal after all the years of insecurity.

And I also mean that the Powers concerned have shown their interest in reducing tensions. If that is so, it should be possible in other spheres as well to achieve results that will benefit co-operation and peace.

The Berlin Agreement can only enter into force, however, once the supplementary arrangements with the GDR have materialized. But the switches have been thrown. And the four Ambassadors have, on the whole, achieved good results.

Of course I could imagine something even better. But surely we remember all those years that lie behind us. And the difficulties which the Berliners have taken upon themselves on our behalf as well.

What will matters look like in future?

For one thing, the status of Berlin remains unchanged. That means that the supreme responsibility of the Western Powers for West Berlin remains.

For another, the solidarity of West Berlin with our Federal Republic will no longer be disputed.

An arrangement for unimpeded access is added.

As previously, West Berlin will be represented to the outside by the Federal Government, but in future in the East as well.

The West Berliners will be able to visit the GDR and the Eastern part of the city.

And not least: they will be able to live and work in security.

This is no small result. Still: who would not wish that more could be attained! That the Germans could move freely. That there were no borders at which shots are fired.

Nobody could really have expected that in the present phase of history the Wall would vanish. The task was a more limited but yet very important one.

Our countrymen will understand this reality. They will also be able to value how much President Nixon, President Pompidou and Prime Minister Heath have contributed to this settlement.

One must proceed from the situation as it is, in order to mitigate and, as I hope, to overcome, in a laborious effort, the consequences of the division of Europe and of our fatherland. The Berlin Agreement is, I am convinced, an important step along this road.

This is a matter not only for the Government and the Parties by which it is borne. It concerns us all. With all the struggle of opinions, this should not be overlooked. The Government itself will continue to bear this in mind in its talks with the Opposition.

The Berlin Agreement cannot be seen isolated from our relationship with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. Knowing the interdependence of problems as I do, I must clearly point this out, too.

The friendship with the West and the search for an understanding with the East complement each other. Both belong together, so that - precisely also in our own German interest - we can achieve further successes for peace in Europe.