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In 1957 East-West relations continued to deteriorate. The Soviet Union was reaping the whirlwind as a result of its intervention in Hungary, and everywhere behind the Iron Curtain police pressure was intensified. In East Germany, following a rigorous crackdown against sympathizers of the Hungarian Revolution, the Ulbricht regime stepped up its drive for academic conformity—students and grammar school pupils were forbidden to travel West, and intellectual discussion of political issues came under stringent state control. Yet, as Western opinion decried the increased Communist terror, the tide of world fortune changed with dramatic suddenness. On October 4, 1957, from a launching pad in Central Siberia, the first earth satellite (Sputnik) hurtled skyward and began encircling the globe. One month later, on November 3, Sputnik II was successfully launched and carried with it the world’s first space passenger, a two year old dog named Laika. The Soviet space triumphs were merely an outward indication of the changing balance of scientific power. Behind them rested years of solid growth of Soviet technology—technology which
was equally applicable to the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles, or explosive devices of megaton capacity.

News of the great Russian achievements was greeted in the West with a mixture of shock and despair. Although Presidential Assistant Sherman Adams and United States Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson discounted the Soviet breakthrough as an attempt to score points in a non-existent basketball game in outer space, the more perceptive military authorities and the public at large regarded the event as a serious challenge to the security of the democratic world. The reality of the missile gap was quickly brought home and the complacency of the early 'Fifties yielded to an overriding feeling of anxiety and concern. The public press was filled with appeals for greater American efforts, for more rigorous education, and for increased military expenditures.

As the clamor for action mounted in the West, the Soviet Union recognized that their success had triggered an unwanted reaction. Accordingly, the Kremlin increased its propaganda advocating peaceful coexistence and on December 10, 1957, one week before a scheduled NATO conference in Paris, Nikolai Bulganin, then Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers, wrote a personal letter to President Eisenhower decrying Western concern and suggesting an early meeting at the Summit.

"I am addressing this letter to you," Bulganin wrote, "in order to share with you certain thoughts regarding the international situation which is developing at the present time." The Soviet Government, he said, had reviewed the world picture and could not but note "that at the initiative of the United States of America and Great Britain, measures are now being developed the purpose of which is a sharp intensification of the military preparations of the NATO members, and that specific plans are being considered in connection with the forthcoming session of the NATO Council. . . .

"I must frankly say to you, Mr. President, that the reaction of certain circles in your country and in certain other NATO countries regarding the recent accomplishments of the U.S.S.R. in the scientific and technical field, and regarding the launching . . . of the Soviet artificial earth satellites in particular, appears to us a great mistake."

The launching of artificial earth satellites, Bulganin said, "bears witness to the great achievements of the U.S.S.R., both in the field of
peaceful scientific research and in the field of military technology." As if to belie Western fears, however, he then added that the Soviet Union sought only peace. According to Bulganin, "the U.S.S.R. has insisted and still insists that neither ballistic missiles nor hydrogen and atomic bombs should ever be used for purposes of destruction. . . . The Soviet Union has no intention of attacking either the U.S.A. or any other country. It is calling for agreement and for peaceful coexistence. The same position is held by many states, including the Chinese Peoples' Republic and other Socialist countries."

Bulganin continued his message with an attack on the Western policy of equipping NATO forces in Europe with tactical nuclear weapons and, particularly, of equipping West German forces with such weapons.

Military circles in the West are attempting to implant the idea that the so-called "tactical" atomic weapons are not very different from conventional types of weapons and that their use would not entail as destructive results as that of atomic and hydrogen bombs. One cannot fail to see that such reasoning, designed to mislead public opinion, constitutes a dangerous attempt to justify preparation for unleashing an atomic war. . . . One likewise cannot fail to take into account, for example, the fact that the placing of nuclear weapons at the disposal of the Federal Republic of Germany may set in motion such forces in Europe and entail such consequences as even the NATO members may not contemplate.

Bulganin said that it was now necessary to recognize that capitalist and socialist states exist side by side. "None of us can fail to take into account," he said, "the fact that any attempts to change this situation by external force, and to upset the status quo, or any attempts to impose any territorial changes, would lead to catastrophic consequences."

The Soviet Premier then concluded with a direct plea for a face-to-face confrontation.

A consciousness of the gravity of the present situation, [he said,] prompts us to address to you, Mr. President, an appeal to undertake joint efforts to put an end to the "cold war," to terminate the armaments race, and to enter resolutely upon the path of peaceful coexistence.

Attaching great importance to personal contacts between statesmen, which facilitate finding a common point of view on important international problems, we, for our part, would be prepared to
come to an agreement on a personal meeting of state leaders to
discuss both the problems mentioned in this letter and other prob­lems. The participants in the meeting could agree upon these other subjects that might need to be discussed.¹

Bulganin’s letter was received stoically in the West. Russian failure to implement the Geneva Agreement ² calling for discussions on German reunification based on free elections led most responsible Western statesmen to discount Moscow’s new overtures toward peaceful co­existence. At the first session of the NATO heads of government on December 16, 1957, President Eisenhower castigated Soviet refusal to agree to all-German elections and announced a new United States space program soon to be put into effect.

Significantly, and although Bulganin had not mentioned it in his letter, President Eisenhower referred to Berlin and exhorted the NATO nations to stand firm. “I cannot let this occasion pass,” he said, “without recalling our common concern over the status of Berlin. The clear rights there of the Western powers must be maintained. Any sign of Western weakness at this forward position could be misinterpreted with grievous consequences.” ²

The following month, in his State of the Union address delivered on January 9, President Eisenhower said that the United States was not taking the Russian achievements lightly. The entire message dealt with the subject of peace and security, and the President offered a special eight-point program designed to regain American scientific and military leadership. From the tenor of his remarks, it was clear that the United States was responding to the Soviet challenge with vigor.³

The next day, when asked at a news conference about Bulganin’s letter and whether a new Summit meeting was likely, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles replied that some positive evidence of Soviet good faith would have to be furnished first.

The most realistic and encouraging act would be the carrying out of some of the prior agreements that have been made and most particularly I would say the agreement which was arrived at at the last Summit meeting with the Soviets. There it was stated that the Four Powers recognize their common responsibility for the German problem and the reunification of Germany and agree that Germany shall be reunified by free elections. That agreement was

¹ Concluded at the 1955 Geneva Conference by Eisenhower, Eden, Bulganin, and French Premier Edgar Faure. (See previous chapter.)

