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Changing Europe and U.S. Policies

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Address by Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)
The Springfield Adult Education Council
Springfield Public Forum, The Phillips Lecture
Technical High School, Springfield, Massachusetts
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Although it will have taken an inordinate length of time to complete it, the record shows that the 87th Congress has disposed of a substantial amount of public business. For this work, it will be praised or blamed—at least until early November—depending in no small part, I should think, on one's political predilections. The Congress also failed to get through certain significant items of business. And for this, too, it will be praised or blamed, at least until early November.

In the closing days of the 87th Congress, however, two major measures were cleared. Praise or blame and political predilections, notwithstanding, these measures are of immense importance to the nation.

I refer, first, to the foreign aid appropriation. We may deplore this appropriation as a waste of money, as an invitation to foreign ingratitude or worse. We may praise it as an act of far-sighted humanitarianism or enlightened self-interest.

However we may regard it, there is no escaping the fact that foreign aid is a critical gear in the intricate machinery of
the nation’s foreign relations. It has continued to turn, more or less adequately, for many years and through several administrations of both political parties. It is no overstatement to say that if the Congress had removed the gear or crippled it by denying an ample appropriation it would have risked bringing down the entire structure on which the peace and security of the nation has rested for many years. Faced with that reality, more than a sufficient number of Senators and Representatives were inclined to the course of prudence with respect to this program. Members of both parties acted to sustain the security and peace of the United States.

This is not to say that misgivings were absent on the part of members who voted for foreign aid. Many entertained serious doubts about one or more aspects of the aid-program. May I say, in all frankness, that I personally share some of these doubts.

I do not believe, for example, that we can or should accept as satisfactory for the indefinite future a course of foreign policy which places great reliance on a continued outflow of dollar grants to other nations. Nor do I believe that we should accept by force of habit a course of sustaining the independence of nations elsewhere by maintaining aid-dependent governments in a style to which they may have become accustomed. Nor do I believe that the long-range interests of this nation are served by casting aid for the economic development of emergent nations, a problem which has a rationale of its own, in the framework of a competitive struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union.
But the intelligent resolution of these and other doubts does not lie in the sudden smashing of the gear of foreign aid with all that that implies to the total machinery of foreign policy and, hence, to our peace and security. I believe, rather, that we must look for the resolution of the doubts in a continuing alertness to the changing realities of the international situation. We must look for it in constructive adjustments in the foreign policies by which we seek to deal with these realities. And we must look for it, finally, in a continuous re-ordering of both objective and administration in the aid-program itself, as circumstances elsewhere and at home change. In these ways we may anticipate, with some realism, the day when the dependency of others on the more dubious and costly elements of the aid-mechanism may come to an orderly end. Indeed, we may look forward to the day when the dependency of our own policies for peace and security on these same dubious elements may also come to an orderly end.

For this reason, among others, it seems to me that the President's new trade policy is the most important act of the recent session of the Congress. This first major revision of foreign trade policy since the enactment of the Reciprocal Trade Program a quarter of a century ago places in the hands of the President authority to deal effectively with recent changes in the patterns of international trade. The program has great significance for the continued growth of our own domestic economy, for that growth is now interwoven with an expanding overseas trade. But even greater, perhaps, are the possibilities which are opened by the new trade program for placing
our security and well-being on a more stable and equitable and, hopefully, a less costly basis than that which now prevails.

In this latter connection, the new trade law bears a direct relationship to the focus of tonight’s discussion. It has particular relevance to Europe, to a changing Europe, and to our relations with that region.

I have already referred to the need for a continuing alertness to the evolving situation abroad. It is essential to effective foreign policy that we do not imprison ourselves in a self-fashioned cage of outworn facts and ritualistic slogans. Certainly, we ought not forget the experiences of the past. But, equally, we must be alert to the realities of the present and try our best to anticipate the needs of the future.

