HICOG’s Objective

--- Democratic Processes through Practice

Statement

By MAJOR GENERAL GEORGES P. HAYS
Deputy US High Commissioner

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to participate in this first broadcast of the AFN monthly series on the activities of the High Commission. These programs will fill a vital need and AFN is to be commended for its public service in producing them.

The operations of HICOG are highly complex and diversified. They are compounded of the activities of 1,400 individuals, ranging all the way from the efforts of the US Resident Officers to promote democratic action among the average German citizens to the activities of our top advisers at Bonn who are carrying out highest policy with our French and British allies.

There is a great geographical spread as well as a broad functional range to our organization. And it is going to be difficult for all the men and women in it to acquire even a general knowledge of all the developments and policies in our diversified fields. Yet we will need that knowledge if we are to achieve the tight teamwork essential to carrying out our challenging task.

At the same time it is just as important that the men and women of EUCOM and other occupation agencies have at least a fundamental knowledge of our purposes and projects. In many different ways we are all driving at the same objectives—to create a viable and democratic state out of this geographic keystone to a peaceful Europe.

T HIS PROGRAM will keep us all apprised of at least the major developments in HICOG from month to month. It will therefore play a vital part in helping to achieve a unity of understanding and purpose among all of us in HICOG as well as attracting the interest and aid of many in other American organizations in Germany.

However, in facing our problems on all levels of HICOG, we must never forget that we are backed by the moral power of the United States—a power stemming from the unprecedented example of a modern state contributing vast economic, political, and cultural aid to a defeated foe.

By that power, we wield enormous influence in Germany. Through it we can encourage the Germans to act for themselves, to participate in public affairs and to recognize the mistakes of the past and the reforms that should be put into effect for the future.

This does not mean we will be less prompt to act under our reserved powers of the Occupation Statute if renewed totalitarian tendencies threaten democratic growth. But we must allow the German people enough freedom to develop the basis for a strong democratic tradition of their own.

They may not adopt all the democratic institutions and procedures that we would like to see established. But each time we must take direct action, we remove from the German authorities the opportunity to work out a satisfactory solution for themselves. It is more important that we supply the guidance and advice and permit the Germans to develop self-confidence and familiarity with democratic processes through practice.

OURS IS A complex and often frustrating task. But in the long run it is the surest way of creating a genuine, indomitable tradition for freedom and tolerance. If we cannot develop that permanent foundation in Germany, then all the finely-wrought democratic structure is built on sand.

I am one who believes that this tradition is growing in Germany today, and that with our help and that of our British and French allies Western Germany will develop into a peaceful and productive member of the community of nations.

But we have still a long way to go. The task is far from completed. It will continue to require the utmost endeavor of every one of us, if we are to succeed.

END

Munich Launches Rubble Cleanup Drive

Munich's one-day rubble-clearing drive was described by Clarence M. Bolts, acting US state commissioner for Bavaria, as evidence that Bavarians have turned their attention from a dismal past to a more objective future.

More than 9,000 inhabitants of Munich, aided by residents of surrounding villages, volunteered their time and efforts on Oct. 29 in a gigantic all-day drive to remove gaping rubble heaps that blighted the city. The cleanup program was sponsored by German civic leaders with the cooperation of American military and civilian offices in Bavaria.

AFN to Air HICOG Reports Monthly

This is the full text of the radio speech delivered by General Hays at the close of "A Report to The People" (see pages 19 and 20), as broadcast over Station AFN on November 11. The series of broadcasts reporting HICOG progress in attaining Occupation objectives is to be continued on a monthly basis, with these "Reports to The People" emanating from AFN Frankfurt.

DECEMBER 1949

INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Berlin Christmas, 1945

to the scene where several hundred
troops were singing out their homesick-
ness in the simple songs of the season. 
Barker mingled unobtrusively with the
men and got off several fairly steady
baritone choruses before he was rec-
ognized. His discovery led to at least
100 handclaps and seasonal best
wishes and he stayed for one more
thunderous chorus which, surely,
could have been heard back home in
any one of the 48 states.

SO IT WAS Monday night, Christ-
mas Eve, 1945.

Work was finished late that night
and I left the printshop definitely
in need of a long walk in the not-too-
cold but crisp evening.

It was a comfortable feeling walking
down deserted streets ... something
like the financial district of New York
around two in the morning on Sunday
after a Staten Island ferry ride. But
this was different. People had lived in
what now were rubbed piles of
badly-made brick and tile. Out of the
heaps here and there a twisted girder
stuck out an arm like a rigid repro-
duction of a modern ballet movement.

