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Modifying the Hallstein Doctrine (June 4, 1969)

After intense debate within the coalition government, the governing parties agreed to modify the Hallstein Doctrine, which had been in effect since 1955. From that point on, international recognition of the GDR by third-party states was still interpreted as an “unfriendly act,” but it no longer led to an automatic severing of diplomatic ties by the Federal Republic.

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**The Government of the Federal Republic Reaches a Declaration of Principle Regarding the Recognition of the GDR by Third-Party States after Discussion of the Hallstein Doctrine owing to the Recognition of the GDR by Cambodia, among others, and Freezes Relations with Cambodia**

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On May 20 [1969], according to the *Bulletin*, he [German foreign minister Willy Brandt] also explained before the Foreign Affairs Association [*Gesellschaft für Auslandskunde*] in Munich that the *modus vivendi* between the two parts of Germany is something that began with a minimum of harmony and needs to be patiently developed further. He will also not be able to avoid the difficult sphere of international relations, which used to be treated with the surgical scalpel of the so-called Hallstein Doctrine in a supposedly radical, but in any case rather undifferentiated manner. In view of the occasion, a few words on this problem are appropriate. Two countries, Iraq and Cambodia, have seen advantages in initiating diplomatic relations with the GDR. The government of the Federal Republic has responded. At first glance, its responses might seem like an automatic application of an outdated doctrine, but such a view would be wrong. The two cases need to be judged separately, and exclusively from the position of the interests of our German policies, which are aimed toward understanding and negotiation. In assessing the relations of other countries to the GDR, we see two aspects as having great significance. First, the form is very important. If it implies a sanctioning of the division of Germany under international law and is lacking any positive reference to German reunification, then of course we cannot accept it. Second, independent of the form, we must examine whether an unfriendly act is being committed against us by way of motives and timing that would have to be viewed as compromising our intra-German efforts. In other words, recognition of the GDR by third-party countries would have to be viewed by us as an unfriendly act, especially as long as the GDR does not modify its intransigent and malicious attitude in its intra-German relations. Furthermore, it is logical that the intra-German rapprochement that we are seeking, the development from intra-German confrontation to intra-German cooperation, would continue in the international sphere. We do not want to isolate our compatriots in the GDR from an international exchange. The opposite is true. [ . . . ]

The government of the Federal Republic unanimously passed the following resolution on June 4, according to the *Bulletin*: “1. Based on the declaration of the government of the Federal Republic of May 30, 1969, the federal government has resolved to recall the German ambassador in Phnom Penh and to stop the activities of the German embassy. Economic and technical relief shall be limited to the completion of the treaties already concluded; no new agreements are to be concluded. 2. The actions of the Iraqi and Sudanese governments as regards the question of Germany have for the time-being destroyed any prospects for a normalization and improvement of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and these countries, although there were initial positive signs. 3. The federal government will not let itself be deceived by the attitude of the governments in Baghdad and Khartoum as regards its friendly feelings toward the Arab peoples. Rather, it will continue its efforts to promote and reestablish good relations with the Arab countries, to the extent that they are willing. The special aid program for Palestinian refugees, which was successfully introduced, shall be continued.”

Source: “Bundesregierung beschließt Grundsatzklärung über ihr Verhalten bei Anerkennung der DDR durch dritte Staaten nach Diskussion der Hallstein-Doktrin wegen Anerkennung der DDR u.a. durch Kambodscha und friert Beziehungen zu Kambodscha ein” [“The Government of the Federal Republic Reaches a Declaration of Principle Regarding the Recognition of the GDR by Third-Party States after Discussion of the Hallstein Doctrine on account of the Recognition of the GDR by Cambodia, among others, and Freezes Relations with Cambodia”], *Archiv der Gegenwart*, June 4, 1969, vol. 5, p. 4805 ff.

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