

*External Affairs*

which was being held when we had our last discussion on international affairs on January 29. It will be recalled that the agenda of the Berlin conference was adopted quickly. It was a simple agenda of three items. The second and third items of that agenda were Germany and the problem of ensuring European security, and the Austrian state treaty. In respect of these two items, as the house knows, no progress was made at Berlin.

In so far as Germany is concerned, the Soviet delegation to that conference was unable to agree to the proposal for free all-German elections as the first step towards unification and a German peace settlement; while the western foreign ministers on their part were not able to agree to the Soviet proposal, which had been previously rejected, that a provisional all-German government should be set up on a basis of equal representation of the freely elected government of the German republic and of the communist regime in East Germany. The result was, in this matter, deadlock.

Similarly, in respect of Austria, when the western foreign ministers, in an effort to bring a peace treaty to Austria at last, accepted the previous Soviet proposals the Soviet delegation then introduced new and irrelevant conditions, with the result that in this matter too there was deadlock. So the peoples of Germany and Austria must have felt, as indeed we felt, disappointment and disillusionment over the negative results of these items of the agenda.

The first item of the agenda concerned methods of reducing international tension and convening a five-power conference. Under that item a decision was taken, as the house knows, to hold a conference in Geneva opening on April 26 to discuss the question of a Korean peace treaty and the war in Indo-China. I will deal with these matters more specifically a little later.

On January 29, when we discussed international affairs, I told the house that in my view, despite some minor concessions and some reassuring words from the successors to Mr. Stalin in the U.S.S.R., nothing that had happened up to that time gave us cause to believe that the basic objectives of soviet foreign policy had changed or that soviet leaders were, in fact, ready to accept a reasonable solution to major international problems. After a careful examination of all the reports of the Berlin conference dealing with Germany, Austria and the general subject of European security, it seems clear that the conclusion I put forward on January 29 holds true today. There has been no evidence

of change in the basic foreign policy objectives of the Soviet union. At Berlin, Mr. Speaker, the same record was played, although it was played somewhat more softly and for that I suppose we should give thanks.

One of the foreign policy objectives of the Soviet union has been to split the European allies, and indeed other allies, from the United States of America; to crack the solid structure of western unity. Mr. Molotov at Berlin made it abundantly clear that this was certainly one of his principal aims. But we can all take satisfaction out of the fact that he failed in achieving that aim. Indeed, the Russian tactics served to strengthen, I think, the unified approach of the western delegation to international problems. The teamwork and the tactics of the western foreign ministers at Berlin, which were I think admirable in all respects, have quite possibly increased the sense of common purpose in the peoples of the free world. A stronger Atlantic community spirit might, I think, be listed as a positive achievement of that conference.

The attitude adopted by the soviet delegation, their refusal to agree to the unification of Germany with free elections or the peace treaty with Austria, has also served to remove—if we still had them—any lingering illusions about soviet policy. I suppose this also can be listed as a positive achievement of the conference. It is a melancholy fact, but a fact nonetheless, that in the world in which we live we must count as a step forward the removal or reduction of false hopes, because false hopes can be dangerous. Clearing the ground of illusions and facing the situation as it makes, I think, more likely the formulation, and eventually the realization, of sound hopes and attainable visions of secure peace.

Since the Berlin conference some progress has been made by the countries of western Europe towards the establishment of the European defence community. In Belgium, for instance, the senate has approved a bill for ratification of the EDC treaty, which earlier had been passed by its house of representatives. In The Netherlands the final steps in the formal process of ratification have been completed. In the federal republic of Germany, parliamentary approval has been received for constitutional amendments which would put beyond doubt the right of the German republic to participate in western defence. In both France and Italy, however, formal parliamentary debate on the EDC treaty has not yet begun. We must hope that it will begin soon.