I AM VERY HAPPY to be back in this country for a short visit and to have this opportunity to give you a brief account of the situation in Germany as I see it.

When Germany is discussed, I think three major questions come to everyone's mind:

1. Why is Germany important to the United States?
2. Where does Germany stand in the great East-West struggle?
3. What progress has been made toward achieving a democratic state in Germany?

Germany is important to the United States for many reasons. Twice, within the lifetimes of many of us, Germany has compelled the United States to send troops to Europe to check her aggression. Now a strange twist of fate has placed western Germany on the frontier of the free peoples of the West. We have had to spend vast sums and great energies in the attempt to help this new state become a peaceful democratic country.

The boundary line between freedom and suppression runs through Germany from the North Sea to the Czechoslovakian border and along it to Austria. Seventy miles from my office in Frankfurt, the Soviet Zone begins and in that zone there are many fully equipped and thoroughly trained Russian divisions. I have another office in western Berlin, which lies like a tiny island of freedom 100 miles inside the Soviet Zone. That island is a frontier as well. It does not survive there because of any indulgent attitude on the part of the Soviets. West Berlin survives because of the spirit of its people and because the Western Powers have made it clear that aggression there would constitute aggression against the entire free world.

GERMANY IS ONE of the highest tension areas in the world. The Soviets are putting every possible effort, short of outright military aggression, into a campaign to overwhelm the Germans and to make that country their greatest satellite. They know that if they could do this all Europe might be forced to succumb. Their menacing military forces in eastern Germany, in the satellite countries and in Russia provide a base from which they and blandishment. This campaign is and blandishment. This campaign is designed to break the will of the German people — and other free peoples — to resist and to live an independent life. In the Soviet Zone of Germany every familiar technique of the police state is used to subjugate the people — forced labor camps, secret police, rigged elections, political and economic pressure and all other weapons of the totalitarian strategy of repression.

A mighty Soviet propaganda machine is also at work which submits the Germans of both the east and west zones to an intense, incessant barrage of psychological warfare which you must experience to appreciate. No expense, no effort is spared to win the war of ideas. Every day powerful transmitters in the East zone and in Russia pour out this material, some of it crude, some of it subtle. The Communists employ every distortion and take advantage of every element of weakness. Every person, group, institution and organization is subjected to this flood in newspapers, films, posters, pamphlets, books and letters. It is augmented and stimulated by infiltration of agents and activists. It adds up to an enormous expenditure of energy and wealth on the part of the Communist world. In recent months it has been largely directed against the United States.

This coming August in East Berlin a propaganda show, which may well be the greatest propaganda show of all times, will take place. Some 1,750,000 young people will be regimented to march and demonstrate in favor of Soviet political aims. This march of the so-called Free German Youth (FDJ), in reality slave German youth, will be a vast masquerade of these aims in the dress of such attractive slogans as peace, freedom and unity.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNIST GOAL in all this? The principal objective of all these efforts is to destroy faith in the principles and power of the free nations of the West. The Communists are trying to interfere with and destroy the unity of the free nations. They are trying to prevent German participation in the common defense of the West. They are trying to keep Europe weak.

These efforts have to be constantly combated on our side by a vigorous and sustained flow of truthful information, by demonstrating the strength and value of a free way of life, by evidence of our determination to defend that life if attacked.

I think it requires no extensive argument to convince us all that the outcome of this struggle in the center of Europe is of the greatest importance to the United States.

In June 1950 when the Communists crossed the 38th parallel in Korea, the analogy between Germany and Korea came to many an anxious mind. Both geographically and politically that analogy in large part still holds.

I stress this point because there has recently been so much discussion of
whether the more important front in the struggle against Communism is in Europe or Asia. The answer is that both are important and vital. In Berlin and in West Germany we meet in different for the same forces which we are meeting in Asia. In Berlin there is no shooting, but we are closer to the mainspring of the action which induces the shooting in Korea.

Western Berlin and western Germany are outposts. Their fate is coupled with that of free people everywhere. We do not propose to make them satellites or subject them to the doctrine of any single party or creed. We seek only to give them a free choice and a free life. We intend to respect their choice as long as it does not take the form of a new extreme leading to aggression.

