

Mr. Pearson: I appreciate the fact that there is some fear in Continental countries that United States policy in that regard may be changing but if you studied the President's Congressional statement yesterday, you would find that he made it very clear that - I think he said - "as long as we can foresee we shall stick close to NATO".

Mr. Lambert: To come back to the question of the Big Four Conference, what do you think the West would propose on the unification of Germany?

Mr. Pearson: I would not know, but they have already laid down certain principles which would be essential to bring about that unification and the first principle is a government chosen by the German people - free elections in all Germany.

Miss Francis: I just wonder how we are going to get both E.D.C. and German unification. I think that Russia might permit one but not both. What is your own opinion about that?

Mr. Pearson: You have certainly put your finger on a very difficult aspect of the whole problem. If Russian policy is anxious to make a move to real friendship with the west - co-operation and all that - they might be able to agree to some proposal by which a unified Germany would be free to choose its own political alignments and then it would be left to the unified Germany as to how it would be worked out.

Miss Francis: And do you think we would consent to that?

Mr. Pearson: I would not like to say but that is a possible proposal on which they might agree. It is only a possible proposal.

Question: Surely Russia could not be expected to agree to that. It is obvious from the June riots that East Germany is solidly on our side and that would have all of Germany against them rather than just two-thirds of Germany as at the moment.

Mr. Pearson: In other words, in your opinion, the Russians would not be able to agree on any kind of unification of Germany which gave Germany a free choice as to its political alignments in the future?

Mr. Daniell: I was just wondering in view of the great difficulties of the German situation if it would not be better to bypass that for a time and concentrate on getting an Austrian treaty. After all, the measure of disagreement there is practically non-existent except for the introduction of the Trieste issue.

Mr. Pearson: That is true. And that might be the tactics which the Western countries might put forward in Berlin - to start with what seems to be the simplest problem. The gap between the two sides on Austria is, on paper, a very narrow one. That might also be a test of the reality of the Soviet pretensions that they do want to close gaps.