THE BERLIN CRISIS AND THE PATH TO PEACE

Remarks Prepared for Delivery
by
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.,Minn.)

Westchester County Democratic Committee Dinner
Glen Island Casino, New Rochelle, New York
Saturday, April 11, 1959

We now look back on ten years of cooperation within the NATO alliance, and we look forward to the rapidly advancing climax of the Berlin crisis.

These two -- NATO and Berlin -- are closely linked together.

The first Berlin crisis of 1948-49 brought the NATO community into being.

The present Berlin crisis tests whether that unique community of nations, conceived in common danger and dedicated to common security, can long endure.

FIRMNESS BEFORE THE SOVIET THREAT

We have learned from hard experience to be firm before the Soviet threat.

We learned much in Greece and Turkey in 1947. And what we learned we put into action when Congress endorsed President Truman's now famous doctrine.

"It must be the policy of the United States," said President Truman twelve years ago, "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation."

We learned the hard way in Czechoslavkia in 1948 when the Communists overthrew a free government. Then came the blockade of West Berlin. We were threatened. But by now we had learned well that those who do not stand firm will not remain free. We did not withdraw from the beleagured city. For nine months free Berlin was sustained by an allied air bridge built of ingenuity and daring.

The lessons learned in Czechoslovakia and Berlin made their impact. Joining hands with the free nations of Europe, we created an unprecendented international community. NATO was established in 1949, just ten years ago. Twelve nations -- augmented by three more which joined later, pledged that "an armed attack against one shall be considered an attack against them all."

The community of nations comprising NATO is the core of the Western world. If this community stands firm and united in the cause of freedom and justice, we shall prevail. If it collapses, we shall be in mortal danger.

The Soviets once more are threatening freedom in Berlin. They are probing to see whether that unique and indispensable community which is NATO can indeed endure.

Last November I stood in West Berlin with its able and courageous mayor, Willy Brandt. I vowed then, and I vow today, to support a policy of firmness, to uphold the right of France, Britain and the United States to maintain garrisons in West Berlin until a legitimate peace treaty is signed.

This is the position and policy of our government. It is also the position and policy of NATO. We will not surrender. We will not be pushed out.

But firmness before the Soviet threat, though indispensable, is not enough. Firmness alone will not preserve NATO, nor assure the survival of free Berlin.

Our firmness must be matched by our imagination and our willingness to negotiate.

Standing firm and a willingness to negotiate are not, as some suggest, contradictory policies. They are the two elements in any viable policy in the Berlin crisis. We can negotiate successfully only if we are prepared to stand firm. And we can command the political support necessary to a posture of firmness only if our negotiating position is clear, consistent, and realistic.

We may be grateful that this also is the position and the policy of our government and of NATO. We will stand firm. And we will negotiate.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF NEGOTIATION

It is about negotiation that I want to talk with you for a few minutes tonight. I have frequently said that we must be willing to talk to the Russians wherever and whenever there seems even the faintest hope of advancing the interests of peace and security.

Remember that we negotiated with the Russians on Austria for ten years. Finally we got a treaty.

Remember that we negotiated with the communists on Korea for two years. In the end we got a cease-fire.

For months we have been negotiating in Geneva on the cessation of nuclear tests. So far, there is no agreement. But we must go on negotiating.

This is what I had in mind when, on March 26, I introduced on the floor of the Senate a resolution which reads in part as follows:

Resolved that the Senate "support the efforts of the United States to continue to negotiate for an international agreement for the suspension of nuclear weapons tests" and that "it emphatically endorse the principle that an adequate inspection and control system must be a part of any such international agreement."

There is no alternative. We must negotiate on Berlin, on Germany, and on the general question of European security. We must go to the summit, and more than once if that is necessary.

I do not propose to talk tonight about the specific elements of our negotiating position in the forthcoming meetings of the Foreign Ministers of East and West. It would be both presumptuous and indelicate for a member of the Legislative Branch to speak of such affairs at the very moment that that position is being hammered out by the statesmen of the Western powers.

But if I do not talk about the specifics, it is appropriate -- in fact it is an obligation on all of us -- to speak about the broad requirements of a viable negotiating position.

