

island is isolated in the midst of Soviet-controlled territory, East Germany. I must say that Canada's view is, and I state this very firmly, that we will not countenance the swallowing up or absorption of 2.5 million of our friends in West Berlin into the Soviet complex which surrounds the City of Berlin.

In the notes of December 31 the United Kingdom, the United States and France also said they would not jeopardize in any way, by negotiation or otherwise, the West Berlin population. Then again in these notes there was a reiteration of the offer, which had been made over several years and which was restated and made manifest in the communique issued after the NATO meeting in December, to negotiate the question of Berlin in relation to the whole German situation as well as in relation to the problem of European security.

Subsequent events, Mr. Speaker, have tended to confirm the wisdom of the firm but flexible position that was taken in these notes and in the meetings of the NATO Council. On January 10 of this year the Soviet Union sent notes to all the powers on the Western side which had fought against Germany in the Second World War. I have reported to the House on that note, and indeed I have tabled it here, accompanied as it was by a draft peace treaty relating to the whole of Germany.

In that note it was suggested that there should be held a conference of the representatives of these countries - 28, I think there are - on the Western and Eastern side which had fought against Germany. The conference would discuss this draft peace treaty. In that note there was, in tone if not in content, the idea that the U.S.S.R. would be ready to consider the problem of Berlin in relation to Germany as a whole. Recent public statements - perhaps we can take some comfort from them - by U.S.S.R. leaders indicate that they do not regard the note of November 27, 1958 to the three occupying powers in Berlin as an ultimatum.

I tabled in this House on February 17 the Canadian reply to the Soviet note of January 10. Briefly, as I stated at the time, our position is this. It would not be useful to have a large peace treaty conference until some aspects of the German question have been examined by representatives of the four states, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the U.S.S.R., those countries that have a special responsibility in Berlin. The Canadian reply did not, and I do not now, try to lay down a blueprint for the solution of the German problem. There will be general agreement, however - I hope there will be. I will put it that way - that this is not the time for Canada, or any other NATO country which has been a party to the preliminary discussion of this problem of Berlin in relation to Germany as a whole and also in relation to European security,