

**Note from the American Embassy to the Soviet Foreign Ministry,
on Germany, February 16, 1959¹**

The Government of the United States refers to the note of the Government of the USSR dated January 10, 1959.

The United States Government has repeatedly expressed its conviction that the continued division of Germany constitutes a danger to European security and to world peace. This danger is heightened by the persistent and flagrant denial to the East Germans of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United States Government has sought to deal with this problem as urgently as possible through negotiations among the Four Powers responsible for Germany. In pursuing this objective, it has been willing to negotiate seriously on all aspects of the problem. This attitude long held was most recently put forward by the United States in its notes of September 30 and December 31, 1958.

The Soviet Government has announced its intention unilaterally to abdicate certain of its internationally agreed responsibilities and obligations in regard to Berlin. That would encourage, and could result in, an attempt to assert control over the rights of the Western Powers to be in Berlin and to have unhampered access thereto. The danger to world peace inherent in this Soviet initiative is evident.

The position of the Western Powers in this matter has been made clear in their note of December 31. They have no choice but to declare again that they reserve the right to uphold by all appropriate means their communications with their sectors of Berlin.

Apart from the question of Berlin, the Soviet note of January 10 contains a number of statements and proposals with which the United States Government does not agree. The United States Government does not, however, propose to discuss these things in the present communication. This is partly because its views on the points at issue have been made plain in the note of December 31, 1958, and on previous occasions; and partly because in its view neither polemics nor insistence on the prior acceptance of any limitations on the means of reaching mutually satisfactory solutions can be helpful.

The United States Government is prepared to participate in a conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and is ready to consider any suggestions as to a date and place, which would be fixed by mutual agreement. The place and date should be settled through diplomatic channels.

The conference should deal with the problem of Germany in all its aspects and implications as raised in the recent exchange of notes between the Governments of the United States of America, France, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany on the one hand and the Government of the USSR on the other hand.

It is suggested that German advisers should be invited to the conference and should be consulted.

¹ Department of State press release 115, February 16, 1959. The Soviet Union replied on March 2, 1959 (*infra*).