There has been much loose talk about Munich -- about the dangers of being "taken in" by the Russians at the negotiating table.

I do not need to tell this audience that Berlin is not Munich.

To negotiate is not to appease. But we must understand very clearly what makes the difference between legitimate negotiation and inexcusable appeasement. Three requirements must be fulfilled if we are to come to the negotiating table prepared to seek reasonable adjustments without fear of succumbing to unreasonable demands. First, there must be unity of policy within the Western community. Second, we must be militarily prepared. Third, our people must understand the full gravity of the situation we confront. I want to ask you to think with me tonight about each of these requirements.

1. THE UNITY OF THE WESTERN COMMUNITY

First, the critical importance of unity. At Munich the democracies were not united. They were divided. The United States lived in the never-never land of isolationism. The low countries of Europe were neutrals. Britain and France were united, it is true -- united in somnambulant apathy, anxious to believe the false promises of the dictators.

Happily, the situation is very different today. Yet there remains much to be done. We have achieved agreement on what we will not do.

We will not get out of Berlin, just because the Russians threaten us.

But negative agreement on what we will not do must now be transmuted into positive agreement on what we will do -- what we will propose, what we will be prepared to give in return for what benefits.

This is our problem and our challenge.

The Western community is composed of free partners. The unity we seek must

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now be forged from the free give and take among partners in a common enterprise.

We must meet the demand for firmness on the part of nations most exposed to the Soviets -- principally the Germans.

We must reconcile this demand for firmness with the opposing demand for flexibility on the part of other nations less exposed -- principally the British.

We must understand the French desire for national prestige.

We must remain sensitive to German resistance to policies that appear to demand greater sacrifice of German interests than they do of the interests of the other partners.

We must never forget that all these points of view are legitimate.

The British, through their capable Prime Minister, Mr. MacMillan, demonstrate what we mean when we say that one can explore imaginatively and negotiate constructively while yet remaining firm.

The French, through their dedicated leader General DeGaulle, remind us that the unity we seek must be open enough to honor a genuine sense of national destiny.

The Germans, through the firm leadership of Chancellor Adenauer -- who after so many years of invaluable service soon will leave the world of active politics -- embody the vital quality of resoluteness.

Some people are distressed about the differences of view among the allies of the Western community. But the free discussion of our differences is a measure of our strength, and not our weakness.

The weak cannot expose their differences without exposing their weakness. So they conceal their differences -- and remain weak. I am confident that in the process of reviewing and reconciling our differences we will emerge even stronger.

To achieve a united position among free and diverse peoples demands the utmost in good faith and consultative skill. But I am confident that we will achieve it.

It is quite possible that some of our present differences are the price we must pay for past negligence. We have tended to be fitful, not constant, in our consultations within the Western community. If we had worked a bit closer with our allies and strengthened the consultative process within NATO during the past five years, the task of achieving unity would be less difficult today.

Be that as it may, let us now accept the present crisis as an invaluable opportunity to fortify the unity of the Western community of nations. Without that unity, peace and justice surely will not for long endure.

If unity is essential for NATO, it is also essential within the United States. It has never been more important than it is today for the Administration to consult with the opposition party and to establish the closest possible working relationship with Congress. Our delegation to the coming Foreign Minister's conference ought surely to include Senator William Fulbright, the respected Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, and Senator Alexander Wiley, ranking Republican member of that Committee.

Finally, we should not ignore the importance of achieving unity and support beyond the confines of the NATO community. The United Nations may play a significant role at this point. Let's not hesitate, at the appropriate time, to place our case before this unique international body. The United Nations cannot solve our problems for us. It was never meant to be a substitute for the difficult foreign policy decisions all governments must make. But it does present many opportunities for the execution of a responsible foreign policy. And no objective is more important than that of mobilizing the support of the many nations that share our concern for security and justice.

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2. MILITARY PREPAREDNESS

The first general requirement for a responsible negotiating position is, then, unity. The second requirement is military preparedness. At Munich, the democracies were unprepared. They had to buy time to rearm. They bought time -- with the only currency acceptable to the dictators, appeasement.