² Concluded at the 1955 Geneva Conference by Eisenhower, Eden, Bulganin, and French Premier Edgar Faure. (See previous chapter.)
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the principal product of the Geneva Summit meeting. Since then the Soviet Union has taken the position that it had no further responsibility for the reunification of Germany and that in any event that reunification by free elections was not an acceptable method. Now that certainly throws doubt upon the worth-whileness of these meetings.4

Two days later, on January 12, President Eisenhower formally replied to Bulganin’s letter. After deploring Soviet failure to carry out the Geneva Agreement, the President echoed Dulles’ remarks regarding the Summit. Personal contacts between statesmen, Eisenhower told Bulganin, were of value “but meetings between us do not automatically produce good results. Preparatory work, with good will on both sides, is a prerequisite to success.” The President then suggested a meeting of Foreign Ministers to complete the preliminary details and to ascertain whether “such a top-level meeting would . . . hold good hope of advancing the cause of peace.” Upon the successful conclusion of the Foreign Ministers’ talks, Eisenhower said, a Summit Conference could then take place.5

But it readily became apparent that the Russians were not interested in negotiating seriously about world problems and had suggested the Summit meeting primarily for the propaganda value. Also, with both the space and missile races running in their favor, the Russians felt no obligation to carry out the provisions of the Geneva Agreement regarding free all-German elections—an event which they knew would spell the end of communism in the Soviet zone.6

Accordingly, President Eisenhower’s offer for preliminary negotiations was spurned and for the next several months the Russians increased world tensions by a steady cannonade of invective accusing the West of preventing a Summit. Taking advantage of their newfound scientific superiority, the Communists combined their propaganda attack with a concerted effort to weaken Western military forces in Central Europe, and particularly, in Western Germany.

* At the Conference of Foreign Ministers subsequent to the Geneva Summit, Mr. Molotov made this explicit. In his words, “It has been suggested here that a plan should be adopted for All-German elections. . . . As I have already shown, such a plan ignores the real conditions in Germany, inasmuch as the question of holding such elections has not yet matured. Such a mechanical merging of the two parts of Germany through so-called free elections, held, moreover, in the presence of foreign troops as envisaged in the Eden plan, might result in the violation of the vital interests of the working people of the German Democratic Republic, and we cannot agree to that.” Pravda, November 9, 1955.
On February 14, 1958, the Polish Foreign Ministry formally presented to the American Ambassador in Warsaw, Mr. Jacob Beam, the Rapacki Plan for the establishment of a neutralized zone in Central Europe. Under the Rapacki Plan, both East and West would agree not to station nuclear weapons in Germany, Czechoslovakia or Poland. Since the major Western missile capability at this time was based on the medium range weapons then located in West Germany, acceptance of the Rapacki Plan would have given the Communists a decided strategic advantage. Also, if it were put into effect, West Germany, and indeed, all Western Europe, would have been left in an extremely vulnerable position for an invasion by the ground forces of the Russian Army. Although the Polish plan was given little serious consideration by the Administration, the East made considerable propaganda mileage out of their trumpeted desire to "lessen tensions." Even in the West, many were lulled by this supposed sign of Communist reasonableness.

Two weeks later, on February 28, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko repeated the Soviet demand for a Summit in an aide-mémoire to U.S. Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson in Moscow. The Soviet note announced the willingness of Russia to agree to a prior conference of Foreign Ministers but insisted that such a session should be "strictly limited" to organizational matters.

As for Germany, the Soviet note spelled out Russia's latest position. Reunification, if it was to come, would have to come through the efforts of the two German governments and not through free elections. The very subject of reunification, in fact, was no longer considered a fit subject for Summit discussion. According to the Soviet note, "the question of unification of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal German Republic into one state, wholly relating to the competence of these two German states, cannot be the subject of consideration at a forthcoming conference at the summit." 6

In effect, the Soviet Union was officially washing its hands of German reunification and was advancing once more to tighten its grip on Central Europe. Henceforth, as we shall see, Russia moved adroitly to consolidate its position in the eastern part of Germany and, if pos-

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*The contents of the Polish note outlining the Rapacki Plan can be found in Department of State Bulletin, May 19, 1958, pp. 822–23.
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sible, to take Berlin in the process. The train of events set in motion by Western resistance to the blockade in 1948 had been reversed and the Kremlin was now riding a wave of solid scientific achievement.

Bulganin's formal reply to President Eisenhower three days later made the Russian position crystal clear:

I should like to remind you, [the erstwhile Soviet Premier stated,] that in our proposals of January 8th there was a direct statement concerning the willingness of the Soviet Government also to discuss, by mutual agreement, such additional constructive proposals contributing to a termination of the “cold war” as might be presented by the other participants in the meeting. However, this does not mean that we can agree to discuss matters that are in the sphere of internal affairs of other states, the consideration of which could have no results other than a still further aggravation of the relation between states. Precisely in this category belong such matters as the situation in the countries of Eastern Europe and the unification into a single state of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. . . . The problem of uniting the GDR and the FRG into a single state . . . cannot, as the Soviet Government has already stated repeatedly, be the subject of discussion at the forthcoming summit conference.?

In Berlin itself, with the beginning of 1958, the relative increase in Communist military and scientific power was reflected directly in the increased harassment to which the Western garrisons were now subjected. On January 15, three days after President Eisenhower's reply to Premier Bulganin declining a meeting at the Summit without prior preparation, Soviet military authorities detained all American military trains on the run between Berlin and West Germany claiming that "new documentary procedures" had gone into effect. Three days later, Mrs. Barksdale Hamlett, wife of Major General Barksdale Hamlett, Commandant of the American sector, was detained by East German police for three hours while shopping in East Berlin. A formal American protest was rejected on February 4 by the Soviet Commandant in East Berlin on the grounds that it was a matter between the United States and the "sovereign" German Democratic Republic.

Similar petty incidents along the sector border continued to plague Allied authorities in Berlin for the next several months as the Russians
attempted to force more and more direct contact between East German officials and the West in the hope of gaining a greater degree of *de facto* recognition for their puppet regime.  

The Soviets also kept up their pressure for a Summit, hoping thereby to force the West into a position of compromise. Indeed, the Kremlin had nothing to lose. If the Western powers continued to insist on sufficient prior preparations to make a Summit conference meaningful, the Communists could keep on shouting that the West had no desire to "lessen tensions." If the West should agree to a meeting, then an even greater propaganda gain would have been made and the West, in effect, would have consented to Russia's refusal to carry out the Geneva Agreement. On March 24, a second *aide-mémoire* was handed to Ambassador Thompson in Moscow, once more proclaiming the Soviet desire for the peaceful settling of world problems—on Soviet terms. With a pointed reference to the recent gains in Soviet technology, the Russian note announced that "considerable time has elapsed since the Geneva Conference and the international situation has changed substantially. That is why the Soviet Government has proposed that a new approach should be made to the solution of pressing international problems."  

At a press conference in Washington the following day, Secretary of State Dulles reaffirmed the existing American position towards negotiations at the Summit. When asked about the Russian note, Dulles replied:

> Now, as you know, President Eisenhower has made perfectly clear that he wants to have a Summit Meeting if there is any reasonable chance of reaching substantial agreements which will ease the international situation and make peace more likely. But it's more and more apparent, and has been revealed I think by this exchange of correspondence, that the Soviets are demanding a very high political price as a condition to having such a meeting, and the question is whether there is enough hope out of such a meeting to justify paying the political price which the Soviets seem to be exacting.  

The West responded to the Soviet *aide-mémoire* the following week with a note recommending that a Summit meeting be held, providing sufficient preparatory work was done beforehand to at least "bring out the possibilities of agreement." For this purpose, exchanges through
diplomatic channels beginning in Moscow during the latter half of April were suggested after which a meeting of the four Foreign Ministers could be held. “The Foreign Ministers, assuming they have concluded the preparatory work to their satisfaction, would reach agreement on the date and place of the Summit meeting and decide on its composition.”  