Somewhere on what I now believe
was near Barbarossa Strasse I stopped
to look over the acres of absolutely
uninhabitable piled ruins and stark
walls not too clear in the silence of a
neighborhood that was no longer
a place where youngsters played and
folks wheeled baby carriages.

These were empty neighborhoods.
I could have wagered my highly in-
adquate weekly cigarette ration that
no living thing had been here ... ever.

Then I saw the youngster climbing
carefully up into the shadows of a
half-wall silhouette that challenged
the almost full moon.

"Hey!" I called.

THE BOY STOPPED and turned
around. He paused and then came
down the irregular slope of rubber
and brick and oddly twisted metal.
He paused this time halfway down
the heap, still about 20 feet away and
looked at me quite blandly. For a
moment there were many things fresh
in my mind about the current season
and where youngsters should be on
Christmas Eve.

"It's almost midnight," I said, "and
time a young man like you should
be at home on Christmas Eve."

"The people who make rules like
that," the youngster said, "are the
same people who have destroyed
Christmas Eve all over the world."

There was something in the lighting
of the scene and something in the
boy's manner that made it impossible
for me to ask a natural question: Did
he speak English? His voice was
clear. I certainly spoke no German
other than that necessary to get
another piece of butter at the mess
hall. Yet I understood every word he
said and he apparently was having
no difficulty with English.

"What's your name," I asked, "and
how old are you and what are you
doing here and where's your home?"

The boy chuckled and adjusted his
stance and for a moment I thought he
had been absorbed by shadows.

"My name is Gerd," he said. "I'm
10 years old and I'm just walking
around like you are ... thinking...
and my home is near."

AGAIN THAT peculiar feeling that
the language we were speaking
was not English, but I knew no Ger-
man and Gerd was a German name ... 
yet we understood each other per-
fectly. "At the age of 10," I said, "you
must have plenty to think about ... 
in this city ... where there hasn't been
a real Christmas in such a long time."

"Believe me," he said, "there are
times when I think it isn't worth it ... 
but there are times when I feel
that the 10-year-old kids in lots of
countries are possibly thinking the
same sort of things I think about."

"That would be normal," I said.

"Possibly," the youngster said.

"But don't you think you should be
home on Christmas Eve?" I asked.

"Home?" Gerd asked.

"Yes, home," I said because I was
personally convinced.

GERD SCRAMBLED up the rubble
heap and seemed to be looking
around from that vantage point.

"Home for youngsters like myself in
a postwar world," he said "isn't that
simple ... either for me or the kids in
India or Malaya or the Balkans or
wherever the war has left an imprint."

"Remember, what we do during this
short season," he said, "has a lot to
do with the shape of our own personal
futures as well as the relationships
possible between peoples of all kinds... creeds, races, nations and so on."

This was too much for me. "Gerd,"
I asked, "where did you pick up all
this sort of thing about ... er, rela-
tionships, and so on?"

"Aup Wiedersehen," he said over his
shoulder as he started to move back
slowly up over rubble heaps into the
shadows where skeletonized walls
etched out dark areas blotting out the
moon. "Aup Wiedersehen," he said
again, "and Merry Christmas ..."

"Merry Christmas," I called up to
him. "Merry Christmas!"

THEN HE WAS gone and I thought
if I got home soon I could heat
up some water and have some Nescafe
with crackers and cheese.

Suddenly from partly behind me a
woman's voice said in German: "Ex-
cuse me, please ...
... " and I turned and
taw a small, stooped old woman
whose eyes glistened wide and
shimmery in the shadows. Still in Ger-
man she said: "My grandson Gerd ...
"

This was 1945 and too early for my
German. "Nix irshenly," I said politely.

"Ach so," she said and I thought
she smiled, then in English: "My
English is Schule English—but my
grandson Gerd ...
"

I reassured her. "He's fine, he's fine!
He may be out a bit late tonight, but
he's a fine kid ... very intelligent...
good sense of humor—please, don't
worry about him!"

THE GLISTENING shimmer in her
eyes stopped, She didn't move.
She was part of the shadows and
the half light.

"Please ... please don't joke with
me ... bitte ... bitte, keine Scherze
... keine Scherze ..."

She took a step toward me and I
could see the plea in the aged face.

"Please," she said, "perhaps you
are being kind ... but please, no
jokes ... Gerd, little Gerd ... look,
for three Christmas Eves I have been
coming here, to this very spot ... this
very spot where little Gerd, poor
little 10-year-old Gerd, was buried
deep beneath this big building after
an air raid ... it is my one tie with
him ... after these years ... please,
make no jokes!"

END