

Address by Kenneth Rush (Berlin, 27 September 1971)

Source: United States-Department of State. Documents on Germany 1944-1985. Washington: Department of State, [s.d.]. 1421 p. (Department of State Publication 9446). p. 1155-1167.

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_by_kenneth_rush_berlin_27_september_1971-en-c1be3678-acb9-4301-987d-81fd1c8be8fd.html

Last updated: 02/07/2015

Address by Ambassador Rush Discussing the Quadripartite Agreement September 27, 1971

This is an especially pleasant occasion for me; it not only gives me an opportunity to be with the distinguished members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry but also is the first chance I have had in many months to come to Berlin for something other than the four-power negotiations.

After assuming my post of Ambassador over 2 years ago, I made my first major speech in Berlin and said I considered Berlin to be my second home and that I would try to come here at least once a month. I certainly can say that I have more than kept my promise. In fact, in recent months I have spent almost as much time here as I have in Bonn.

Ordinarily, of course, I would have been delighted with the prospect of coming to Berlin so often. But participation in the negotiations gave me scant opportunity to do anything but work on the business at hand. I must say, therefore, that one reason I am so happy that the negotiations have successfully ended is that I will now once again have the opportunity to become even better acquainted with the city and the people on whose behalf my colleagues and I have concentrated so much energy in the past 18 months.

There are, of course, other and more important reasons why I am pleased that the first phase of the Berlin negotiations has ended. They have resulted in a historic document which constitutes a definitive and comprehensive four-power agreement on Berlin. With this agreement, the four powers have for the first time agreed in writing that the situation of the city should be improved, that its ties with the Federal Republic should be maintained and developed, and that practical improvements should be provided for its inhabitants. In effect, all four powers, but especially the Soviet Union, have determined that Berlin should once and for all be removed as an area of potential conflict between East and West.

I am convinced that this agreement will substantially benefit the interests of all Berliners. In it, both the Soviet Union and the Allies have taken serious commitments. These commitments will provide a fair basis for the peaceful development of a prosperous and free society in the Western sectors of the city. Further, they will help bring about conditions which could result in an easing of tension throughout Europe. This, I believe, will be the ultimate benefit of the work we have done here. For I am convinced that the real problem of Berlin — the ugly division of the city — can only be settled in conjunction with a general reduction of the tensions which have plagued Europe and the world for the past 25 years.

Before telling you more about the new agreement on Berlin, I would like to tell you a few things which it is not. First, I must say that, pleased as we are with the result of our negotiations, we should not in any way describe the agreement as a triumph for one side or another. It is true that this agreement represents an achievement which goes beyond the early expectations of all who were associated with it. It is also true that Allied interests, German interests, and above all, the interests of the Berliners themselves, are given the clearest and most binding protection through this text.

But this achievement was not the result of unilateral concessions by one side or another; it was made possible by the flexibility and desire for agreement shown by all sides.

The provisions of this agreement are based on the recognition of both sides that an arrangement of this sort was in all our interests. We did not push the Soviets into anything, and they did not push us into anything. What this means is that the benefits it contains were agreed on with the full understanding of both sides. An agreement based on such solid foundations will be much more lasting than one reached only at the price of one-sided concessions.

With regard to another vital subject, I should like to state without qualification that the agreement pertains to all of Berlin and not, as some have said, only the Western sectors. It is true, of course, that the provisions of one part of the agreement relate only to the Western sectors of Berlin, but the practical improvements also relate to the access routes through the German Democratic Republic and to visits by West Berliners to East Berlin and the GDR. And, after all, such practical improvements were the key goal of our negotiations. The

Eastern sector of Berlin needs no practical improvements against actions by the Western sectors or by the Federal Republic.

You need only look at the preamble and part I, entitled “General Provisions,” to determine that the agreement covers all of Berlin. The preamble refers to the American sector of Berlin, and since it is brief I should like to quote from it as follows:

“Acting on the basis of their quadripartite rights and responsibilities, and of the corresponding wartime and postwar agreements and decisions of the Four Powers, which are not affected,

“Taking into account the existing situation in the relevant area,

“Guided by the desire to contribute to practical improvements of the situation,

“Without prejudice to their legal positions, ...”

Obviously these items must refer to all of Berlin, since these rights and responsibilities and agreements and decisions relate to all of Berlin.