The Soviet government did not reply to the Allied note. Instead, on May 5, Foreign Minister Gromyko advised the Western ambassadors in Moscow of those matters which the Soviet Union proposed to consider at the Summit. No mention was made of a prior meeting of Foreign Ministers and the question of German reunification was specifically excluded. The items which Russia agreed to discuss at the Summit were all designed to weaken the Western position in Europe—specifically: the creation of a denuclearized zone in Germany, the “liquidation of foreign military bases in foreign territories,” a reduction in the number of foreign troops stationed in Germany, and, as a kicker, the signing of a nonaggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Two weeks later, on May 23, the Communists stepped up their pressure in Berlin. East sector police tightened customs controls along the West Berlin border and all civilian traffic crossing the boundary was halted and subjected to a rigorous inspection before being allowed to proceed. The new measures were necessary, the East German regime announced, to halt the smuggling of butter and other scarce commodities into West Berlin.

The West formally replied to Gromyko’s note of May 5 by submitting its own list of terms for discussion. The Allies gave primary emphasis to the question of Germany and the implementation of the Geneva Agreement. As both Dulles and Eisenhower had made clear, the Soviet refusal to allow free all-German elections and the reunification of Germany as a result of these elections was making the road to the Summit extremely rocky.

On June 11, Nikita Khrushchev, who had succeeded Bulganin as Soviet Premier during the latter part of February, wrote to President Eisenhower expressing Russian concern over what he termed “Western delay” in agreeing to a Summit. Khrushchev was particularly critical of Western insistence that German reunification be discussed. This insistence, he said, could only be considered as “proof of an in-
tention to bury in its very embryo state the conference with the par-
ticipation of the heads of Government."  
Interestingly, Khrushchev gives a revealing picture in his letter, of
the Soviet attitude toward international guarantees:

It is a known fact, that guarantees are usually given by a strong
state (or states) to a weak state. In this connection the basic prem-
ise is the inequality of strength, and a strong state determines the
conditions with respect to the weak state. A state to which guaran-
tees are given is made dependent on the state which gives these
guarantees. History contains many examples where a state that
had given guarantees violated its obligations and thereby created a
situation where there was no way out for the state to which the
guarantees had been given.

Following Khrushchev's letter, the attitude of Soviet officials in Ber-
lin became more belligerent. On Monday, June 23, a 54-vehicle Ameri-
can convoy bound from Berlin to West Germany was denied entrance
to the East German autobahn at the Soviet Babelsberg checkpoint.
The American vehicles were part of the advance party of the 2nd
Battle Group, Sixth Infantry, which is stationed in Berlin, and were
en route to the Hohenfels training area near Nuremberg. When the
American convoy commander, Major Cecil R. Dansby, presented the
required documentation to the Russian control officer, he was blandly
informed it was insufficient. Henceforth, he was told, the Soviet Union
would require a complete manifest of each vehicle and would insist
on checking the identity papers of each individual. In accordance
with his orders, Major Dansby refused to comply and returned with the
convoy to the American sector. The following evening it left by rail
using the standard documentation.

The Soviet action in denying passage to the motor convoy was a
deliberate attempt to expand the documentation requirements then
existing for Allied movements between Berlin and West Germany.
The Russian Military Authority in East Berlin had been informed of
the battle group's move several days before it was to take place—a
standard procedure—and had deliberately chosen to make an issue of
the crossing. In so doing, it was closely following Moscow's new line
of increasing pressure on the West.

* Because of the limited training areas in Berlin, the Allied garrisons there have
regularly gone to West Germany for several weeks each year for sustained field
training exercises.
Two weeks later, President Eisenhower replied to Khrushchev's letter. Like Khrushchev, the President betrayed a tone of annoyance.

I was frankly surprised by your letter of June 11, [Eisenhower said.] You complain about delay in preparation for a Summit meeting precisely at the moment when the Western powers have submitted a proposal for a serious and effective procedure for conducting these preparations. This refutes the allegation contained in your letter that the three Western powers are creating obstacles and impeding progress toward a Summit meeting. . . . In spite of the arbitrary action of the Soviet Government and its apparent unwillingness to negotiate seriously on concrete points at issue, the Western powers do not propose to abandon hope or to relax their efforts to seek solutions of the major outstanding problems.19

Already, however, East-West relations were in serious disrepair, and the Berlin episode was only one example. In Lebanon, Soviet agents took advantage of internal pressures threatening to topple the democratic government of President Chamoun. In Tripoli, Communist agitators led a series of riots designed to force a closing of the nearby Wheelus Air Base operated by the United States Air Force.

On July 15, the Soviet Foreign Ministry presented a new note to Ambassador Thompson in which the West was directly accused of whipping up the armaments race and fanning the flames of war. Attached to the belligerent Soviet note was a typical Russian gimmick—a “Draft Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation” containing the usual Communist provisions for the withdrawal of Western troops from Germany and the liquidation of “foreign” military bases. Significantly, the Soviets now made no request for a meeting at the Summit.20

The following day, President Eisenhower, yielding to a plea from President Chamoun of Lebanon, ordered United States Marines to Beirut to help the Lebanese government defend its position.21 The President's action was greeted in Berlin by corresponding military alerts, first by the Soviets, then by the Allies. Russian tanks encircled the Western sectors as they had done following the Hungarian uprising in 1956. The American garrison was placed on a full state of combat readiness, and armored vehicles of the Berlin Command took up strategic positions throughout the city.

Two weeks later, East German Peoples Police (Volkspolizei) invaded the isolated American enclave of Steinstueck in West Berlin
and, using Gestapo tactics, began searching buildings and questioning residents reportedly in search of deserters from the East German army. The formal protest lodged by the American Sector Commander, Major General Barksdale Hamlett, was rejected by the Soviets on August 12. Hamlett was told once more to direct his objections to the "sovereign" German Democratic Republic.  

Throughout the months of September and October the diplomatic fusillade between East and West continued. A note from the Soviet Foreign Ministry on September 18 recommended a four-power commission to consider a German peace treaty and a meeting of East and West German delegates to discuss a "confederation" between the two. No request for a Summit conference was included and no mention made of the Geneva Agreement.  

On September 30, the American government rejected talks between East and West Germany until a government had been created in the Soviet zone which "truly reflects the will of the German people." "The regime established in the Soviet zone of Germany," the American note stated, "does not represent the will of the people of eastern Germany. It is rightly regarded by the people of all parts of Germany as a regime imposed by a foreign power and maintained in power by foreign forces. Since this regime has no mandate from the people it purports to speak for, it would violate any genuine concern for the interests of the German people to allow such a regime to participate in any discussions involving their future government."  

