

professed their desire to promote the objectives of easing tension and of a reduction of the cold war. These professions, however, are certainly difficult to reconcile with the demands made by the Soviet Government on November 27, 1958 when it abruptly declared that existing agreements on Berlin were null and void.

Whatever the basic Russian objectives may have been, I am bound to observe that these tactics do not convey an image of a state bent on a lessening of international tension. On the contrary, the Soviet Union deliberately chose to create a crisis where none had recently existed, and thereby to plunge the whole world into a new period of deep anxiety that will not abate until there is some sort of meeting of minds in negotiation between East and West, and some agreement has been reached on the German question.

The Berlin situation was the critical issue before the NATO Council Meeting held in Paris last December. I, along with my colleagues the Ministers of Finance, Defence and Defence Production, had the honour to represent Canada at that meeting. Members will recall that before the formal meeting of the NATO Council began on December 16 there was a meeting on Sunday, December 14 at which were present representatives of the three occupying powers from the West, the United Kingdom, the United States and France. At that meeting, held, as I said a moment ago, prior to the meeting of the Council, there were also present representatives of West Germany. Willie Brandt, who honoured this country by a visit recently, also attended that meeting in his capacity as Mayor of West Berlin. Out of that meeting of the three occupying powers and West Germany came a statement in which they publicly rejected the Soviet proposals and reaffirmed their determination to maintain their position and rights in the city, including the right of free access to Berlin.

When this issue came before the NATO Council the Canadian Delegation took an active part - I say without immodesty that we did take an active part - in pressing for a full discussion of the Berlin situation in the Council with emphasis on maintaining an appropriate blend of firmness in the face of threats, and constant readiness to examine serious Soviet proposals. The position adopted by the Council two days later was entirely consonant with the Canadian position. The Council, in associating itself with the position taken by the four Western powers, adopted the view that the Berlin question could be satisfactorily settled only in the context of a consideration of the problem of Germany as a whole. The Council referred to the notes that had been sent by the Western powers to the U.S.S.R., in which they offered to negotiate on the situation with respect to Germany as a whole. That offer