

NATO Declaration on Berlin (16 December 1958)

Caption: On 16 December 1958, following suggestion by Moscow that West Berlin be granted the status of a free city, the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) renews its guarantees with regard to the presence of American, British and French troops in West Berlin.

Source: Documents on American Foreign Relations. 1958. Dir. of publ. ZINNER, Paul E. 1959. New York: published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Harper & Brothers. "Declaration of the North Atlantic Council (December 16, 1958)", p. 233-234.

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Declaration of the North Atlantic Council, December 16, 1958.

1. The North Atlantic Council examined the question of Berlin.
2. The Council declares that no state has the right to withdraw unilaterally from its international engagements. It considers that the denunciation by the Soviet Union of the interallied agreements on Berlin can in no way deprive the other parties of their rights or relieve the Soviet Union of its obligations. Such methods destroy the mutual confidence between nations which is one of the foundations of peace.
3. The Council fully associates itself with the views expressed on the subject by the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany in their statement of 14th December.
4. The demands expressed by the Soviet Government have created a serious situation which must be faced with determination.
5. The Council recalls 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. The member states of NATO could not approve a solution of the Berlin question which jeopardized the right of the three Western powers to remain in Berlin as long as their responsibilities require it, and did not assure freedom of communication between that city and the free world. The Soviet Union could be responsible for any action which had the effect of hampering this free communication or endangering this freedom. The two million inhabitants of West Berlin have just reaffirmed in a free vote their overwhelming approval and support for that position.
6. The Council considers that the Berlin question can only be settled in the framework of an agreement with the U.S.S.R. on Germany as a whole. It recalls that the Western powers have repeatedly declared themselves ready to examine this problem, as well as those of European security and disarmament. They are still ready to discuss all these problems.