Following the American statement, the puppet East German regime itself got into the act. On October 29, Walter Ulbricht, then First Secretary of the East German Socialist Unity Party (SED), charged that the presence of Allied forces in Berlin was illegal. According to Ulbricht, Berlin belonged to the German Democratic Republic; and with patent disregard for the relevant four-power agreements, Ulbricht stated that "when various zones of occupation were created, Berlin was not made a fifth zone. It remained part of the Soviet zone of Germany."

In a dispatch from Bonn that same day, New York Times correspondent Sydney Cruson reported that "Herr Ulbricht's statement was interpreted here as signaling a new East German effort to exert pressure on West Berlin. . . . Nothing drastic or dramatic was ex-
pected from the Communists immediately. But it was noted here [in Bonn] that they had been trying to build a legal case for their claim to Berlin for almost a year.” 25

The following week John Foster Dulles took notice of the increasing Communist pressure on Berlin at a State Department press conference:

Q.—Mr. Secretary, East German Communists have begun to say repeatedly that West Berlin belongs to East Germany and have begun to compare it to Quemoy. Do you see any potential danger in this kind of propaganda campaign?

A.—No. I see no danger in it, because, as I pointed out, we are most solemnly committed to hold West Berlin, if need be by military force. That is a very solemn and formal three-power commitment to which the United States stands bound. I think as long as we stand firm there, and the Communists know we will stand firm, that there is no danger to West Berlin. 26

Less than a week later, on November 10, 1958, at a meeting at the Polish Embassy in Moscow honoring the state visit of Wladyslaw Gomulka, the real Soviet attack on Berlin began. Speaking to the assembled guests, Nikita Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union was determined to end the Allied occupation of Berlin. “The imperialists have turned the German question into an abiding source of international tension,” Khrushchev said. “The ruling circles of Western Germany are doing everything to whip up military passions against the German Democratic Republic, against the Polish People’s Republic, against all the socialist countries.”

Khrushchev then launched into a heated attack against “Western militarism” and bluntly accused the United States, Britain, and France of violating the protocols of the Potsdam Agreement regarding German rearmament:

What then is left of the Potsdam Agreement? One thing in effect: the so-called four-power status of Berlin, that is, a position in which the three western powers—the United States, Britain, and France—have the possibility of lording it in Western Berlin, turning that part of the city, which is the capital of the German Democratic Republic, into some kind of state within a state and, profiting by this, conducting subversive activities from Western Berlin
against the German Democratic Republic, against the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Treaty countries.

Let the United States, France, and Britain themselves build their relations with the German Democratic Republic, let them reach agreement with it themselves if they are interested in any questions concerning Berlin. . . . They have violated the Potsdam Agreement repeatedly and with impunity, while we remain loyal to it as if nothing had changed. We have every reason to set ourselves free from obligations under the Potsdam Agreement, obligations which have outlived themselves and which the western powers are clinging to, and to pursue with regard to Berlin a policy that would spring from the interests of the Warsaw Treaty.²⁷

For two weeks Khrushchev's charges went unanswered. Then, on November 26, Secretary of State Dulles replied during the course of one of his regular press conferences. When asked for his opinion as to why the Berlin question was reactivated at this time, Dulles responded as follows:

I was not surprised by it at all. I think that the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists—what Khrushchev calls "the International Communist Movement"—is disposed periodically to try to probe in different areas of the world to develop, if possible, weak spots; to develop, if possible, differences. . . . The effort is, I think, periodically to try to find out whether they are up against firmness and strength and unity. If they find that, then I think the probing will cease.

Q.—Mr. Secretary, last week late there was considerable evidence that on Saturday the Soviet Government would make its promised proposals about the status in Berlin and perhaps East Germany. The Soviet Government did not do so. Do you have any intimation as to how quickly it may act in this matter or why it did not act on Saturday?

A.—Well, somebody suggested to me that perhaps Mr. Khrushchev had submitted his idea to his legal advisers and that they had raised some questions which had caused a pause. Because the fact of the matter is . . . that he had based his case upon alleged breach of the Potsdam Agreement.

Now, the rights and status of the Allies in Berlin and the responsibilities and obligation of the Soviet Union do not in any way whatsoever derive from the Potsdam Agreements. . . . Therefore to say that because the Potsdam Agreements have been violated the Soviet Union is relieved of obligations which it assumed ex-
plicitly some four years later [under the New York and Paris Agreements of 1949 lifting the blockade] seems to be a non sequitur, to put it mildly.  

The following day, November 27, 1958, the storm broke. In separate notes to the United States, Great Britain, and France, the Soviet Union demanded that the occupation of Berlin be terminated and that West Berlin be converted into a demilitarized free city. Six months, said the Russians, should be sufficient. If the West had not accepted its proposals within that time, then the Kremlin would conclude its own agreement with East Germany and end the occupation regardless.

As in June of 1948, the Russians once more were trying to force the West from Berlin. Unlike 1948, however, Moscow took no action. Instead, it merely announced what it intended to do and waited for the West to respond. But as surely as Stalin had imposed the Blockade, a new Berlin Crisis was at hand.

Khrushchev's note of November 27, 1958, is the formal beginning of the present deadlock in Berlin. As we have seen, the roots of the Russian note lie in the earlier gains of Soviet technology and, most particularly, in the successful launching of Soviet space satellites the year before. In the following paragraphs, the Russian message is reprinted in detail. No editorial comment is injected except for an occasional change to italics to emphasize a particular passage. For the most part, the document speaks for itself:

* As noted previously (see Chapter VI), the provisions of the Potsdam Agreement related to the overall settlement in Germany and not to Berlin. Indeed, the final Protocol of the Potsdam Conference did not mention Berlin except to refer to it (in one instance—Paragraph I, 4, (II), D) as the seat of the Allied Control Council.

Thus, as Dulles points out, Allied rights in the former German capital do not derive from the Potsdam Agreement but from the Protocols drafted earlier in the European Advisory Commission—Protocols which were ratified at Yalta (see Chapter II)—and from the agreements lifting the blockade in 1949 (see Chapter VII). Accordingly, in basing his case on the Potsdam Agreement, Khrushchev had chosen the wrong pact.

Also, since Khrushchev incorrectly based the Soviet case on the Potsdam Agreement, he is equally wrong in assuming that the agreements on Berlin were temporary and have "expired." The protocols drafted by the EAC—and ratified by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin—contained no time limit and clearly were to remain in effect until the Allies were able to agree on a suitable successor arrangement. By harping on the Potsdam Agreement, Khrushchev, who patently knew better, had imparted a slight tone of unreality to his attack which indeed, may have been intentional. As the subsequent Soviet note of November 27 will show, he wriggled out of this predicament nicely.
FROM THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY
November 27, 1958

The government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addresses the Government of the United States of America as one of the signatory powers of the Potsdam Agreement on the urgent question of the status of Berlin.

The problem of Berlin, which is situated in the center of the German Democratic Republic but the western part of which is cut off from the GDR as a result of foreign occupation deeply affects not only the national interests of the German people but also the interests of all nations desirous of establishing lasting peace in Europe. Here in the historic capital of Germany two worlds are in direct contact and at every turn there tower the barricades of the “cold war.” A situation of constant friction and tension has prevailed for many years in this city, which is divided into two parts. Berlin, which witnessed the greatest triumph of the joint struggle of our countries against Fascist aggression, has now become a dangerous center of contradiction between the Great Powers, allies in the last war. Its role in the relations between the Powers may be compared to a smoldering fuse that has been connected to a powder keg. Incidents arising here, even if they seem to be of local significance, may, in an atmosphere of heated passions, suspicion, and mutual apprehensions, cause a conflagration which will be difficult to extinguish . . .