This alertness is most essential with respect to Europe. For Europe has long been at the core of our foreign policies, and Europe is changing rapidly. It is changing, moreover, in ways which are likely to require adjustments in policies on a scale more extensive than any we have known in the past decade.

We cannot yet define the adjustments which may be desirable, possible, or, indeed, inevitable in the years ahead. Our policies interact with the policies of other nations and the courses which they take will surely affect our own. But we will discern the lines of adjustment, and we shall have a better chance to formulate effective adjustments as we deepen our understanding of what is presently transpiring in Europe.
Those of you who have traveled from time to time on that continent may have been struck by the obvious manifestations of change over the years. Indeed, a great change is readily evident in such simple matters as the progressive improvement in the dress of the people and the worsening of the traffic problems in the major European cities. It is evident in the copious availability of food and other consumer goods, in the general intensity of commercial and industrial activity.

The present look of Western Europe, to one who saw it ten or fifteen years ago, is that of a booming prosperity. And, indeed, the economic indicators sustain the apparent. Western Europe is prosperous, and it is dynamic. It is producing, investing, trading--internally and externally--and consuming at unprecedented levels.

There is a general belief that this dynamism is due to the Common Market. The fact is that much of the economic momentum was generated in the European countries on an essentially national but cooperative basis, even before the Market arrangements began to go into effect. We may anticipate, therefore, that there is much more to come if the Common Market continues to live up to its initial promise and, if the cooperative concepts of the Market are extended outward to other nations.

In any event, the atmosphere of Western Europe in 1962 makes it difficult to recall the Europe of 1945--the devastated Europe, stunned by long years of privation, by the incredible brutality and massive destructiveness of the war. It is difficult, even, to recall the Europe of 1950 or 1951--the Europe struggling to its feet with the help of the Marshall Plan.
Difficult though it may be, it is essential that we recall these earlier Europes. For it was in those settings that our basic postwar comprehensions of the European situation were formed, comprehensions which persist to some extent even today although circumstances have changed greatly.

We saw Western Europe, then, as hurt almost beyond help, threatened by revolutionary upheaval from within and aggression from without. We saw Western Europe dependent on this nation for its very subsistence, let alone the revival or survival of its freedom. And after the Berlin blockade, we saw Europe, as a whole, split beyond any expectation of healing between the monolithic oppressive Stalinist system in the East and the reviving free nations of the West. And we saw, in a divided Germany the wedge of a deepening division in a nation and a continent.

Throughout the early postwar years, our policies were reasonably attuned to the realities of the European situation. They were policies which could produce more and more vehement slogans of liberation, more and more speeches in the Congress on liberation, but, unfortunately, not the actuality of a liberation in Eastern Europe, as we saw with striking clarity at the time of the Hungarian uprising. But they were policies which, with less and less fanfare, were appropriate to the restoration of Western Germany, the recovery of Western Europe and to the protection of its renewed vitality and freedom.

Western Europe readily accepted our leadership in those years. Cynics might note that the Europeans had little choice. But I prefer to think that our leadership was accepted in major part because it was an understanding, effective and responsible leadership. We
pursued policies which Western Europeans recognized as serving their interests and policies which served our own interests, by safeguarding the security, the peace, the progress—the essential well-being—of the people of the United States, at a realistic and bearable cost.

As I have noted, attitudes tend to persist even after the circumstances which give rise to them have changed. National policies and administration are subject at least to the same inertia. If we would deal effectively with the Europe of 1962, therefore, we must now grasp firmly the fact that we are no longer dealing with the Europe of 1945 or 1950. In Western Europe, we are no longer dealing—to be blunt—with the gaunt and shabby economic dependent, the shocked, tottering and willing dependent of the earlier years. On the contrary, Western Europe, today, is on its feet and has been for several years. More, it is running.