Military preparedness is vital. As Carl Sandburg once observed, "the cockroach is always wrong when it argues with the chicken." The militarily weak always invite appeasement when they negotiate with the militarily strong.

Once again, our present situation is happily very different from that of the democratic leaders who confronted the Fascists at Munich twenty-one years ago. Yet there is little cause for complacency. We must put to work immediately the lessons of the Berlin crisis. For this crisis throws a bright light on our military position and shows us that there is much yet to be done.

Last weekend, before the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the NATO Council, President Eisenhower reviewed the military posture of the Western community. He fortified his optimism with scripture. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace," quoted the President, "his goods are in peace." But Mr. Eisenhower neglected to complete the quotation which continues, "But when a stronger than he shall come to him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted and divideth his spoils."

I would suggest that we indulge less in self-congratulation and more in self-examination -- and if necessary in self-sacrifice.

Many thoughtful men have been engaged in this critical self-examination. Many of them have concluded that our defense establishment is rapidly becoming inadequate in terms of the threat we face. If we allow our armour to become weak we may well suffer the fate of the improvident man of the scriptural story.

It is time we faced resolutely some searching questions.

Are we militarily prepared in relative terms, relative, that is, to present and forseeable Soviet capabilities? And are we militarily prepared in relevant terms, relevant, that is, to the various military contingencies we may have to face?

Is our strategic force adequate -- relative to the Soviets? General Power, head of the Strategic Air Command, said the other day: "I think our deterrent posture is deteriorating." The fact is that unless action is taken now we are going to find ourselves facing the Soviets with an old weapons system, we with our manned bombers, and they with long range missiles.

Is our military establishment relevant to the kind of threats we may have to deal with? The fact is that unless action is taken now we will run the risk of short-changing our forces in weapons appropriate to their job. General Lauris Norstad, Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty forces, has asked for a new weapons system for NATO. His request has been given vigorous support by the President's distinguished committee, headed by Mr. William Draper, and commissioned to evaluate our military aid program.

The increase in military assistance is to be primarily for new weapons in the NATO area.

The military balance of terror between East and West is a horrible thing. But this horror is exceeded only by the prospect of an imbalance of terror, an imbalance favoring the communists. For then the cockroach would indeed find himself arguing with the chicken. To negotiate from military weakness is to invite appeasement.

If the Western community of nations is to endure, we must do what is necessary to maintain military parity with the Soviets -- and do it now.

3. PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

The third general requirement for a responsible negotiating position is public understanding. The appeasement of Munich was partly the product of popular misunderstanding. Most people thought that Czechoslovakia was a small, remote country, hardly worth bothering about -- certainly not worth fighting over.

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In a democracy, responsible policy cannot long maintain itself in times of crisis when the public is misinformed -- or even when it is uninformed.

Again our situation today is happily very different from that of Munich. A recent New York Times survey of American opinion reveals serious concern about Berlin. The American people surely are not basically opposed to a responsible policy in the Berlin crisis.

But the Times survey also flashed some danger signals. Thirty-nine percent of the people interviewed did not understand the basic strategic problem we confront in defending free Berlin -- the fact that it is located over 100 miles inside of communist Europe. Right here in the New York area the percentage of uninformed people ran as high as 75%. Just as serious, most people were certain that the crisis would pass -- that the danger was not great.

I do not believe we are at the brink of war. I too am confident we can contain this crisis. But we shall successfully avoid war and discharge our responsibilities to the people of West Berlin only if we understand the full complexity and precariousness of our situation.

It is not enough that our diplomats understand the problem. Our capacity to cope with the danger we now confront will not depend alone on the wisdom of statesmen meeting in Washington, London, Rome, Paris, and Bonn. It will rest finally on the understanding of the people from whom the statesmen draw their power.

Why do I say this? It is because people who have not been given the facts may tend to expect too much, or may mistake legitimate negotiation for appeasement. People who do not know the facts -- who do not know, for example, the complexity of the problems we face -- may demand what is impossible. They may demand or expect a permanent European settlement with the Russians.

People who have not been fully informed -- who do not know, how precarious our situation is -- may shout "Munich" if our diplomats begin talking about limited agreements with the Soviets aimed at easing tensions.

