Speech of Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)

THE DEADLOCK AT GENEVA

After four weeks of negotiating in Geneva we have little to show for our efforts. If the usual procedure is followed, we can expect agitation to the effect that we are wasting our time and that our representatives ought to come home. For them to do so at this time, in my opinion, would be a mistake. It has taken four weeks to bring to a head the basic business of the conference. That basic business is Berlin, even though the question of Berlin is related to other questions affecting Germany as a whole and Central Europe. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that it was the Berlin Crisis which brought the Geneva Conference into being in the first place and not the larger questions of German reunification or European security.

In the light of disturbing reports of impending failure at Geneva, I should like to recall that just four months ago I addressed the Senate on the German situation. In subsequent discussions on the floor other Members analyzed this situation in detail and discussed possibilities for meeting the problems which it posed. I recall, particularly, the observations of the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations (Mr. Fulbright), the remarks of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. Dodd), the bold plan of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. Capehart) and the critical and constructive comments of the Senator from New York (Mr. Javits).
When I spoke on the German situation last February, I was moved to do so by one principal consideration. We were committed at that time, as we are now, to stand fast in West Berlin. It seemed to me, however, that we were committed to that position in support of policies which, conceived more than a decade earlier under another Administration, had become inadequate, if not obsolete, in the light of current conditions and the current needs of this nation and other Western states. It seemed to me that those policies no longer held realistic hope of leading towards a stable peace and the greater security of freedom in Germany and Europe. They promised -- these inadequate and obsolete policies -- at best only a desperate and costly rearguard action to maintain a surface status quo which was becoming ever more separated from the underlying realities of the evolving situation in Germany, Europe and the world. At worst, those policies promised a disastrous diplomatic retreat or a catastrophic war -- limited or unlimited -- a war by accident or miscalculation.

These thoughts, Mr. President, were spoken freely in the Senate last February 12 and in four subsequent speeches. They were spoken with the intent of being constructive. They were spoken out of a desire to cooperate responsibly with the Administration. They were spoken in the hope of encouraging a wide utilization of the most powerful device of freedom -- the device of full and free discussion -- in order to recast and to strengthen our policies to meet the impending crisis in Germany.
In that spirit, Mr. President, I advanced nine essentials for a positive Western policy on Germany. These proposals were not, for the most part, original except in their restatement in the context of my remarks. Nor were they set forth in a package, on an all-or-nothing basis. On the contrary, some of them were already implicit in our policies, and all of them were obviously subject to modification and elaboration. Nevertheless, they were set forth, as one Senator's views, of a possible way around the dangerous impasse towards which the world appeared to be headed in Germany.

Let me recall in summary form at this point these nine suggested essentials of policy, as they were stated and developed in subsequent speeches.

(1) Stand fast in Berlin, not as a slogan, not as an end in itself but as the basis for a Western initiative for peace in Europe.

(2) Call upon the German leaders of the East and West Berlin communities to begin serious negotiations for unifying the public services and municipal government of that city.

(3) Enlist the conciliatory services of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the effort to bring about the interim unification and neutralization of all Berlin; guarantee by U.N. or other international means the free use of the routes of access to the entire city until such time as it became once again the capital of a unified Germany.

(4) If this or a similar approach to interim unification and neutralization of all Berlin is not obtained, then continue the Western presence in West Berlin, whether or not the Russians chose to leave the other sector of the city.
(5) If forced to maintain the Western presence in West Berlin in such circumstances, however, consider seriously withdrawing the garrisons of French, British and American forces from the city and replacing them with West Germans supported by NATO guarantees.

(6) Call upon the Germans in authority in West and East Germany to talk, to talk a great deal on the whole range of problems involved in harmonizing the political, economic and military systems of the two zones as an essential preliminary step to the unification of Germany.

(7) Call upon the East German communists and the Russians to permit the exercise, without the threat of terror, of basic political freedoms in the Eastern zone, as a preliminary to reunification.

(8) Seek agreements between the Soviet Union and the Western allies to guarantee for a period of years the kind of unified Germany which might emerge from German discussions and see to it that a reunited Germany is neither subjected to military pressures by its neighbors or becomes a source of aggressive military pressure on them.