Indeed there are certain aspects of the change which has taken place which border on the ironic. European currencies, for example, were once in little demand in the international financial markets. Some of these currencies are now in relatively greater demand than our own. Not so long ago we legislated inducements to encourage American enterprise to invest in Western Europe and found very few takers. Now we are concerned and properly so by the great outflow of American capital to that region, and we are seeking to stimulate Western European investment in this country as a partial counterbalance. Once we were badgered for loans by Western Europeans. In recent years we have been seeking a speedup in repayment of various obligations and what is more, the Europeans have been repaying in advance. Once we
placed abroad, as far as possible, orders for arms and munitions and other material for NATO. Now, we are pressing the European allies to make their military purchases in the United States as a means of obtaining foreign exchange to off-set the dollar-outflow involved in keeping our military forces in Europe.

I do not cite these examples in dismay or alarm. The recovery and prosperity of Western Europe were the ends which we sought because our national interests are interwoven with these ends. Moreover, the international financial position of the United States is one of great reserves and in the past year this position has apparently strengthened. I cite the unusual and ironic turnabouts, rather to indicate the extent to which economic circumstances have changed in Western Europe.

The transition has not been sudden. And as it has taken place, our policies—sooner or later—have generally adjusted to the changes. Some of the examples which I have just cited are representative of specific adjustments. But in more general terms, we might note that the policies of postwar relief to a stricken Europe, the postwar loans, the Marshall Plan, have long since passed into history. With the exception of Spain, no economic aid of any kind has been extended to Western Europe for several years.

From one-sided economic aid, in short, we have progressed to a vastly expanded two-way trade—regular commercial trade. This trade has flourished, and it now encompasses one-third of our total trade, $5.3 billion in exports to Western Europe, and $4.7 billion in imports from Western Europe in 1961. Compare these figures with a pre-war trade which, in 1938 stood at $1.2 billion in exports and $474 million in
imports. Apart from its other virtues, the Marshall Plan was a key factor in bringing about this immensely and mutually advantageous growth in trade.

It is doubtful, however, that we can coast indefinitely in this satisfactory situation even if we so desired. It is not likely that we shall be able to avoid difficulties in the period ahead in our relations with Western Europe. The basic question which is looming is whether a surge forward in Western cooperation, notably in trade, is now possible, indeed, necessary.

The major decisions in this connection cannot long be avoided. Indeed, Western Europe is moving towards them largely on a self-generated momentum. The Inner Six countries--Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg--are impelled by the high initial effectiveness of the Common Market into a speedup in the removal of economic impediments as among themselves. As a group, moreover, they are at a point at which there will be a significant step forward in the freeing of trade with nations outside the Market or the heightening of restrictions on that trade. Moreover, the very success of the Common Market appears to be serving as a stimulus to integrated and quasi-independent European action on other matters, particularly on the part of the core nations of Western Germany and France. And the resolution of the Algerian question is likely to increase this stimulus.

Britain and other Western European nations linked in the Free Trade Area commonly called the Outer Seven, are also carried toward major decisions largely by the significance of the Common Market to their trade. They are drawn by both the great promise and the uncertain
prospects with which the Market confronts them. And finally, we are impelled towards major decisions not only by considerations of trade but because of the key position which all of Western Europe—and a changing Europe—occupies in the structure of policy upon which our peace and security depends.

We find ourselves, in short, in a period of major transition in Western Europe during which many questions, economic and more than economic, are appearing and demanding answers. We do not yet know all the questions, let alone the answers. For it does not rest with us alone to pose the one or to compose the other.

It is in this context that the action of the Congress in enacting into law the President’s new trade program assumes great importance to the nation. In a most responsible and non-partisan achievement and by overwhelming vote the Congress has equipped the President to deal with the several possibilities which are emerging, all of which have great significance for the nation’s security, peace and well-being.

It is easy enough to visualize these possibilities in an optimistic light. One might look ahead, for example, to the entry of the United Kingdom and other European nations into the Common Market or, in other ways, the devising of satisfactory trade arrangements between the Inner Six and Outer Seven of Europe so that they will not find themselves at sixes and sevens. One might look ahead, too, to the immense possibilities of trade-growth between this nation and all of Western Europe, through the reciprocal removal of trade barriers,
in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, under the
General Agreement for Tariffs and Trade and in other ways.