It is my firm belief that the Administration has not done a good enough job of informing the public in the interests of greater understanding. Now, what specifically are the ingredients of this understanding?

First, we must be open-minded and imaginative. We must understand that negotiated agreements designed to reduce the hazards of war are not appeasement unless they alter the status quo to our disadvantage.

Second, we must be patient. We must understand that nothing will be solved overnight, that settlements will in fact take years, and that we face a long road of uncertainty and insecurity.

Third, we must be resolute and willing to sacrifice. We must be willing to spend money -- hard-earned money -- to do what is necessary to maintain the strength of the Western community of nations.

The requirements of the present crisis are high. I came here tonight to speak about Berlin and the prerequisites of effective negotiation. I cannot leave without reminding you that the imagination, patience and resoluteness, which as a people we must now demonstrate, is necessary at every level in our contest with the Soviets -- in aid, in trade, and in appeals to the minds and souls of men and at every point in our contest with the Communist bloc -- in Asia, in the Middle East, in Africa, at the U.N.

WE ARE CALLED TO GREATNESS

I think I understand well the Communist threat. I have talked to Khrushchev. I have seen at first hand his vigor, his determination, his ruthlessness. I know the power of totalitarian might. We must never underestimate this massive threat.

More to be feared than Soviet hardness is our own softness.

More to be feared than ruthless Soviet purpose is our aimlessness.

More to be feared than the pernicious appeal of Communist slogans to the disinherited of this earth is our own inability to develop a clear sense of purpose

and to give mankind a vision of a noble destiny.

I do not believe the pessimists who say that as a people we Americans cannot or will not meet the demands of the present trial of Western civilization.

I do not propose that we chastise the American people.

I propose that we challenge them!

The measure of our responsibility is such that we must act with greatness. No people have ever risen to greatness without being called to greatness.

The tragedy of these years is that the voice that should summon us is silent.

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(1) Samuel I.
S.I. Newhouse
730 Park Ave
N.Y.

(1) Henry Schultz, Club 21
+ Softony
Hillman of Time
Anti Def. League

(1) Surrogate - Judge Samuel Di Falco
N.Y. City

Democ Party — Liberal Program — FDR — Jefferson-Jackson-Wilson-Truman

What We Do between now + 1960 determines future — Issue is Leadership!! (Interim Healthy)

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Geo Humphrey
Hubert Humphrey

Priority — Nat Security + Peace —

NATO

We now look back on ten years of cooperation within the NATO alliance, and we look forward to the rapidly advancing climax of the Berlin crisis. (Evil Triumphs - Good Men Fail to Act!)

These two -- NATO and Berlin -- are closely linked together.

The first Berlin crisis of 1948-49 brought the NATO community into being. (Leadership)

The ~~Present~~ Berlin crisis tests whether that unique community of nations, conceived in common danger and dedicated to common security, can long endure. — Strong Leadership!

Firmness before the Soviet threat

We have learned from hard experience to be firm + resolute before the Soviet threat.

We learned much in Greece and Turkey in 1947. And what we

learned we put into action when Congress endorsed President Truman's now famous doctrine. — Leadership!

"It must be the policy of the United States," said President Truman twelve years ago, "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation."

We learned the hard way in Czechoslavkia in 1948 when the Communists overthrew a free government. Then came the blockade of West Berlin. We were threatened. But by now we had learned well that those who do not stand firm will not remain free. We did not withdraw from the beleagured city. For nine months free Berlin was sustained by an allied air bridge built of ingenuity and daring.

The lessons learned in Czechoslovakia and Berlin made their impact. Joining hands with the free nations of Europe, we created an unprecedented international community. NATO was established in 1949, just ten years ago. Twelve nations, --

augmented by three more which joined later, pledged that "an armed attack against one shall be considered an attack against them all."

The community of nations comprising NATO is the core of the Western world. If this community stands firm and united in the cause of freedom and justice, we shall prevail. If it collapses, we shall be in mortal danger.

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Last November I stood in West Berlin with its able and courageous mayor, Willy Brandt. I vowed then, and I vow today, to support a policy of firmness, to uphold the right of France, Britain and the United States to maintain garrisons in West Berlin until a legitimate peace treaty is signed.