Similarly, in part I, the four governments agree that they will strive to promote the elimination of tension and the prevention of complications in the relevant area; that there shall be no use or threat of force in that area and that disputes shall be settled solely by peaceful means; that they will mutually respect their individual and joint rights and responsibilities, which remain unchanged; and that, irrespective of the differences in legal views, the situation which has developed in the area shall not be changed unilaterally. Obviously these terms have no meaning if applied solely to the Western sectors of Berlin.

Part II then goes on to refer specifically to the Western Sectors of Berlin, thereby clearly implying that there is an Eastern sector. Throughout the discussions we made clear to the Soviet representatives that we were talking about all of Berlin and that the agreement related to all of Berlin, and there can be no doubt in their minds as to our position.

The question of legal status was one of the key points of the negotiations. In the over 20 years since the end of the Berlin blockade, both sides had developed precise but highly contradictory interpretations of the legal status of Berlin. We of course continue to be certain that our legal interpretation correctly reflects the status of the city. Our goal, however, has been to achieve practical improvements for the citizens of Berlin, and it became evident quite early in the negotiations that we could not agree on these practical improvements if we attempted to get the Soviets to change their legal view or if they attempted to get us to change ours.

We decided, therefore, to forgo legal arguments in favor of practical improvements. This meant, of course, that we did not change the overall situation, including the ugly wall which divides this city. But we came to the conclusion that an agreement on practical improvements would be a distinct step forward and certainly better than no agreement at all. In our view such an agreement would not only do much for the citizens of the Western sectors; it could also be a first step in a wider process which might someday result in an end to the division of Berlin and even of Germany.

The Allies took this step only after being absolutely sure that the agreement did not prejudice our continuing legal position in Berlin. As I noted above, we took care in wording the various parts of the agreement to insure that our concept of the four-power status of all of Berlin continues. The wording leaves no doubt that East Berlin is not treated as a part of the GDR and thus supports the Western legal interpretation that all of Berlin is an area that is not part of East Germany. The point is supported in the section on inner-Berlin communications which states that:

“... communications between the Western Sectors of Berlin and areas bordering on these Sectors and those areas of the German Democratic Republic which do not border on these Sectors will be improved.”

I can also state to you unequivocally that the quadripartite agreement on Berlin does not in any way provide recognition by the three Western Allies of the sovereignty of the GDR, de facto or otherwise. I have just described for you the great effort which we took to make sure that no provision of this agreement prejudiced our legal interpretation of the situation in Berlin and Germany. The agreement makes quite clear that the rights and responsibilities of all four powers remain unaffected. Under these rights and responsibilities are included the reserved rights possessed by all four Allies for Germany as a whole including, of course, Berlin. Our position continues to be that pending a final peace settlement, no step can be taken to change the existing legal situation. This position is reflected in the agreement. As far as the Western Allies are concerned, the legal status of Germany, including Berlin, is in no way affected by the quadripartite agreement.

Legally, therefore, the situation of Berlin and Germany remains exactly as it was on March 26, 1970, at the beginning of the quadripartite negotiations. It is in the practical sphere where our long months of negotiations have changed the situation and, in my opinion, changed it very much for the better. This, as I stated earlier, was the real hope of the Allied Powers when they proposed commencement of the talks on Berlin in a note to the Soviet Union of August 1969. We were of the opinion that practical steps to ease the physical situation of this beleaguered city could make a real contribution to the search for peace and stability in Europe as well as making the day-to-day lives of the Berliners themselves very much easier.

I know I need not describe in great detail for this audience the historical developments which led to the situation in Berlin as it was at the beginning of our negotiations. Suffice it to say that both East and West had several times during the 25 years following World War II edged near the brink of war over the city. It was here that two opposing political systems met face to face, and it was here that tensions between the two systems were first felt. We all knew that in Berlin the potential for a worldwide conflict could never be ignored.

When President Nixon assumed office in January 1969, he brought with him the belief that the time had come finally to do away with the hostility which had poisoned relations between East and West for so many years. Through many years of study of world politics and international affairs, he had concluded that, whatever the basis for the confrontation which had divided East and West in the years following World War II, the times and the priorities of the countries of both East and West had changed. We were now entering a new era in which the major nations of the world would have to put aside the divisions of the past and cooperate more closely to meet the problems presented by modern technology. It was this belief which led the President to issue his famous call for an end to the “era of confrontation” and the beginning of an “era of negotiation.”