This brings me to my second question: Where do the Germans stand in the struggle between East and West?

This question has to be examined in several different ways before one can get a full answer to it.

In one sense, there is no doubt whatever of the answer. Germany feels itself a part of the West. And despite the great propaganda barrage, Communism has steadily lost ground in western Germany; in the elections during the past year in the US Zone, the Communist Party lost all of its representatives in the state legislatures.

Unlike the West Germans, the 18,000,000 East Germans, living under Soviet-Communist domination, have been unable to express themselves. There is no doubt that they too seek a free life, undominated by Communist influence. One day the two zones must be united as a free state within a united Europe.

The 47,000,000 people of the Federal Republic have thus far withstood all Communist attempts to separate them from the West. The blandishments of the so-called peace plebiscites, staged by the Communists, have found no real response in western Germany. The strategy of fear has not only failed to reduce the West Germans and the West Berliners to submission, it has evoked vigorous countermeasures.

All of the evidence indicates that the people of the Federal Republic identify themselves with the life of the West. Differences of opinion arise, however, on the question of active German participation in Western defense. Opposition to participation comes not only from Communists whose major aim is to weaken the West. Many Germans honestly oppose a contribution to defense because of their fear of anything suggesting the recreation of a German army with its possible use as an aggressive instrument.

Some oppose participation because they see in it a threat to a united Germany; some because they fear it might bring on a war in which their land might not be sufficiently protected by the Allied Forces. Others simply hope for a neutral Germany which somehow will be able to avoid all the unpleasant consequences of taking a firm position.

The debate has been going on since last September when the foreign ministers in New York first raised the question of a German contribution to Western defense. Personally, I find the debate a healthy sign. Certainly, the German decision on a contribution to the defense of Europe will be a free one. If participation comes, as I think it will, it will come because the German people feel it is their responsibility to participate in the defense of their country as a member of the free community of nations.

At the present time there is no clear decision. But the idea of neutralism seems to be less appealing as it becomes apparent that such a policy would play so patently into the hands of the Communists. The growing strength of the Western Powers and their increased forces in Germany will bring greater confidence that defense of Europe and Germany is a tenable proposition. It is becoming clearer that Germany will be accepted by the Allies as an equal partner in the Western community. Another factor is the growing awareness among the German people that it would be anomalous if the Germans themselves did not take a place at the side of non-Germans in the defense of Germany.

This brings me to my third and, in some ways, the most important question: How democratic is Germany today? Can the Germans be trusted with any arms at all?

There must be many people in this country who wonder whether this talk of a German military contribution, however safeguarded, is not dangerous and perhaps foolish. Does it mean, you may ask, that we have forgotten what Germany's militarism meant in the past? Are we not risking the same fearful consequences again? Six short years ago the German armies were defeated in the most destructive war in history. Have we forgotten how we vowed that never again would we allow Germany to become a military power? Is not our present policy a reversal of this resolve; is it not a shortsighted policy of expediency?

These are all serious questions and honesty demands that they be thoroughly explored. The answers will be more easily understood, however, if we can first be quite clear about exactly what policy we are now following toward Germany.

In the first place, it is not a policy which advocates or condones a revival of German militarism. The United States and its allies are as determined as ever that there will be no German general staff in the old Prussian sense, no military caste with the political and social power it once exercised, and no German national army, which would be capable of becoming the source or the instrument of a future aggression. It is the fundamental principle of all proposals made to date that whatever German contribution to defense is made may only take the form of a force which is an integral part of a larger international organization. These conditions of a German contribution are of vital importance. If the German people decide to contribute to Western defense it will be on these terms and every precaution will be taken to see
that they are enforced. I am glad to say that we have evidence that the Germans themselves want it this way.

In the second place, our policy on participation does not mean that the United States and its allies are making or will make any concessions toward Nazism or neo-Marxism. There must be guarantees for the future that such groups would not be permitted to guide or control any German contribution.

As for expediency, the concept of German defense participation is no more expedient than any other action which is needed to cope realistically with the present world situation.