Indeed these optimistic possibilities are now open. But in
all realism we must recognize that they are not the only possibilities.
In this connection, I would point to the difficulties which have arisen
in the course of British negotiation for membership in the Common Market.
It is understandable that there should be difficulties and cautions on
both sides in these negotiations. But the hesitancies should not be
dismissed by the glib assertion that it is just a matter of Britain
"wanting the cake and eating it too." There is more involved—much more.

And much of what is involved is concerned with the Commonwealth.
We will do well to remember that the Commonwealth, whatever its short­
comings, remains a significant factor for restraint and order and the
evolution of freedom in a world which is never far from chaos and filled
with tyranny. It is to be hoped, therefore, that arrangements will be
devised which permit reconciliation of new British ties with Western
Europe with the maintenance of the Commonwealth. For such a reconcilia­
tion may well decide whether present trends in Western Europe will turn
inward or outward, towards seclusion or inclusion, in the direction of
fragmentation or toward more effective cooperation among all the free
nations in meeting the worldwide problems of freedom.

If the coming transition in Western Europe will require adjust­
ments in our economic policies it is not unlikely that it will require
adjustments in political and defense policies. Again, it is possible
to view the possibilities in a most optimistic light. We might assume,
for example, that the great economic progress of Western Europe might
produce a steady closing of political as well as economic ranks and the development of more effective common approaches towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and towards all the issues involved in a common advance of freedom throughout the world. One might also assume the continuation and deepening of military co-operation under NATO, with the Europeans bearing an increased share of its costs in manpower and materiel, commensurate with the improvement in their economic situation.

Yet, we would not see the present situation fully if we did not also note certain tendencies which suggest alternative possibilities. We must note, for example, that Western policies with regard to China and other parts of the Far East are by no means parallel policies, let alone common policies, and the gap which has existed for years shows no sign of closing. That may be understandable inasmuch as the Far East has become increasingly remote from the concern of Western Europe even as it has come closer to ours. But near at hand, we cannot ignore the fact that the profitable trade and shipping enticements which have existed since the breakdown in our relationships with Cuba have proved too much for some NATO members to resist. Again, I suppose one might rationalize this situation by noting that many of the NATO members are maritime nations and, as such, have traditional reluctances or legal restraints against introducing impediments to commerce on the seas, and further, that Cuba is somewhat remote from their immediate interests.

But even more directly, in the North Atlantic relationship itself, a relationship in which, presumably, the security and other interests of the European members are at least equally and probably more at stake, we cannot fail to notice certain anomalous tendencies.
There are obvious differences over nuclear strategy which far from
being resolved, appear to be deepening. Further, it is years since
NATO established a force goal of thirty divisions in Western Europe.
At the present time, however, there are only twenty-three divisions
in the region, and so far as I am aware, the only increments to its
strength in the past half-decade have come from the United States
and West Germany which now supplies half of the European contingent.
This is the case despite the fact that economic growth throughout
Western Europe would appear to equip the nations of that region to
increase their expenditures for the common defense and permit us to
reduce ours.

In this instance, we are confronted with an almost inescapable
conclusion that the Western European allies are either most
lackadaisical about their security or they see the military threat
to the North Atlantic region or at least to Western Europe in a far
different perspective than do we.

This conclusion, moreover, is reinforced by another anomaly
in the current situation. I allude to it by pointing out that much of
the discussion of foreign policy in the last Congress, as in its pre-
decessors, revealed a continued deep ideological hostility and security
concern with respect to any and all relations with Eastern Europe. The
Congressional concern included Yugoslavia and Poland despite the fact
the Presidents of both parties throughout the years have urged a some-
what different approach at least to these two Eastern European nations.

