STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

THE 2ND GERMAN CRISIS

Mr. President:

In recent weeks, two serious incidents have taken place in connection with Berlin. They reveal once again, with stark clarity, the potentiality of conflict which is inherent in that situation. The first incident was that of the Allied military plan to fly planes above the 10,000 foot level on the airlanes to Berlin. The second involved an attempt of communist border guards to switch the passes of allied personnel traveling the land routes to Berlin. Had the switch worked, allied personnel would have been compelled to acknowledge the authority of the East German regime in place of the Soviet Union over the approaches from the West. Hence, the Russians would have been in a position to absolve themselves from responsibility for subsequent interference with allied passage to Berlin. This second incident led to a prompt reprisal against the movement of Soviet personnel in Western Germany.

These incidents, each in its own way, represented the placing of the chip on the shoulder. They were the dares of children carried over into the deadly game of devastating military confrontation.

Fortunately, the interaction of reprisal--counter-reprisal--came to a halt before it had gone very far. Fortunately, the chips were removed from the shoulders by those who had placed them there instead of being sent flying at some point by one side or the other. That these incidents did not lead to serious consequences may well have been due solely to the intervention of the highest political authorities, President Eisenhower in one instance and Mr. Khrushchev in the other.
In this fashion is the way to the summit kept open, but--let us not delude ourselves--the way of almost haphazard descent into disaster is not closed. It is avoided for the moment but it is not closed. Nor will it be closed so long as the problems of a divided Berlin, encased as they are in the problems of a divided Germany and the still larger problems of a divided Europe are not faced, so long as they are not faced with policies which fit today's realities rather than with yesterday's generalities.

What are these antiquated generalities on Germany, Mr. President, to which all involved appear still to cling? On the Soviet side, the generalities are these: In some fashion, at some time, all of Germany will become a communist state if only the Western presence can be removed from Berlin and the two parts of Germany kept sharply separated for the indefinite future.

And the generalities on the part of the Western allies? Our policies hold that at some time, in some fashion, all of Germany will be drawn into the Western camp if only the allied presence remains in Berlin and if we can will out of existence that half of Germany which is held by the communists until such time as it can become a part of and subject to the political control of a united Germany.

There are certain similarities, Mr. President, in the two positions. In communist policies, no less than in those of the Western allies, great significance is attached to control of Berlin. Further, both positions tacitly regard the present division of Germany as preferable to the alternatives to unity which have so far been proffered. And, apparently, at least the highest political leadership on each side is fully cognizant of the catastrophic consequences of total military conflict in present circumstances and seeks, therefore, to avoid its use in the pursuit of political objectives in Germany.
If these are the generalities, what are the realities? The over-ridding reality is that there are two German authorities in one Germany and there is no indication whatsoever that either is going to go away in peace. The present division is maintained, on one side, by a German authority with a high degree of public support and popular participation, by the presence of allied forces in Berlin, by the symbol of NATO’s protection. It is maintained, on the other side, by a very low degree of public support propped up with totalitarian controls, backed by Soviet armed forces and such guarantees as are contained in the Communist Warsaw pact. In short, the division of Germany into two political entities exists whether it is recognized or not.

In these circumstances, I see no likelihood that the generalities of Soviet policy on Germany lead anywhere but in circles endlessly travelled. Nor do I see—in present circumstances—that Western generalities lead anywhere but in circles endlessly travelled. That has certainly been the experience of the past decade and a half.

In short, Mr. President, as between the Western allies and the Soviet bloc there is stalemate in Germany. There will be no Western retreat in peace. Nor do I see the probability of a Soviet withdrawal in peace. We may be able to maintain the situation without total war—at Berlin no less than in Germany as a whole—if we are prepared to pay the price. The Communists can maintain it, too, and even challenge it at Berlin if they are prepared to pay the price.