HISTORY OF OPPOSITION TO HITLER

To assess correctly the real importance of the Berlin problem confronting us today and to determine the existing possibilities for normalizing the situation in Berlin it is necessary to recall the development of the policy of the Powers parties to the anti-Hitler coalition with respect to Germany.

It is common knowledge that the USA, as well as Great Britain and France, by no means immediately came to the conclusion that it was essential to establish cooperation with the Soviet Union for

* Italics and passage headings added throughout.
** Here Khrushchev is implanting the idea that West Berlin belongs to East Germany. He refers to “the Western part” of Berlin as being “cut off from the GDR as a result of foreign occupation.” The implications of this argument, as subsequent passages will make clear, is that the Soviet Union is trying to restore a “normal” situation in Berlin by ending the “foreign” occupation. Of course, this overlooks entirely that the East German regime—the so-called German Democratic Republic—is in itself an abnormal creation and retains its power in Germany only because of the bayonets of the Red Army.
the purpose of counteracting Hitlerite aggression, although the Soviet Union constantly indicated its readiness to do so. In the capitals of the Western states opposite tendencies prevailed for a long time and they became especially marked in the period of the Munich deal with Hitler. Entertaining the hope of controlling German militarism and pushing it eastward, the governments of the Western Powers tolerated and encouraged the policy of blackmail and threats pursued by Hitler and acts of direct aggression by Hitlerite Germany and its ally, Fascist Italy, against a number of peace-loving states.

It was only when Fascist Germany, upsetting the shortsighted calculations of the inspirers of Munich, turned against the Western Powers, when Hitler's army started moving westward, crushing Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and the Netherlands, and toppling France, that the governments of the USA and Great Britain had no alternative but to admit their miscalculations and embark upon the path of organizing, jointly with the Soviet Union, resistance to Fascist Germany, Italy and Japan. . . . *

When the peoples were celebrating victory over Hitlerite Germany a conference of the heads of government of the Soviet Union, the USA and Great Britain was held in Potsdam in order to work out a joint policy with respect to postwar Germany. . . . The entire content of this agreement was directed toward creating conditions precluding the possibility of yet another attack by Germany against peace-loving states, toward preventing German militarists from unleashing another world war so that Germany, having abandoned forever the mirage of a policy of conquest, might make a firm start on the road to peaceful development.

. . . However, further developments deviated a great deal from

* The above rewriting of the history of the early opposition to Hitler is one of the literary highlights of the Soviet message. In preparing it, the Soviet Foreign Ministry seems to have overlooked that from 1930 to 1933 the Soviet Union, through its international apparatus of the Comintern, directed the German Communist Party to collaborate with the Nazis in undermining the German Weimar Republic, leading directly to Hitler's rise to power. That during the period 1933–1939 the Soviet Union concluded no less than twelve commercial treaties with Nazi Germany materially assisting in the buildup of Hitler's military power. That on August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union backed away from negotiations then in progress with Great Britain and France in Moscow regarding an anti-Hitler pact, and concluded the notorious Molotov-Ribbentrop Agreement which set the stage for the subsequent invasion of Poland. That in spite of repeated warnings from the Western powers, particularly Great Britain, of an impending German attack, the Soviet Government continued to provide vast quantities of raw materials to Nazi Germany until the very date that Hitler's armies marched across the Russian frontier on June 22, 1941. And finally, that in April, 1941, the Soviet Union signed a joint neutrality pact with Japan, thereby clearing the way for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.
the direction mapped out at Potsdam. Relations between the USSR and the Three Western Powers kept deteriorating. Mutual distrust and suspicion kept growing and have now developed into unfriendly relations.

**The Policies of Winston Churchill**

The policy of the Western Powers was increasingly influenced by forces obsessed with hatred for Socialist and Communist ideas but which concealed during the war their hostile designs against the Soviet Union. As a result, the course was set in the West toward the utmost aggravation of the ideological struggle headed by aggressive leaders, opponents of the peaceful coexistence of states. The signal for this was given to the United States and to other Western countries by W. Churchill in his notorious Fulton speech in March 1946.

The conflict between the two ideologies—a struggle of minds and convictions—in itself could not have been particularly detrimental to relations between states. The ideological struggle has never abated and it will continue so long as there are different views on the structure of society. But, unfortunately, the pronouncements of W. Churchill and those who share his views influenced the minds of other Western statesmen, which had the most regrettable consequences. Governmental bodies and the armed forces joined in the ideological struggle that blazed forth. The results are universally known. Instead of developing cooperation between the major Great Powers, the world was split into opposing military alignments and competition began in the manufacture and stockpiling of atomic and hydrogen weapons.

**Alleged Western Violations of the Potsdam Agreement**

A particularly drastic change in relations between the USA, as well as Britain and France, and the Soviet Union occurred when those powers shifted to pursuing a policy in Germany that ran counter to the Potsdam Agreement. The first violation of the Potsdam Agreement was the refusal by the governments of the USA, Great Britain, and France to honor their commitments under the aforesaid agreement regarding the transfer to the Soviet Union of the agreed amount of industrial equipment from West Germany.

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*The Soviet accusations against the West, and particularly against Sir Winston Churchill, ignore the fact that Sir Winston's Fulton speech came four weeks after the Moscow speech of Premier Stalin delivered on February 9, 1946, announcing that the wartime alliance had ended and that the world revolution of communism was to be resumed.*
in partial compensation for the destruction and damage inflicted upon the national economy of the USSR by the aggression of Hitlerite Germany.

But the matter did not end there. With every passing year the governments of the USA and Great Britain drifted farther and farther away from the principles underlying the Potsdam Agreement. The same road was followed by France which, although it acceded to the Potsdam Agreement later, cannot, of course, disdain its share of the responsibility for carrying out this agreement.∗

**MILITARISM IN WEST GERMANY**

Having embarked upon the restoration of the military and economic potential of West Germany, the Western Powers revived and strengthened the very forces that had forged Hitler’s war machine. Had the Western Powers honored the Potsdam Agreement they would have prevented the German militarists from regaining their positions, checked revanche tendencies, and not permitted Germany to create an army and an industry manufacturing the means of destruction. . . .

It is evident that the bitter lessons of the murderous war have been lost on certain Western statesmen, who are once again dragging out the notorious Munich policy of inciting German militarism against the Soviet Union, their recent comrade in arms.**

∗ Reparations deliveries to the Soviet Union from the Western zones of Germany were not halted until July 8, 1948, two weeks after the imposition of the Berlin Blockade and six weeks after the Russians had walked out of the Allied Control Council—the organization set up explicitly by the Potsdam Agreement for governing Germany. But even before reparations deliveries to the Soviet Union were halted, Russia had milked the Western zones for over two billion dollars worth of materials and the Soviet zone for eight times that figure. Also, and though Khrushchev studiously refrains from mentioning it, reparations deliveries to the Soviet Union were made contingent by the Potsdam Agreement upon “exchange for an equivalent value of food, coal, potash, zinc, timber, clay products, petroleum products, and such other commodities as may be agreed upon” which were to be furnished by the Soviets to the West. Items, it need not be added, which were never delivered by Russia in spite of having received reparations from the Western zones for over three years.