In assessing the world situation in early 1969, President Nixon rightly concluded that the key to peace and stability continued to lie in Europe and that the cornerstone of peace in Europe would have to be laid in Berlin. It was for this reason that President Nixon, only 1 month after taking office, made his first trip abroad to Europe and that this trip included a stop in Berlin. The President went to Berlin for two reasons. First, he knew that continued freedom of this city and continued peace in Europe depended on the firmness of the American commitment to defend the freedom and viability of Berlin. The President came here, therefore, to demonstrate as directly as possible American determination to continue its guarantee of the security of the city. This determination remains unchanged, and I know I speak for President Nixon when I say to you here again this evening that there can be no doubt about the will and intention of the American people to defend Berlin against any external threat.

But President Nixon assigned another equally important task to his first trip to Berlin. He knew that the era of negotiation could really only begin in Berlin, for no matter how successful negotiations in other areas might be, they could have no real result until the nagging tension which surrounded this city had been eased.

During this visit, therefore, President Nixon took the first initiative toward the Berlin talks which have just been successfully concluded. At a visit to the Siemens plant here, he said:

“When we say that we reject any unilateral alteration of the status quo in Berlin, we do not mean that we consider the status quo to be satisfactory. Nobody benefits from a stalemate, least of all the people of Berlin.

“Let us set behind us the stereotype of Berlin as a ‘provocation.’ Let us, all of us, view the situation in Berlin as an invocation, a call to end the tension of the past age here and everywhere.”

In July 1969, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, in a speech before the Supreme Soviet, gave the Soviet response to that initiative by indicating a willingness to negotiate on the subject of the Berlin questions. During the following 6 months, there were several exchanges of notes between the Soviet Union and the three Western Powers until the negotiations formally began on March 26, 1970.

From the outset, the Berlin negotiations were extremely difficult. The Soviets reiterated their known position that they had transferred full control of the Eastern sector of Berlin, and over the access routes, to the East German state. The Western Allies reiterated their known position that four-power status continued valid for *all* of Berlin and that there were four-power rights of access — of civilian access as well as military access — to the city.

The negotiations remained at this general level for approximately 9 months until the Allies proposed a complete draft agreement on February 5, 1971. The Soviets countered with a draft of their own on March 26, 1971. Their draft did not contain provision for unimpeded access, for specific measures to secure such access, or for Soviet responsibility with regard to access or travel by West Berliners to East Berlin and the GDR. It did contain provisions which might have resulted in a serious weakening of the ties between the Western sectors and the Federal Republic and in the removal of many Federal Republic agencies and institutions from the Western sectors. It is interesting to note that there are about 22,000 Federal German civil service employees in the Western sector at the present time.

Some on the Western side felt the Soviet draft evidenced the impossibility of reaching some compromise between the two proposed agreements. Nevertheless, the Allied negotiators plugged on step by step, first subjecting the Soviet draft to detailed analysis and criticism. We then tried to identify common concepts and language in the two drafts. The next step was to develop a joint text containing common language.

In May 1971 there was finally a move on the Soviet side to undertake a Soviet commitment that access to and from the Western sectors would be unimpeded. From that time onward, the pace of the negotiations accelerated. There were more and more frequent meetings of the Ambassadors and, in between these, more meetings of the advisers. Finally, in July we decided that the time might have come for a final breakthrough on the ambassadorial level, and the Ambassadors instituted a series of marathon sessions starting on August 10 and, with some interruptions, running through the 18th of August, when the most important outstanding issues were resolved in a 14-hour session which lasted until after midnight. On August 24 the text of the agreement was submitted to governments for their consideration and approval. The signature followed on September 3, after some further dramatic moments.

I would like to note at this point a particularly important element of these negotiations — and one that was a source of great strength to me. I am speaking of the direct personal interest which President Nixon maintained in the progress of the negotiations. Prior to their beginning, he formulated the American negotiating objectives. During the talks I was in touch with him frequently and received from him direct and frequent guidance. The President intervened personally with Soviet officials to overcome difficulties which arose during the course of the negotiations, particularly at one point when the Soviet negotiators appeared unwilling to discuss the central access issue until they first received satisfaction about the reduction of the Federal German presence in the Western sectors. In sum, his help was inestimable in bringing the negotiations to fruition.

