

# Soviet Obstruction

*The following is the text of a statement made by Henry A. Byrodde, director of the Bureau of German Affairs, Department of State, on April 29 over the television network of the National Broadcasting Company and reprinted from the Department of State Bulletin.*

**I** WANT TO TALK TO YOU about one of the major problems our government faces today. After continuous effort over a period of years to reach agreement with the USSR on Germany, our government — in conjunction with the French and British — concluded reluctantly in 1949 that progress could no longer be delayed because of Soviet obstruction. We, therefore, gave authority to the western Germans to establish a democratic form of government in western Germany.

Attempts at obstruction by the Soviet Union followed, including the blockade on the City of Berlin. You all know the gallant story of the airlift to Berlin. Thwarted in this, the Soviets requested a meeting of the four foreign ministers in a final effort to block the formation of the German government. We met with them in good faith, but Molotov soon made it very clear that there could be no agreement on Germany except one which would place all Germany at the mercy of the Soviet Union.

I give you this history because of its similarity to what is happening today.

The tactics, military preparations and hostile propaganda of the Soviet Union — resulting in open aggression by forces in their orbit last June — have reluctantly caused free nations to look to their own defense. In the Atlantic area, the 12 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization made a far-reaching decision to establish a common force and further agreed that western Germany, should she so elect, would have the right and opportunity to join and so participate in her own defense. This was many, many months after Soviet representatives had established military forces — so-called police forces — in East Germany.

The Soviet Union has attacked this defensive plan, now with veiled threats, now with mocking "peace offensives." They also asked for a Big Four meeting to discuss German demilitarization.

We have no desire to avoid such a meeting, since one must always cling to the hope that a basic agreement can be possible. But this time we wanted the assurance of an agenda, not simply weeks of futile discussions by the foreign ministers on procedures and on what to talk about.

For this purpose, the deputies of the foreign ministers have now been in session in Paris more than eight weeks.

**I** WANT TO CUT THROUGH confused interplay of agenda wording and tell you why what is going on at Paris is much more important to us than a play on words.

Gromyko, the Soviet representative, has maintained that the question of western German participation in her own defense is the principal cause of tension in Europe. This is clearly nonsense since the question of German participation in defense would not arise except for the aggressive Soviet behavior, coupled with their large military forces, in eastern Germany and the satellites. To accept their contention would lead to the conclusion that the acts and policies of the West were the primary cause of tensions in Europe.

The Western deputies have also indicated that existing levels of armaments and armed forces and means for international control of armaments should be a subject for Four-Power consideration. When we and our Western Allies disarmed upon the end of the last war, Russia maintained — in some instances even increased — her military strength. It is the threat of these Red armies — partly outside Russian borders and far in excess of the needs of any state for its own self-protection — that is the real cause of tension in Europe today. In the face of this situation, the Soviet representative desires agenda wording which would commit us to a policy of reduction in armed strength of the Four Powers — and this prior to any consideration of the present unbalance and prior to any agreement on a form of international inspection and control. This is an old and familiar Soviet proposition. It, too, forms no basis for honest discussions.

These are some of the differences at Paris. Soviet propaganda, Soviet double talk, Soviet insistence that white is black and black is white, denies what you and I know to be true. It would seem that the original goal of the Soviet representatives — that is, to prevent western Germany from accepting a defense role with the West — has now been broadened into an attack upon the whole defensive effort of the West. It is important that we all understand what is behind their efforts to confuse and control. +END