It should also be noted that here Khrushchev is still basing his case on the Potsdam Agreement which, as has been indicated, did not refer to the occupation of Berlin but to occupation policy for Germany as a whole. But in mentioning the Potsdam Agreement, Khrushchev declines to list those elements which are still in effect and from which Russia continues to benefit. Among these are the temporary recognition of the Oder-Neisse line as Germany’s eastern frontier, the division of East Prussia between Russia and Poland, the delivery of a sizable portion of the German merchant marine to the Soviet Union, and the recognition of the “Polish Provisional Government of National Unity” (Communist) as the legal Polish Government.

** As is well known, the rearmament of West Germany began only after the Soviet
**The Peaceful Aims of East Germany**

... Whereas in West Germany, whose development was directed by the United States, Britain, and France, a government took office the representatives of which do not conceal their hatred for the Soviet Union and often openly advertise the similarity of their aspirations to the plans of the Hitlerite aggressors, in East Germany a government was formed which has irrevocably broken with Germany's aggressive past. State and public affairs in the German Democratic Republic are governed by a constitution fully in keeping with the principles of the Potsdam Agreement and the finest progressive traditions of the German nation. The rule of monopolies and Junkers has been abolished forever in the GDR. Nazism has been eradicated and a number of other social and economic reforms have been carried out, which have destroyed the basis for a revival of militarism and have made the German Democratic Republic an important factor of peace in Europe. . . .

**The Soviet Union Stands for Nonintervention**

There is only one conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing: The Potsdam Agreement has been grossly violated by the Western Powers. It is like the trunk of a tree, once mighty and fruitful, but now cut down with its heart taken out. The lofty goals for which the Potsdam Agreement was concluded have long since been renounced by the Western Powers, and what they are actually doing in Germany is diametrically opposed to what the Potsdam Agreement had envisaged. The crux of the matter is not, of course, that the social and political systems of the GDR and the FRG are basically different. The Soviet Government considers that the solution of the question of social structure of both German States is the concern of the Germans themselves. *The Soviet Union stands for complete noninterference in the internal affairs of the German people or in those of any other people.*

... The recent elections for the People's Chamber and local

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Union demonstrated its intention of dominating Western Europe, and indeed the entire free world. At first, rearmament was strongly opposed in West Germany and was accepted reluctantly after the Soviets had created a 100,000 man "People's Police in Barracks" in East Germany, and had sponsored the invasion of South Korea. Even today the West German Bundeswehr is numerically inferior to the forces under arms in the Soviet zone—a fact even more significant when one considers that the Soviet zone has only one-fourth as many people as West Germany.

* East Berlin, June 17, 1953?? Budapest, October 23, 1956??
bodies of the German Democratic Republic are yet another striking indication that the population of the GDR unanimously supports the policy of its Government, which is aimed at preserving peace and reuniting Germany on a peaceful and democratic basis, and is fully determined to defend its Socialist gains. . . .

BERLIN

Actually, of all the Allied agreements on Germany, only one is being carried out today. It is the agreement on the so-called quadripartite status of Berlin. On the basis of that status, the Three Western Powers are ruling the roost in West Berlin, turning it into a kind of state within a state and using it as a center from which to pursue subversive activity against the GDR, the Soviet Union, and the other parties to the Warsaw Treaty. The United States, Great Britain and France are freely communicating with West Berlin through lines of communication passing through the territory and airspace of the German Democratic Republic, which they do not even want to recognize.

The governments of the Three Powers are seeking to keep in force the long obsolete part of the wartime agreements that governed the occupation of Germany and entitled them in the past to stay in Berlin. At the same time, as stated above, the Western Powers have grossly violated the Four-Power agreements, including the Potsdam Agreement, which is the most concentrated expression of the obligations of the powers with respect to Germany. Moreover, the Four-Power agreements on the occupation of Germany, which the governments of the USA, Great Britain, and France invoke in support of their rights in West Berlin, were approved by the Potsdam Agreement or adopted for its implementation. In other words, the Three Powers are demanding, for their own sake, the preservation of the occupation privileges based on those Four-Power agreements, which they themselves have violated.

If the USA, Great Britain and France are indeed staying in Berlin by virtue of the right stemming from the aforementioned international agreements and, primarily, from the Potsdam Agreement, this implies their duty to abide by these agreements. Those who have grossly violated these agreements have lost the right to main-

* Here Khrushchev moves away from the idea that Allied rights in Berlin are based on the Potsdam Agreement—i.e., away from the stand he took at the Polish Embassy on November 10, and which Dulles referred to as a "non-sequitur." Khrushchev's method of doing so, as illustrated in the next paragraph, is extremely clever and indicates the adeptness of the Soviets at bending words (and agreements) to suit their purpose.
tain their occupation regime in Berlin or any other part of Germany.

It is well known that the conventional way to put an end to occupation is for the parties that were at war to conclude a peace treaty offering the defeated country the conditions necessary for the re-establishment of normal life.

The fact that Germany still has no peace treaty is the fault primarily of the governments of the USA, Britain, and France, which have never seemed to be in sympathy with the idea of drafting such a treaty. It is known that the governments of the Three Powers reacted negatively to every approach the Soviet Government has made to them regarding the preparation of a peace treaty with Germany.*

... The result is a veritable vicious circle: The U.S. Government is objecting to the drafting of a German peace treaty by referring to the absence of a united German state while at the same time hampering the reunification of Germany by rejecting the only real possibility of solving this problem through agreement between the two German states.

Is it not because the Western Powers would like to prolong indefinitely their privileges in West Germany and the occupation regime in West Berlin that they take the position on the question of drafting a peace treaty? It is becoming increasingly clear that such is the actual state of affairs.

**Allied Agreements no longer Binding**

An obviously absurd situation has thus arisen, in which the Soviet Union seems to be supporting and maintaining favorable conditions for the Western Powers in their activities against the Soviet Union and its Allies under the Warsaw Treaty.

It is obvious that the Soviet Union, just as other parties to the Warsaw Treaty, cannot tolerate such a situation any longer. For the occupation regime in West Berlin to continue would be tantamount to recognizing something like a privileged position of the NATO countries, for which there is, of course, no reason whatsoever.