The question for us, no less than for them, is not: Can the present situation be maintained? Rather, it is: Do we want to maintain it? Is this situation in the highest interests of the Western nations? Is it, in all truth, in the highest interests of the Soviet people? Is there an alternative which better serves these highest interests on both sides?
The need for an alternative is indicated, I believe, by historic experience. German unification will not wait forever. At some point the Germans themselves will tire of the present disunity which is imposed upon them largely by the ideological differences of the Western nations and the Soviet Union. If the mood of a plague on both your houses sweeps through that country it may well upset the delicate balance upon which the peace of Europe and the world is now hinged. For that reason, alone, Mr. President, we must seek, even as the Russians must seek, in a mutual interest in the survival of a recognizable civilization, we must seek a way to end the present stalemate. It is too great a risk for mankind--for the Russians no less than the Western nations--to assume an indefinite German acquiescence in the present division.

We need, further, Mr. President, to devise a new situation at Berlin, not for West Berlin alone, as the Russians would have it, but for all Berlin. For, it is at that point that the intimate juxtaposition of opposing military forces creates the gravest danger of careless or accidental sparks which may go beyond the control of those who play with the fire. This point is underscored by the incidents to which I referred at the beginning of my remarks and by others of a similar nature going back to the time of the Berlin Blockade. The point of no return has not yet been transgressed in these incidents but let no one assume that, with the hair-triggering of modern military establishments, that point will continue indefinitely to be avoided.

Finally, Mr. President, some way other than stalemate in Germany is essential, if the huge burden of armaments is not to grow beyond the capacities of all peoples to bear. Certainly it is essential if we no less than the Russians mean seriously to lighten this burden. We may well ask
ourselves: How much of our annual military budget of $110 or more billions is occasioned by this stalemate? How much of the budgets of the Russians, the British, the French, indeed, the budgets of just about every nation in Europe?

We are correct when we stand firm in the face of a Soviet provocation at Berlin. But standing firm, alone, meets only the immediate provocation. It does not face these other factors in the German situation, the factors which strongly indicate that the present stalemate is not adequate. Standing firm, alone, does not meet the question of the essential need for peaceful progress on German unification. Standing firm, alone, does not meet the question of the danger of accidental war or war by child-like provocation at Berlin. Standing firm, alone, does not meet the question of the inter-relationship between a dangerously divided Germany and a dangerously divided Europe—the delicate balance between peace and war. Hence, it does not meet the question—let alone of disarmament—but even of the capacity of the nations involved to bear the burden of armaments, along with all the other burdens of an increasingly complex civilization.

We may believe that we are countering the immediate provocation, but we do not face these essential questions by proposing to hold plebiscites in Western Berlin on the eve of a summit conference, especially plebiscites whose results are a foregone conclusion. In election after election—the most recent in December 1959—the people of Berlin have made clear beyond any doubt that when faced with a choice between freedom and communist absorption, they will choose overwhelmingly, for freedom, even freedom on the razor's edge. I can see no virtue in a parade of West Berliners to the polls once again to prove what has been proven over and over again, even to the point of Soviet acknowledgment. I can see harm in it, particularly in a world
that has had a surfeit of propaganda in recent years. A gesture of that kind may hammer home more firmly the existing stalemate. It does not face the questions which suggest that it is time to end the stalemate.

Nor are these questions faced by Mr. Khrushchev when he seeks to alter the status of West Berlin alone. To be sure the situation in West Berlin may be "abnormal" as the President and Mr. Khrushchev apparently have agreed. But one does not achieve normalcy by compounding the abnormality. If the situation in West Berlin is abnormal now, it would be even more abnormal to substitute for it the situation which Mr. Khrushchev has proposed. For, he would leave as the sole German authority in what will one day be again the capital of all Germany, a militant minority, the German communist regime of east Germany. He would leave, in this fashion, the symbolic citadel of German unification in the hands of those with the least claim to it. As for the international enclave of freedom, which would remain in West Berlin, it would matter little whether its safety were guaranteed or not. It would be to the German authority in Berlin, their capital not to a sleepy international enclave, to which more and more Germans would look for leadership and inspiration.