(9) To that end consider agreements for the control and limitation of armaments in Germany and Central Europe along the lines of the Eden Plan, the Rapacki Plan and similar plans, predicated on satisfactory agreements being reached at the Geneva Conferences on the Prevention of Surprise Attacks and the Suspension of Nuclear Testing.
Mr. President, when these proposals were advanced initially there was a great deal of comment on them both at home and abroad. Some of it was critical and some of the criticism was little short of an expression of shocked disbelief.

Yet the proposals were not too far removed from the changes which Mr. Dulles was seeking to bring about in Western policy during his last trip abroad, shortly before he was stricken. Since that time, Mr. President, we have, in fact, witnessed a major evolution of United States and Western policy with respect to Germany in the direction of these proposals.

This nation went into the present Geneva Conference with a general approach which represented a sharp modification of the policies to which we had clung for years. The new approach has made it evident that while we would stand fast in Berlin, we would do so not as an end in itself, but as the basis for moving towards a reasonable settlement of basic Berlin, German and European problems. Beyond standing fast, we have suggested at Geneva a specific plan for bringing about negotiations for the reunification of the public services and municipal government of that city. We have called for a phased reunification of all Germany based upon extensive contact and extensive talk on the part of the German authorities of the East and West prior to free, all-German elections. We have sought the restoration of the right of open political activity for all Germans, free of terror and legal reprisals, in both zones. We have expressed our willingness to seek agreements between the Soviet Union and the Western nations to guarantee a unified Germany and its neighbors against aggression.
We have noted our willingness to consider limiting the level of armaments in both parts of Germany and a reduction in foreign forces in that country—a position which seems to me to encompass the basic philosophy of the Eden and Rapacki Plans.

There is really only one sharp difference, Mr. President, between the proposals which I suggested last February and the proposals which are listed in what has been termed the Western Package at Geneva. We did not see fit to deal initially with Berlin as the most pressing of the German problems and I am sure Mr. Herter and his associates have had good reasons for proceeding as they have until now. Nor have we—Mr. Hammarskjold apparently concurring—seen fit to call upon the conciliatory services of the United Nations Secretary General to bring about an interim neutralization of all Berlin under international auspices.

One other of the nine essentials of policy listed last February is not embraced in present policy; that is, the possible substitution of West Germans for the British, French and American garrison in West Berlin. That proposal, however, was obviously not associated with a peace settlement. On the contrary, it was intended as an alternative if the efforts to negotiate a settlement in good faith were to fail.

Mr. President, I have taken the time of the Senate to review in juxtaposition discussions and events that occurred in the past, and have since taken place at Geneva. I have not undertaken this comparison out of any desire to vindicate a position. I have not had occasion to alter that
position significantly in the past and I see no need to justify it now. It was presented, in February, as one Senator's views. It is still one Senator's views.

No, Mr. President, that has not been my purpose. My purpose today as it was last February is to contribute constructively to the policies which this Administration conducts on behalf of all of us, on behalf of all the people of this nation—the policies upon which the peace and the well-being of the United States so greatly depend.

Specifically, Mr. President, I wish, today, to call attention to the fact that when I initially advanced the nine proposals they were not criticized by a man who by the nature of his position has an enormous influence upon the prospects for peace in the world. The Senate may recall that Premier Nikita Khrushchev of the Soviet Union commented publicly on the remarks which I made on February 12. I refer, Mr. President, to a news story which appeared in the Washington Star, February 19, 1959.

Mr. Khrushchev is reported in this story as hailing as "worthy of attention" certain of these proposals. He went on to say that "One could reach agreement with people who have adopted such sober attitudes." He went on to say, further, "Supporters of the cold war are attacking Mansfield and accusing him of making concessions to the U.S.S.R. Nobody is making any concessions to us. Mansfield is just thinking soberly and sensibly."

It was the recollection of that comment by Mr. Khrushchev which led me to make this statement, today, at a moment when the Geneva
Conference may be in danger of failure. What I wish to point out is this: If the Soviet Premier believed a few months ago that the proposals which I had made were "sober and sensible," and, if, as I have just noted, proposals of a very similar nature have been introduced at Geneva by the Western delegations, then, perhaps, Mr. Khrushchev should also regard the latter as "sober and sensible."

