

5. At the same time as the Soviet Union has been attempting to intimidate the peoples of the free world with demonstrations of its nuclear strength, it has intensified its efforts to get the whole of Berlin at its mercy, to impose a discriminatory status on Germany, to perpetuate her divided state, and to break up the Atlantic Alliance. With these ultimate aims in mind, the U.S.S.R. has artificially provoked a crisis over Berlin. Disregarding the obligations it has undertaken, the Soviet Union has cut Berlin in two. The walling-in of the people under its control has once more demonstrated to the world the real nature of the Communist system and the irresistible attraction of a free society. Ministers expressed their sympathy with all those for whom the raising of this wall in Berlin has meant the separation of families and the denial of escape to freedom in the West. They also expressed their admiration of the courage and attachment to freedom of the people of Berlin, and reiterated their conviction that a just and peaceful solution of the problem of Germany, including Berlin, must be found on the basis of self-determination.

6. In the spirit of the agreed policy of the Alliance, the Ministers recalled their communique on Berlin of December 16, 1958, and reaffirmed their determination to protect and defend the liberties of West Berlin, and ensure to its people the conditions for a free and prosperous life.

7. Established rights and obligations, solemnly confirmed in international agreements, cannot be extinguished unilaterally by the stroke of a pen — by the signature by the Soviet Government of a "peace treaty" with a regime which represents no one but its Soviet masters. The three Western Powers who bear special responsibilities for Berlin stand by their clear obligation to protect those who have put their trust in them. Acting in close co-operation with their NATO allies, they have taken the necessary measures to maintain their rights and to fulfil their obligations. Confirming their agreement on this policy, the members of the Alliance reaffirmed the responsibilities which each member state has assumed in regard to the security and welfare of Berlin and the maintenance of the position of the Three Powers in that city. They agreed to maintain close consultation on this question.

8. The Council heard statements on Berlin by the Foreign Ministers of the countries most directly concerned, and was informed of the intention to resume diplomatic contacts with the Soviet Union, in accordance with the aims which the West is pursuing for the maintenance of world peace and in the hope that these contacts might serve to determine whether a basis for negotiation could be found. Their colleagues approved the resumption of diplomatic contacts and expressed the hope that a negotiated settlement could be achieved. After full discussion of the situation, the Council agreed that the Alliance must continue on its resolute course, combining strength and firmness of purpose with a readiness to seek solutions by peaceful means.

9. Ministers noted the improvements made by member countries in their force contributions, particularly in response to the aggravation of the military