Nor are the questions faced on our part by a continued advocacy of free all German elections. Communism will not write its death warrant in East Germany in this fashion, not when it is holding the gun. We may call for free elections and, indeed, we should; but let us not delude ourselves into believing that this will bring about unification or in any way act to end the present stalemate. We have called ourselves hoarse on this point for a decade and a half and so far as anyone can see, the German totalitarian regime in the East has used this time to drive the stakes of possession more firmly into the ground.
Nor are the questions of the stalemate faced by the Russians, Mr. President, when they call for formal recognition of the division of Germany and certification of the division in peace treaties with two Germanies. How many wars need to be fought before it is perceived, at last, that a numerous and determined people once seized with the sense of national unity are not likely to be kept forever apart in peace? Countless forgotten agreements which have presumed to make permanent by paper such cleavages gather dust in the archives of history.

What I am suggesting, Mr. President, is that if there is to be reasonable hope for peace, there must be reasonable hope soon for the reunification of Germany. The absence of such hope may very well convert the rational urge to national unity into the irrational urge for conquest and, in this connection, it is significant to note that a substantial body of Germans already identify East Germany as Middle Germany and look to the lands beyond the Oder-Neisse as the true East. It is not far-fetched to assume that the patterns of the past may repeat themselves, in modern garb, in circumstances provided by the continued German cleavage, by the deep divisions in Europe, by a world which hangs continually by fingertips from the sill of incipient disaster.

The pressures of the German situation are little different, today, from what they were, when a year ago, their prolonged neglect, led to the first German crisis. That they did not erupt, then, was due to the round of goodwill tours, the visiting back and forth and hither and yon. How much longer these safety valves will operate, it is difficult to say. What can be said with certainty is that it is unsafe to rely indefinitely on safety valves.
Sooner or later the nations involved must come to grips with the realities of the German situation as it is today. It is probable that the longer the moment of reckoning is put off, the smaller will be the margin for peace, a durable peace.

If the pressures in the German situation are the same as they were a year ago, it seems to me that the means with which they might be dealt in peace are also similar to those which were indicated then. At that time, the Senate will recall that I advanced for discussion 9 essentials upon which a firm western policy for peace might conceivably be built. It is among these points, I believe, in which we may still find the way to solution.

As then, so now, the focal point of potential conflict is Berlin, where the military confrontation is most intimate and unstable. As then, so now, the answer to this problem does not lie in propaganda stances or gestures; nor does it lie in the incantation of the words of firmness while the first of the deferred payments of appeasing concession is made for the dubious privilege of maintaining the existing stalemate. Nor does it lie in the astute proposal of Mr. Khrushchev to alter the status of West Berlin alone, even if the guarantees which he proffers for that altered status were absolute.

The answer, the answer for peace, it seems to me, lies in a change of status for all Berlin, for East Berlin no less than West Berlin. The answer, it seems to me, lies in agreement which permits this city--this entire city--and its routes of access to be held in trust by the United Nations or some other international body, with neutral forces responsible to its authority, until such time as it is once again the capital of all Germany. Let this new interim status for the entire city be guaranteed by the Allied
nations. by the communist nations, by the United Nations. Let the cost of
maintaining the city in trust be borne by the two principle German political
authorities which have the greatest stake in it--by Bonn and Pankow--in pro-
portions equal to the authority which they claim. Beneath an international
authority, let the two German authorities begin the long and difficult task
of merging the two parts of what is one city.

In a setting of that kind, Mr. President, we might contemplate the beginning
of the end of the present dangerous juxtaposition of Soviet and Allied forces.
We might find as valid the withdrawal of both Soviet and Allied forces from
Berlin.