This is the position and policy of our government. It is also the position and policy of NATO. We will not surrender. We will not be pushed out.

But firmness before the Soviet threat, though indispensable, is not enough. Firmness alone will not preserve NATO, nor assure the survival of free Berlin.

But our firmness must be matched by our imagination and our willingness to negotiate.

Standing firm and a willingness to negotiate are not, as some suggest, contradictory policies. They are the two elements in any viable policy (in the Berlin crisis). We can negotiate successfully only if we are prepared to stand firm. And we can command the political support necessary to a posture of firmness only if our negotiating position is clear, consistent, and realistic.

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The Requirements of Negotiation

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Western community. Second, we must be militarily prepared. Third, our people must understand the full gravity of the situation we confront. I want to ask you to think with me tonight about each of these requirements.

1. The Unity of the Western Community.

First, the critical importance of unity. At Munich the democracies were not united. They were divided. The United States lived in the never-never land of isolationism. The low countries of Europe were neutrals. Britain and France were united, it is true -- united in ~~somnambulistic~~ apathy, anxious to believe the false promises of the dictators.

Happily, the situation is very different today. Yet there remains much to be done. We have achieved agreement only on what we will not do.

We will not get out of Berlin, ~~just~~ simply because the Russians threaten us.

But negative agreement on what we will not do must now be transmuted into positive agreement on what we will do -- what we will propose, what we will be prepared to give in return for what benefits.

This is our problem and our challenge.

The Western community is composed of free partners. Therefore, the unity we seek must now be forged from the free give and take among partners in a common enterprise.

We must meet the demand for firmness on the part of nations most exposed to the Soviets -- principally the Germans.

We must reconcile this demand for firmness with the opposing demand for flexibility on the part of other nations less exposed -- principally the British.

We must understand the French desire for national prestige.

We must be able to do and understand the Italian desire to be a major Partner - She is indeed!

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We must remain sensitive to German resistance to policies that appear to demand greater sacrifice of German interests than they do of the interests of the other partners.

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2. Military Preparedness

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unprepared. They had to buy time to rearm. They bought time -- with the only currency acceptable to the dictators, appeasement.

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If the Western community of nations is to endure, we must do what is necessary to maintain military parity with the Soviets -- and do it now.

Balance of Power

Balanced Babsit

3. Public Understanding.

The third general requirement for a responsible negotiating position is public understanding. The appeasement of Munich was partly the product of popular misunderstanding. Most people thought that Czechoslovakia was a small, remote country, hardly worth bothering about -- certainly not worth fighting over.

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Second, we must be patient. We must understand that nothing will be solved overnight, that settlements will in fact take years, and that we face a long road of uncertainty and insecurity. Inch along - a long tedious process.

Third, we must be resolute and willing to sacrifice. We must be willing to spend money -- hard-earned money -- to do what is necessary to maintain the strength of the Western community of nations.

The requirements of the present crisis are high. I came here tonight to speak about Berlin and the prerequisites of effective negotiation. I cannot leave without reminding you

that the imagination, patience and resoluteness, which as a people we must now demonstrate, is necessary at every level in our contest with the Soviets -- in aid, in trade, and in appeals to the minds and souls of men and at every point in our contest with the Communist bloc -- in Asia, in the Middle East, in Africa, at the U.N.

Total Challenge to the Total Soviet Threat.

We are Called to Greatness

I think I understand well the Communist threat. I have talked to Khrushchev. I have seen at first hand his vigor, his determination, his ruthlessness. I know the power of totalitarian might. We must never underestimate this massive threat. But,

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More to be feared than the pernicious appeal of Communist slogans to the disinherited of this earth is our own inability to develop a clear sense of purpose and to give mankind a vision of a noble destiny.

Works
Peace
Food
Health
Educ

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I do not propose that we chastise the American people.

I propose that we challenge them!

The measure of our responsibility is such that we must act with greatness. No people have ever risen to greatness without being called to greatness.

The tragedy of these years is that the voice that should summon us is silent. The Nation needs leadership. ~~The free world~~ It is the duty & opportunity of our Party - the Democratic Party - to provide it!

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Minnesota
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