... It should be clear for anybody with common sense that

* The West, of course, has not refused to sign a peace treaty with Germany and repeatedly has suggested methods for completing such a document based on free elections. But the Soviets have insisted that a peace treaty must be signed with “both” German states and not as a result of free elections—a proposal which the Western powers have declined because, as Dulles points out, the East German regime does not reflect the will of the German people—the people to whom all four Allies have an obligation as a result of the defeat of Nazism.
the Soviet Union cannot maintain a situation in West Berlin that is detrimental to its lawful interests, its security, and the security of other Socialist countries. It would be well to bear in mind that the Soviet Union is not a Jordan or an Iran and will never tolerate any methods of pressure upon it for the purpose of imposing conditions advantageous to the opposing NATO military bloc. But this is precisely what the Western Powers are trying to get the Soviet Union to endorse in their attempts to retain their rights of occupants in West Berlin.

Can the Soviet Union disregard all these facts, which affect the vital security interests of the Soviet Union, of its ally—the German Democratic Republic—and of all the member states of the Warsaw Defense Treaty? Of course not! The Soviet Government can no longer consider itself bound by that part of the Allied agreements on Germany that has assumed an inequitable character and is being used for the purpose of maintaining the occupation regime in West Berlin and interfering in the internal affairs of the GDR.

In this connection, the Government of the USSR hereby notifies the United States Government that the Soviet Union regards as null and void the “Protocol of the Agreement between the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom on the zones of occupation in Germany and on the administration of Greater Berlin,” of September 12, 1944, and the related supplementary agreements, including the agreement on the control machinery in Germany, concluded between the governments of the USSR, the USA, Great Britain, and France on May 1, 1945, i.e., the agreements that were intended to be in effect during the first years after the capitulation of Germany.

Negotiations with the GDR Will Begin

Pursuant to the foregoing and proceeding from the principle of respect for the sovereignty of the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Government will enter into negotiations with the Government of the GDR at an appropriate time with a view to transferring to the German Democratic Republic the functions temporarily performed by the Soviet authorities by virtue of the above-mentioned Allied agreements and under the agreement between the USSR and the GDR of September 20, 1955. The best way to solve the Berlin problem would undoubtedly be to adopt a decision based on the enforcement of the Potsdam Agreement on Germany. But this is possible only in the event that the three Western Powers return to a policy in German Affairs that would be pursued jointly with the USSR and in conformity with the
spirit and principles of the Potsdam Agreement. In the present cir-
cumstances this would mean the withdrawal of the Federal Re-
public of Germany from NATO with the simultaneous withdrawal
of the German Democratic Republic from the Warsaw Treaty,
and an agreement whereby in accordance with the principles of
the Potsdam Agreement, neither of the two German states would
have armed forces except those needed to maintain law and order
at home and guard the frontiers.

SOVIET UNION SEEKS NO ANNEXATION

... Some ill-wishers of the Soviet Union may of course try
to interpret the position of the Soviet Government in the question
of the occupation regime in Berlin as the striving for some sort
of annexation. It goes without saying that such an interpreta-
tion has nothing in common with reality. The Soviet Union, just
as other Socialist states, has no territorial claims. In its policy, it
is firmly guided by the principle of condemning annexation, i.e.,
the seizure of foreign territories and forced annexation of foreign
peoples. This principle was proclaimed by Lenin, the founder of
the Soviet state, as far back as the first days of Soviet power in
Russia.

The USSR does not seek any conquests. All it wants is to put an
end to the abnormal and dangerous situation that has developed
in Berlin because of the continued occupation of its western sec-
tors by the USA, Great Britain and France. *

THE SOVIET SOLUTION

Essentially speaking, the only interest the United States, Great
Britain and France have in West Berlin consists in using this “front
line city,” as it is vociferously called in the West, as a vantage point
from which to carry on hostile activities against the socialist coun-
tries. The Western powers gain nothing else from their stay in
Berlin as occupants. The ending of the illegal occupation of West
Berlin would cause no harm whatever, either to the United States
or to Great Britain or France. It would, on the other hand, sub-

* The above paragraphs should be read in light of Soviet actions in Poland in
1939, in Finland in 1939–40, and in the Baltic states, Bessarabia and East
Prussia immediately following the war. The key phrase in this section is Khru-
shchev’s definition of annexation, “i.e., the seizure of foreign territories.” As
subsequent paragraphs will show, the Soviet Union does not consider West
Berlin as “foreign” territory but as legitimately belonging to the German Demo-
cratic Republic. Accordingly, for the East German regime to later absorb it
would not be “annexation” in the Marxist sense.
stantially improve the international atmosphere in Europe and set peoples' minds at rest in all countries.

Of course, the most correct and natural way to solve the problem would be for the western part of Berlin, now actually detached from the GDR, to be reunited with its eastern part and for Berlin to become a unified city within that state in whose territory it is situated.

**Economic Guarantee to West Berlin**

However, the Soviet Government, taking into account the present unrealistic policy of the USA as well as of Great Britain and France with respect to the German Democratic Republic, cannot but foresee the difficulties the Western powers have in contributing to such a solution of the Berlin problem. At the same time, it is guided by the concern that the process of liquidating the occupation regime may not involve any painful break in the established way of life of the West Berlin population.

... The Soviet Government considers that when the foreign occupation is ended the population of West Berlin must be granted the right to have whatever way of life it wishes for itself. If the inhabitants of West Berlin desire to preserve the present way of life based on private capitalistic ownership, that is up to them. The USSR, for its part, would respect any choice of the West Berliners in this matter.*

**Free City Proposal**

In view of all these considerations, the Soviet Government on its part would consider it possible to solve the West Berlin question at the present time by the conversion of West Berlin into an independent political unit—a free city, without any state, including both existing German states, interfering in its life. Specifically, it might be possible to agree that the territory of the free city be demilitarized and that no armed forces be contained therein. The free city, West Berlin, could have its own government and run its own economic, administrative, and other affairs.

The Four Powers which shared in the administration of Berlin after the war could, as well as both of the German states, undertake to respect the status of West Berlin as a free city. . . .

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* But what about Ulbricht and the GDR—the country of which, according to Khrushchev, West Berlin is a part?  
** Acceptance of this provision, of course, would mean the introduction of the Red Army into West Berlin, and a concomitant curtailment of its freedom and independence. In addition, if the Soviets were able to establish themselves in
For its part, the Soviet Government would have no objection to the United Nations also sharing, in one way or other, in observing the free-city status of West Berlin.

**Necessity for Agreements with the GDR**

It is obvious that, considering the specific position of West Berlin, which lies within the territory of the GDR and is cut off from the outside world, the question would arise of some kind of arrangement with the German Democratic Republic concerning guarantees of unhindered communications between the free city and the outside world—both to the East and to the West—with the object of free movement of passenger and freight traffic. In its turn West Berlin would undertake not to permit on its territory any hostile subversive activity directed against the GDR or any other state.

**Free City a Concession**

Naturally, it would also be realized that the GDR's agreement to set up on its territory such an independent political organism as a free city of West Berlin would be a concession, a definite sacrifice on the part of the GDR for the sake of strengthening peace in Europe, and for the sake of the national interest of the German people as a whole.

**The Threat of Unilateral Action**

The Soviet Government, guided by a desire to normalize the situation in Berlin in the interest of European peace and in the interest of a peaceful and independent development of Germany, has resolved to effect measures on its part designed to liquidate the occupation regime in Berlin. It hopes that the Government of the USA will show a proper understanding of these motives and make a realistic approach to the Berlin question.