With this exception and despite occasional short-lived efforts
to improve the tone of United States-Soviet relations—as for example
during the Geneva Conference of 1955 and when the "Spirit of Camp David"
prevailed—our relations with Eastern Europe have, in fact, been extremely limited, involving minimal diplomatic and cultural contact and small-scale—in some instances--trivial trade. The closed-door situation in the East European Communist countries, of course, has been a factor in this situation. At the time the Marshall Plan was proposed, for example, the Eastern European governments under Stalin’s dictation isolated themselves almost completely from contact with the West. But it is also true that we imposed, as a matter of policy, our own quasi-quarantine on relations with that region and have retained it through the years. The principal motives, apparently, have been a belief that any other course would adversely affect the security of the West and the hope that quasi-quarantine would contribute to a liberation of the Eastern European people from oppressive Communist governments.

In any event, our policies with respect to Eastern Europe have involved stringent trade controls for many years. These controls have acted to keep our commerce with all of the Eastern European countries at a very low level. Exclusive of trade with Poland and Yugoslavia, it has amounted to under $100 million a year. And the great bulk of the $100 million consists of trade with the Soviet Union. By contrast, our commerce with Yugoslavia and Poland, unfolding under a somewhat eased policy, came to over $300 million in 1961.

It would reasonable to assume that a parallel policy towards Eastern Europe would prevail among our NATO allies. They are closer to the source of danger, sharing the control of the continent with the Communist governments. Their stake in the security of the West and the liberation of Eastern Europe would appear at least equal to our own.
But we look in vain, if we look for parallel policies. With the Soviet Union alone, for example, the trade of the NATO nations of Europe amounted to over $1.5 billion in 1961. And the trade of our NATO allies with Eastern European countries, exclusive of the Soviet Union, in the same year came to a total of over $2 billion.

Indeed, in the case of West Germany, trade with East Germany has been about $500 million a year for the past five years. West German trade with the Soviet Union alone amounted to $400 million in 1961, equal to our total trade with all of Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia and Poland.

Moreover, the trade figures are a bare-bones indicator of the extent of increasing contact between West and East Europe. Add to it, a growing intra-European tourism. Add to it, the spread of commercial aviation networks until they embrace both parts of Europe and include principal European carriers. Add to it the direct rail service now available between Moscow and Rome, Paris and London. Add to it new credit agreements and sea-going shipping arrangements which facilitate the flow of trade between the two parts of Europe.

What begins to emerge from these and other indicators is a far different portrait of the all-European situation than that which prevailed a decade or more ago, the period in which our general comprehensions were formed and our basic political and defensive policies established. The contemporary portrait hardly suggests a Western Europe cowering with fear before the threat of imminent Soviet invasion, or subversion from Eastern Europe. It hardly suggests a Britain, Germany, France, or Italy which hold that the way to induce change in Eastern
Europe is to isolate it. It hardly suggests Western Europe standing firm or even standing still, insofar as contact with Eastern Europe is concerned.

On the contrary, the current situation appears to be that of a Europe which while it may be separated on ideological lines is finding, through an extensive commerce and other contacts, a tolerable way to live with the division. This is a far different Europe than that which existed at the time our present policies of quasi-quarantine of Eastern Europe were devised. It is a far different Europe than that which is suggested by the situation in Berlin in which the United States and the Soviet Union confront each other in a continuous state of incipient conflict.

It is a Europe, in short, which appears to have changed markedly in a decade, except at Berlin. So much has it changed that it suggests the desirability of a critical examination of both our comprehensions of the situation and the policies which are derived from them to determine whether both may have fallen somewhat behind the times. We will not serve our own interests if we cloak the realities of the present situation in the facts and slogans of the past. Policies persisted in long after circumstances alter risk irrelevancy or worse.