AND NOW I COME to the fundamental question — how democratic is Western Germany?

As you know, the United States, Great Britain and France, who occupy West Germany and West Berlin, have given major attention to the problem of bringing about a democratic government and social order in Germany. Six years is not a long time to achieve such an end. A democracy is not produced by fiat — one can not legislate it into being. It must come as a result of education and in the last analysis it must be self-education.

It must be borne in mind that Germany’s social structure was a predominantly authoritarian one and that Nazism was not some freakish phenomenon that appeared overnight. It was a direct product of an authoritarian society in a great social crisis. In such a society, a totalitarian solution finds ready followers.

It would be false to deny that a great deal of this authoritarian cultural pattern is still in existence in Germany. It is there — it still exists in the whole sphere of human relations.

In six years, even in this time of revolutionary transition, Germany could not be expected to have transformed itself into a democracy in the sense that we in America understand it — as a habitual social practice. But at the same time, one can truthfully say that the new Germany is moving to become a democracy. Starts have been made and we have been devoting large efforts to further this development on every level of German society — in the schools and universities, in labor, church and civic organizations, in radio and press, in the political and governmental structure.

The form of a German democracy will never be entirely like ours, but its constitution and its government are democratic and its chief political leaders are pro-democratic. The country has a free press. Freedom of speech and the rights of the individual are respected. All over Germany there are small groups of people who really understand the principles of representative government and the bill of rights. They are sincerely and effectively working for it.

ECONOMICALLY, WESTERN GERMANY has made a large recovery which not only helps the Germans, but also other peoples of the free world. Its level of production is now one-third greater than before the war. The old cartels which once turned a large part of Germany’s economy over to Hitler have been or are being broken up into smaller competing units. If the German people recognize their own best interests, they will see to it in future that these concentrations do not re-emerge. Although its economic and financial structure is still shaky, West Germany is now able to maintain a decent standard of living for the majority of its population. Compared with conditions in the Soviet Zone, the Federal Republic’s economy is prosperous indeed.

The government of western Germany has displayed a salutary willingness to join various plans for international cooperation such as the Organization for European Economic Cooperation and the Council of Europe. Most significant, both politically and economically, has been the signing of the Schuman Plan in which France, Germany and the Benelux nations have agreed to share their coal and iron and steel resources for the common good. If France and Germany, traditional enemies in Europe’s wars, endorse this type of cooperation and carry it out, the cornerstone of European unity will be securely laid. The Schuman Plan is a great, constructive step toward European peace and union. No issue must be allowed to get in its way.

Of course, Germany faces many problems, which if not solved, could produce dangerous opportunities for radical groups of the right and the left. There is a shortage of capital for improving the industrial plant. High prices and taxes engender discontent among the working groups. There are still a great number of refugees among the 9,000,000 who have streamed into West Germany since the war, who must be fully assimilated into the economy.

In Germany, as in other countries, there are venal people. Some make money by selling strategic materials to the East zone and other Communist-dominated areas. The long eastern border and the difficulty of adequate inspection controls have made it easier for them to carry on their harmful trade. I have requested the government of the Federal Republic to take action against these practices, and I am convinced that it is serious about checking this trade. The federal chancellor has instituted a centralized licensing system to control closely all trade with the East. We have sent American inspection teams to augment the work of German police along the border. These measures and others with German and Allied cooperation have greatly reduced and should continue to reduce the flow of strategic materials to Communist areas.

ON THE POLITICAL FRONT we are watching closely the outcroppings of small fanatic parties, who seek to appeal to malcontent groups.

In the state elections in Lower Saxony, in the British Zone, on May 6, the Socialist Reichs Party, largely under leadership of former Nazis, won 11 percent of the popular vote and 16 seats in the legislature. This has been widely publicized as a revival of Nazism, and it is indisputably an outcropping of the old Nazi spirit.

This event occurred in a state which was once a stronghold of Nazism, where unemployment is exceptionally high, and where one-fourth of the population consists of
refugees. Yet in that state 85 percent of the voters gave their support to parties which upheld the democratic idea. In my judgment a group similar to the SRP could not marshal as much support in any of the other German states in the west zone.