True, Mr. President, in comparing the statement which I made on February 12 with the Western proposals which were presented in Geneva, one may find that the "i's" are not always dotted in precisely the same way and the "t's" are not always crossed exactly alike. But the intent is very similar. Therefore, if the Soviet Premier believed that a basis for bonafide negotiations resided in my statement, he may rest assured that it is also present in the Western proposals. Unless he has changed his mind since that time or unless he has not been adequately informed, I believe Mr. Khrushchev will find that these Western proposals at the Conference are equally, if not more so, "worthy of attention." I believe he will discover that the Secretary of State, Mr. Herter, has presented these proposals not out of any attempt to secure a hollow propaganda victory, not out of any desire to exacerbate the cold war, but in a sincere effort to express in a practical fashion, the desire of the people of the United States to find a secure and equitable settlement of the fundamental problems of a divided Berlin, a divided Germany and a divided Europe. At the least, I respectfully suggest to Mr. Khrushchev that these proposals are worthy of a more careful treatment at the hands of the Soviet Premier than they received at the hands of the Soviet delegation which tended to dismiss them as completely unacceptable or too involved or too complex.
Mr. President, I call the attention of the Soviet Premier to these matters in the hope that, as he recognizes that the larger interests of the Russian people, the people of the United States and all peoples require peace, no less will he recognize that the wish for peace must be translated into the acts of peace. Specifically, it must be translated into agreements. What is done in this connection at Geneva is essential to what may come later at a summit.

If the West were to go to the summit, or, indeed, if the Soviet Union were to go to the summit with the two positions as far apart as they now are, as a realist, Mr. Krushchev must know that little if anything would be accomplished. That is why I hope the Soviet premier himself will consider the Western proposals. I hope he will study them. I hope, on the basis of his personal study, he will be specific, he will instruct his aides at Geneva in terms of "this we can accept and this we must talk about further". It seems to me, in the light of President Eisenhower's desire and effort to be reasonable, in the light of the new approach which the Western nations have pursued at Geneva, some such action on Mr. Krushchev's part is essential at this point to advance the cause of peace. He can do much to clarify the areas of agreement which already exist and to delineate the areas of disagreement which must be reconciled by direct talks of Heads of States. Unless this is done now, what, indeed, can we or the Russians expect to achieve by a meeting of a few days duration at the summit? If there is, in fact, something else to be achieved then it would be helpful if the Soviet Premier made clear what it is.
I urge this course, in all sincerity, on the Soviet Premier. I urge him to take it before positions solidify into the brittle crusts of propaganda, before decisions are made that cannot be revoked. In this connection let me say that it may not be possible to stop the Soviet Union from making a separate peace treaty with East Germany, if that is its intention. Nor can that nation be stopped from withdrawing its forces from Berlin, if it so desires, before a broad settlement is reached. If either of these irrevocable steps is taken, however, the tasks of peace-making will be infinitely compounded. The breach may no longer be closable in this generation or the next. The seeds of inevitable war may well be implanted.

The moment calls for patience, not impetuosity. It calls for forbearance. This is not the time for the West or for the Soviet Union to entertain the idea of picking up their respective marbles and going home.

We have stated and we will continue to reiterate, as the President and Secretary Herter have on so many occasions, that there will be no summit meeting unless a degree of progress is achieved. The President noted on June 3 that he would be prepared to define liberally what he meant by progress. I commend him for his willingness to stay in the game and for his statesmanship in giving every possible encouragement to our Secretary of State in the difficult negotiations now being conducted in Geneva.

If we are firmly convinced that there is no basis for a settlement, then we should be prepared to break off the conference, cleanly, honestly, and without futile recriminations. We should not do so, however, until every
possible facet is explored and every possible move is made. I am certain that it is the intent of the President and Secretary Herter and his colleagues to strive to arrive at equitable agreements. I am likewise certain that if and when the time arrives when the representatives of the West are convinced that there is no point in continuing the talks at Geneva, that they will make their decision known and return to their respective countries. Certainly, however, that point has not yet been reached. Let us be in no hurry. Let us be patient and let us explore every reasonable and honorable channel in the hope that an agreement is still possible and that the deepest desire of mankind can, at least in part, be realized. No nation at this critical time has the right to be more interested in saving face than in safeguarding civilization.