Certainly, we ought never to approach changes in foreign policy lightly. Neither ought we to fear them. We must always be prepared to seek them if, in the light of altered situations, changes may be indicated in terms of our own security, peace and well-being.
In the end, it is the President who has the awesome responsibility of decision in these matters. But I have long believed that any President gains from thoughtful public consideration of foreign policy. Nor is such consideration impossible in this country until after November, as Mr. Khrushchev appears to think. The questions involved in our relations with the rest of the world are not political; they are national. The people of this nation have long since shown a capacity to separate the two and, in time, to deal with those in public life who fail to separate them. It is with continued confidence in that capacity, therefore, that I suggest to you some aspects of the European situation and our policies, which are in need of thorough and dispassionate public examination.

1. It does not seem to me unreasonable, for example, to anticipate that the impact of the economic transition in Western Europe is bound to be felt, not only in economic matters, but throughout the structure of Western cooperation. It seems to me, further, that our once preponderant position of responsibility must evolve into a greater sharing of responsibility in line with the diminishing differences between the basic capacities of the Europeans and ourselves as the effect of World War II on Europe recedes into history. There is no failure of leadership in adjustment to this reality. Rather, it is an essential of leadership. It would, indeed, be a failure if we were to cling to an excessive responsibility in Western affairs on a mistaken assumption that nothing has changed and the need for us is little different than it ever was and that special sacrifices on our part must continue. In that presumptive course lies not only unnecessary tension but unnecessary cost and unnecessary risk for the security of our own people.
More suitable to the present, it seems to me, is the course of a less ritualistic pursuit and, at the same time, a more realistic pursuit of interdependence among the Western nations on the basis of a more proximate equality of benefit and sacrifice in our relations. We may begin to find such a course through the new trade program and a great expansion of trade, not only with the Common Market but with all the Western European nations. Certainly, that is precisely what the policy is designed to permit, and I have no doubt that the President will pursue it with vigor. But we need to be prepared for some very hard and difficult bargaining in the days ahead. We must be prepared to look to our national needs with the same frank concern as do others. Unless we are so prepared we may well find ourselves continuing to carry more of the burdens of interdependence while enjoying less of its benefits. We will do well, too, to make certain that the trade interests of Latin America, Japan and other nations with whom close and fortuitous relations are enjoyed, are not shunted aside in the effort to strengthen the ties across the Atlantic.

2. If the beginnings of the adjustments of our course are to be found in the new trade program, they are not likely to end with that program. For, I do not think that we can discount for much longer the existence of Western European concepts of security needs which differ considerably from our own. Nor can we ignore the continued reluctance of Western European governments to increase their sacrifices for the common defense in the patterns which were determined some years ago.
May I say the Europeans have an equal right to their views as to what may presently be necessary to their defense, to the common NATO defense, and every consideration should be given to their views. But equally, we have a right and a responsibility to examine the extent of our commitment to the common defense, particularly in view of the failure to reach the NATO force goals, in view of the consistent balance of payments deficits which we have experienced for several years, in view of the expanded European capacity to bear a larger share of the common costs if they were so inclined, and in view of the enormous burden of assistance which we have carried and are carrying, largely alone, with respect to other areas of the world. It would appear to me that, at the least, the time is already past due when the remaining military aid programs to Western Europe should follow the economic aid programs into history. Nor is it unreasonable to consider a reduction in our expensive ground-force commitment to Europe—both in manpower and in dollars—if a reduction might be negotiated for a reciprocal withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe. Any such reduction is, of course, inseparable from a satisfactory and enduring resolution of the Berlin question. Otherwise, we would be in the impossible situation of reducing forces in Europe one day only to have to increase them the next.

3. Prospects for any such course are also partially dependent on the situation in Eastern Europe. And it is difficult to speak of the present situation in that region with any precision. Our public sources of information are somewhat limited, to say the least. Nevertheless policies which still derive from an interpretation of that region as
the Soviet monolith which it was in Stalin's day seem to me to be open to question. Certainly, Eastern Europe remains an area of preponderant Soviet influence. Certainly, Communist nations of the region are linked in the Warsaw Pact. But it is hardly accurate to see the Soviet relationship with Finland and with Poland in the same perspective; nor is it valid to equate the Soviet relationship with East Germany and with Yugoslavia, nor the Soviet relationship with Poland and with Bulgaria, Rumania or Albania. Indeed, the latter country has actually severed diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and sent its military mission packing!