Nevertheless the potential threat of the Socialist Reichs Party to German democracy must not be minimized.

The federal and state governments are alert to the danger, and possess the power to suppress extremist political groups. Such action has already been taken against the SRP’s strong-arm squads. Further action against the party itself may be taken when in the next few weeks the constitutional court, which alone can outlaw it, is established.

A situation, such as this, gives the Germans a chance to show the strength of the Federal Republic. The world will watch closely how the German authorities and people meet this test. I believe they will meet it successfully. They must, if the peoples of the world are not again to turn against Germany.

Let me now try to summarize my answer on the question of democracy in Germany. I think there is a residue of authoritarian attitudes in German society, there is some aggressive nationalism, there is a feeling among certain groups of superiority over other peoples. There is a reluctance among some to face the full significance of the terrible crimes of the Hitler years.

And yet in West Germany, and in West Berlin, particularly among the youth of the country, there is a growing understanding and appreciation for concepts of freedom and democracy; there is a strong desire to become a part of a wider community and to cooperate with the Western world. In the press and radio, in schools, in adult education groups, in civic organizations, in some of the political parties and in parliaments, courageous men and women are emerging. They are trying to show the way to a democratic life. It is our policy to help them.

Not long ago I had an opportunity to speak before the students of the University of Frankfurt.* I was interested to know what the reaction would be when I made the following statement: “The time has come in Germany to stop debating the question whether or not democracy is the right form of government for the Germans. It is the only form in which men can live in freedom and decency.” There was long and deep-felt applause. The response of the students reflects a belief that is growing among the German people.

Ten years from now we shall have a more complete answer to the question of democracy in Germany. But, as I have said, I have confidence today that progress is being made. I am convinced that our programs to aid democratic developments in Germany are vital. Above all I am convinced that German integration with western Europe and with the Atlantic community is the best way to ensure that Germany will be democratic.

I want to emphasize this thought. Local solutions are no longer solutions anywhere in the world. There is no real solution of the German problem inside Germany alone. There is a solution inside the European-Atlantic world community. Inside this wider community there is room for the imagination and energies of all young Europeans, including the Germans, to flourish. In it some of the perennial, minor disputes, onto which demagogues and nationalists like to fasten, would disappear.

The basic aim of our policy in Germany has been, and will remain, the development of the German Federal Republic into a cooperative member of the Western community of free nations. In six years, as I have said, a significant start has been made. I believe that these beginnings are sound enough to warrant confidence in western Germany as a partner in the defense of the West.

In the attempt to carry out this policy, the foreign ministers met in Brussels last December. They decided that a logical counterpart to Germany’s participation in Western defense would be the return to Germany of a large measure of sovereignty. We are at present engaged in studies directed toward the replacement of the present Occupation Statute by a series of contracts with the Federal Republic. These contracts will provide for the protection of the interests and functions of the Allies which are vital to their security and defense.

There are, of course, risks in our decisions on Germany, but it is wise and necessary that we take these risks. In the Western world, nations must be free. The paramount necessity today is the alignment of the free nations into a determined union in defense of a civilized social order which permits individual freedoms.

The magnitude of the stakes warrants the utmost in effort and sacrifice from the democratic nations of the world. In this task, the United States has a tremendous responsibility of leadership. The biggest contribution we can now make is to give clear evidence to the world that we are capable of carrying out this responsibility.

A few weeks ago a prominent German said to me: “We Europeans like you and your great debates, but it’s a little too much to have one every six weeks.” This thought is prevalent in the minds of many Europeans. It is of the greatest urgency today that the people of the United States, who are making such large sacrifices for freedom, recognize the importance of a united and firm policy, and support it. The strength of such a policy will then flow out to the rest of the democratic world.

From my experience in Europe I am convinced that nothing would do more to strengthen the democratic forces in Europe, particularly in the young republic of Germany, than such a manifestation from this country. I am convinced that it would invigorate the forces of freedom everywhere, even those behind the Iron Curtain. It would help assure that peace and freedom will prevail.

* See page 45.