... In case this proposal is not acceptable to the government

West Berlin, many Berliners, for safety alone, would be forced to make their peace with the East. Many also, seeing the handwriting on the wall, would turn to communism for their own well being.

*An arrangement of this sort would entitle the Soviets, who would now have authority in West Berlin, to prohibit any form of life there which they might deem “hostile” or “subversive.” Certainly included in this category would be an uncensored press, a free radio, and the right of free assembly. Indeed, Khrushchev has made it clear that West Berlin as a free and independent city would not exist.*
of the USA then there will no longer remain any topic for negotia-
tions between the former occupying powers on the Berlin ques-
tion.

THE ULTIMATUM

The Soviet Government seeks to have the necessary change in
Berlin's situation take place in a cold atmosphere, without haste
and unnecessary friction, with maximum possible consideration
for the interests of the parties concerned. Obviously, a certain
period of time will be necessary for the powers which occupied
Germany after the defeat of Hitler's Wehrmacht to agree on pro-
claiming West Berlin a free city, provided, naturally, that the
Western powers display due interest in this proposal.

. . . In view of this, the Soviet Government proposes to make
no changes in the present procedure for military traffic of the USA,
Great Britain, and France from West Berlin to the FRG for half
a year. It regards such a period as fully sufficient to provide a
sound basis for the solution of the questions connected with the
change in Berlin's situation and to prevent a possibility of any
complications, provided, naturally, that the governments of the
Western powers do not deliberately seek such complications. Dur-
ing the above-mentioned period the parties will have an oppor-
tunity to prove in practice their desire to ease international ten-
sion by settling the Berlin question.

If the above mentioned period is not utilized to reach an ade-
quate agreement, the Soviet Union will then carry out the planned
measures through an agreement with the GDR. It is envisaged that
the German Democratic Republic, like any other independent
state, must fully deal with questions concerning its space, i.e., exer-
cise its sovereignty on land, on water, and in the air. At the same
time, there will terminate all contacts still maintained between
the representatives of the armed forces and other officials of the
Soviet Union in Germany and corresponding representatives of
the armed forces and other officials of the USA, Great Britain,
and France in questions pertaining to Berlin.

ONLY MADMEN . . .

The Government of the Soviet Union would like to hope that
the problem of normalizing the situation in Berlin, which life it-
self raises before our states as a natural necessity, will in any case
be solved in accordance with considerations of statesmanship,
the interests of peace between peoples, without the unnecessary
nervous strain and intensification of a "cold war."
Methods of blackmail and reckless threats of force will be least of all appropriate in solving such a problem as the Berlin question. Such methods will not help solve a single question, but can only bring the situation to the danger point. But only madmen can go to the length of unleashing another world war over the preservation of privileges of occupiers in West Berlin. If such madmen should really appear, there is no doubt that strait jackets can be found for them. If the statesmen responsible for the policy of the Western powers are guided by feelings of hatred for communism and the socialist countries in their approach to the Berlin question as well as other international problems, no good will come out of it. *

Sweetness and Light

The Soviet Government believes that it would be sensible to recognize the situation prevailing in the world and to create normal relations for the coexistence of all states, to develop international trade, to build relations between our countries on the basis of the well known principles of mutual respect for one another's sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in one another's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit.

The Soviet Union and its people and government are sincerely striving for the restoration of good relations with the United States of America, relations based on trust, which are quite feasible as shown by the experience in the joint struggle against the Hitlerite aggressors, and which in peacetime would hold out to our countries nothing but the advantages of mutually enriched spiritual and material cooperation between our peoples, and to all other people the blessings of a tranquil life under conditions of an enduring peace. 29

The implications of the Soviet note are clear. Russia had decided to force the Western powers from Berlin—to incorporate the city's West-

* This is very similar to the argument advanced against the stopping of Hitler's march into the Rhineland in 1936, into Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938, and into Poland in 1939. "Why fight for Danzig?"

All dictators seem to be able to credit their own position with sanity and anyone who would oppose them with madness. Thus, just as it would have been "madness" according to Hitler for Britain and France to have gone to war in 1936 to prevent him from going into the Rhineland, so would it be madness for the Western powers to oppose Khrushchev, and fight for Berlin in 1958.
The First Ultimatum

ern sectors into the GDR—and, buttressed by the achievement of Soviet technology, had selected this time to begin. But Khrushchev's thrust was varied. First he accused the Western powers of seeking to perpetuate a state of war with Germany by clinging to out-dated occupation agreements. Then he charged the West with violating these very agreements; of no longer deserving the rights of occupiers, and of seeking to use their position in Germany to disrupt the "normal" order of things in the "Socialist camp." Thus, while he himself was attempting to change the situation—attempting to annex West Berlin and deny its citizens the freedom they presently enjoy—it was the West that was blamed for revanchist aspirations and for menacing the peace of Europe.

From this characterization, Khrushchev moved on to the postwar development of Germany; to the creation of what he termed the Hitlerite state of the Federal Republic and the new and "democratic" regime in East Germany which had "irrevocably broken with Germany's aggressive past." Clearly, this was an attempt to gain sympathy and support for the tyrannical Ulbricht state from those perhaps unfamiliar with the Berlin question, from the emerging nations of Asia and Africa, from the neutrals and the uncommitted.

The ruse of a "free city" which Khrushchev suggested was in line with this attempt. By making Soviet demands outwardly palatable, the West would be hard put to explain their objections. Unlike the blockade, which had cast the Russians in the role of aggressors, the Soviet note of November 27 placed the West on the defensive—placed the Allies in the position of explaining why they were against the Soviet proposals, and why, as Khrushchev would have it, they were against ending the remnants of World War II.

Khrushchev's "free city," of course, would have been free from nothing save freedom itself. The introduction of Soviet forces to West Berlin territory, combined with the prohibition of what the Communists termed "subversive" activity there, would have meant the end of the city's independent existence.

And after giving the West an undisguised ultimatum of six months, Khrushchev labeled any so foolish to oppose his plan as madmen for whom strait jackets could be found. Only madmen, he said, would risk world war for the preservation of their privileges as occupiers. But now Khrushchev was talking to the West and not to the neutrals; to
those who felt an accommodation with Russia was possible, and to those who shrank back from the necessity of halting aggression in its infancy. To be sure, it was not for their rights as occupiers that the West would fight in Berlin, but for the freedom of the two and a half million people who composed the Western sectors and who for the past thirteen years had devoted themselves to the cause of freedom. But this was a point Khrushchev sought to obscure, and by making it look as though the West opposed his plan just to perpetuate their rights as occupiers the Soviet leader was preempting the moral justification for Western resistance.

Last, but certainly not least, Khrushchev also sought to gain a greater degree of recognition for the puppet East German regime and the Soviet henchmen who controlled it. By continually referring to the GDR as though it was a sovereign state, indeed, by insisting that the West would have to deal with it, and that Berlin was a part of it, Khrushchev was endeavoring to have the world recognize what he considered an accomplished fact. Namely, that the sixteen million of people of East Germany had no voice other than that of Walter Ulbricht.