What meaning, if any, these and other differences in Eastern Europe may have to the peace and welfare of the United States is an open question. But nothing is gained by closing our eyes to the fact that differences do exist or by regarding as sacrosanct policies which derive from earlier assumptions with regard to the region from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

On that basis alone, the policies which we have pursued more or less consistently with all of Eastern Europe except Finland and to a lesser extent with Yugoslavia and Poland for a decade and a half clearly require careful scrutiny. When we consider, further, that NATO trade with Eastern Europe has risen to a level of $3.5 billion and other East-West European relationships have greatly expanded, while we have continued to maintain a quasi-quarantine, the need for thoughtful review becomes even more evident.

I would reiterate that prospects for an orderly improvement of our policies with respect to Europe or, at least, a safe reduction
in their burdens on the public, are likely to prove remote so long as there is a continuance of the present tension in Berlin.

It is the policy and, by this time, it should be clear to all that it is the policy of the United States neither to be provoked into unnecessary war nor to surrender Allied rights in Berlin to force. Whatever is necessary to assert that policy will be done. But let there be no mistake as to the cost of that situation to this nation. The increase of several billions in the defense budget in the last two years was closely related to it. The call-up of National Guardsmen and Reserve components last year was directly related to it. The grant of standby authority to the President to do the same this year is related to it.

I would point out, further, that the rights which we are seeking to safeguard in Berlin are Allied rights even though the principal responsibility and cost for upholding them has been borne by this nation since 1948. It seems to me that, in the light of the altered situation in Europe, we may properly inquire whether the Berlin situation today is not at least as much a responsibility of the Germans and the Europeans as it is of the United States. We may properly inquire, whether or not in view of the catastrophic implications which this situation contains, it has not become, to some extent, a worldwide responsibility to share.

It would appear to me that we have every right to insist that those whose interests are at least as directly involved as ours bear more equitably the risks and costs which are involved. At the least, it would appear to me that they join in an effort to find a rational alternative to this dangerous and costly situation, by such honorable
means as may be open, be it by diplomacy, be it through the United Nations or through conferences on Germany at which the European nations who may be prepared to contribute, as well as Germans, might be present. Indeed, it is not at all inappropriate that both the United States and the Soviet Union move further back in such negotiations while the Europeans themselves make a greater effort to find answers to the problems posed at Berlin by a divided Germany.

In any event, I do not believe that we should be dissuaded from seeking more rational answers to the Berlin dilemma and related questions by the raised eyebrows or the relatively cost-free reticences of others, so long as we continue to bear the preponderant burden of cost and responsibility.

To stand firm while circumstances move on is not to stand firm at all. It is to recede into irrelevance and a frustrating impotence from which the only escape may indeed be an ignominious retreat or a war of mutual annihilation. The President deserves to be sustained at home and by allies abroad as he engages in an unremitting search for a better answer to the dilemma. And the hour is indeed already very late in Berlin.

I have discussed these matters with you, tonight, notwithstanding the fact that the winds of October have already begun to kindle the political fires of November. I have felt free to do so because these questions of a changing Europe and our foreign policies will be with us all regardless of the outcome of the election.
With the President remains the awesome responsibility of decision. He will have to make the decisions—decisions on which hinge the security, the peace and the well-being of generations. In all frankness, the decisions which are reached with regard to foreign policy are not likely to differ significantly whatever the political composition of the next Congress. In these national matters, I am confident that President Kennedy will continue to have the support of the preponderance of the membership of Congress, as did his predecessor. And I am confident, too, that he will have the preponderant support of the people of the United States.