In the microcosm of Berlin, moreover, could be cast the molds of reunification
for all of Germany. I think it is clear that that reunification is not going
to begin on the basis of free all-German elections in the foreseeable future.
Nor does the formula offered by the Russians offer any greater hope, for they
would formalize the division of Germany into two German nations, with a vague
provision for future negotiations between these two nations on the question
of unification.

If there is to be a well-founded hope for German reunification in peace, it
must be recognized by all that we are dealing with one German nation in which
there are two German political entities. I say that, Mr. President, not to
play with words but in an effort to define more precisely the reality which
confronts us, for it is only in terms of that reality that we can hope to act
for peace in Germany.

To divide Germany into two nations, as the Russians suggest, will not change
the fact that there is one Germany. It may postpone the day when that unity
will reassert itself but it will also increase the violence of the pressure
for unification and may well thrust that pressure from rational into irrational
channels.
Similarly to insist upon free all-German elections at this time, as the route to unification, is also to postpone the day of unification, in all probability, with the same consequences. This route, unfortunately, is closed by the inescapable fact that there are two political entities in the one Germany. While one entity might achieve supremacy by this route, the other is not likely to conduct its own burial in peace by this route.

If these are the facts, as I believe them to be, and if it is desirable to break the stalemate now in Germany, as I believe it to be, then it follows that there should be one peace treaty with Germany, with both German political entities sharing responsibility for it. It follows that both, with such assistance and persuasion as can be provided from without, must assume deep responsibilities in the task of unification because that task will be most difficult; in the lapse of 15 years, institutions have grown up in the two parts of Germany which will not readily be reconciled, one with the other. It follows, too, that if there cannot be free all-German elections at this time, there must be at least a guaranteed measure of equal political freedom and of equal political participation for all Germans, living in each of the two political entities at this time.

Finally, to act for peace, not only in Germany but in all Europe and to give substance to the professed universal desire for a lightening of the burden of armaments, there must be recognition on all sides that present military arrangements in Germany and, in deed, in all Europe are not sacrosanct. If there is an end to the military confrontation at Berlin, if there is visible progress in peace towards German unification, then there can be, there ought to be, a general easement of the entire European military confrontation and the development of all-European agreements for safeguarding the peace. The Eden, the Rapacki and similar proposals of the past warrant the most careful consideration in this connection.
Mr. President, what I suggested in February, 1959, and what I say today, seems to me to encompass the essential elements of a new Western approach to the problems of Germany and Europe. If one holds that the present stalemate is greatly in our interest then I suppose there is little point in considering these elements. If one holds, as I hold, that the present stalemate is not in our highest interest and if we are to have a chance to avoid both the pitfalls of appeasement and conflict in the days, months and years ahead, then these elements of a new policy, I believe, are worthy of the most careful and continuous consideration.

During the past year, I believe they have received such consideration in this country and elsewhere. It seems to me that Western policy, particularly as manifested at the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers last spring, reflects a movement away from the generalities of yesterday towards the realities of today. I hope that Western policy in the period ahead will reflect the views of all the Allied nations, but the domination of no single nation and, in so doing, will continue the process of transition to new tenets.

There is no assurance that this transition will bring about the settlement which Europe and the world needs. There is no assurance that a similar and essential transition will take place in Soviet policies and without it, there will be no agreement. But whatever the Soviet reaction, this transition in our own policies needs to continue in the highest Western interests and in the interests of mankind.

We cannot ignore our own responsibilities on the assumption that others will ignore theirs. We cannot, for we shall suffer along with others, for our own neglect. There is no escape. There is no retreat. We must seek a change and hope that others will do the same. But we must not avoid a change if it is in our interests, regardless of what others may do or not do. We must seek, in new
policies, an agreement which eases rather than appeasizes at Berlin, an agreement which paves a practical way to the peaceful unification of Germany, an agreement which begins to stitch the cleavage between Europe--East and West. Let others obstruct such an agreement if they will but let us not ignore these needs in our policies, these needs which are the most compelling that confront the people of the Western World--the people of Russia and Eastern Europe no less than those of Western Europe and the United States.