Now, to move to the agreement itself. A primary accomplishment of this agreement, from the Western viewpoint, is in the *access* field. We have obtained a direct Soviet commitment to maintain unimpeded civilian traffic to and from Berlin. This traffic will be facilitated so as to take place in the most simple and expeditious manner and will receive preferential treatment. The Soviets have also accepted the principle of sealed freight shipments, the contents of which the East Germans cannot inspect. Vehicles which cannot be sealed will, in general, be subject only to inspection of accompanying documents. There is provision in the agreement for through trains and buses, with formalities limited to identification of persons. Travelers in private vehicles will, except in certain special cases involving misuse of the transit routes, be exempt from search of their persons, vehicles, and personal luggage and from detention or exclusion from the use of the routes. Procedures concerning travelers will not involve delay, and travelers will not be required to pay individual tolls or fees for the use of the transit routes. West Berliners will be able to travel again to the Eastern sector of Berlin and to East Germany under the same conditions applying to other persons. This has been very difficult since the Berlin wall was erected in 1961. We have also not forgotten the residents of the isolated enclaves such as Steinstuecken. Arrangements are envisioned which will for the first time connect these territories with the rest of West Berlin.

When the agreement goes into effect, the Soviet Union will recognize practices which have been authorized by the Allies for over 20 years which provide for representation of the interests of the Western sectors abroad by the Federal Republic. These provisions will actually only bring a change in the present situation in the Soviet Union and, hopefully, in other Eastern European states. Virtually every other country of the world has for many years accepted FRG representation of the full range of international interests of the Western sectors.

With this agreement Berliners traveling to the Soviet Union and elsewhere will be able to call on FRG embassies and consulates for all consular services provided by such establishments. The Soviet Union will accept the right of West Berliners to travel abroad on Federal German passports. It will sign cultural and trade agreements with the Federal Republic which specifically include the Western sectors. The U.S.S.R. will also in the future recognize the right of West Berliners to be part of Federal German delegations and will no longer object to the holding of international meetings and conferences in the Western sectors.

Taken as a whole, these provisions will not only secure the right of West Berliners to travel to all parts of the world with the same rights and protection as residents of the FRG, but will also improve Berlin's ability to take part in the full breadth of international life in the East as it has up to now in the West. This possibility will greatly enhance the city's attractiveness as a center for international exchange and will strengthen its role as a meeting place between East and West.

It was fully agreed by the four powers represented that there would be no change in the legal status of the city; as a result, the Western sectors of Berlin will maintain and further develop their ties with the Federal Republic even though they will continue as in the past not to be a constituent part of the Federal Republic and not to be governed by it. This relationship with the Federal Republic was set forth by the Allies when the Federal Republic was established in 1949. The purpose was not to perpetuate the occupation rights, but to preserve the legal basis on which the freedom and security of the city depended. And the necessity of preserving this legal base continues; it is this legal background which permits the Allies to maintain their guarantee of security for the city.

In exercise of their supreme authority, the Western Powers have over the years permitted establishment of special ties between the Western sectors and the Federal Republic. The quadripartite agreement gives official recognition to these ties from the U.S.S.R. as well as the Western Allies. For the first time, these ties are no longer questioned in any quarter.

In this context, the Western Powers stated voluntarily that, while there would be some changes in the demonstrative presence of the Federal Republic, there would be no modification in the substantive relations which have developed between the Western sectors and the Federal Republic. The three Allied Ambassadors set out their views on the future relationship of the Western sectors to the Federal Republic in a letter

delivered to the Federal Chancellor shortly after signature of the quadripartite agreement.

The agreement and the letter note that there will be a limited reduction of Federal German political activity in the Western sectors. There will be no further meetings of the Bundestag and Bundesrat, which in the former case have not taken place for 7 years and in the latter for 11. The Bundesversammlung also will not meet in the Western sectors, but as was suggested before commencement of our negotiations, if the election of the President were to be rotated among the Laender every 5 years, the next meeting of the Bundesversammlung in Berlin would in any event not take place until the year of 2024. In addition, the Federal President, the Federal Chancellor, and other high officials of the Federal Government will be prohibited from performing acts in the Western sectors which would be tantamount to governing these sectors. This is not a new provision, but a description of the status quo. The activities which have been limited are all manifestations of the so-called demonstrative Federal presence in the city.

Over the years, the Allies allowed the Federal Republic to develop this demonstrative presence as a means of counteracting Soviet claims that there were no legal ties between Berlin and the FRG. Now that these ties have been officially recognized, this demonstrative presence becomes less important. In any case, the Chancellor, the Federal President, and the Cabinet Ministers can continue to visit Berlin. Bundestag committees and Fraktionen will also be able to conduct business here.

The key passage in the letter to the Chancellor is that which reads:

“The phrase in Paragraph 2 of Annex II of the Quadripartite Agreement reads ‘... will not perform in the Western Sectors of Berlin constitutional or official acts which contradict the provisions of Paragraph 1’ shall be interpreted to mean acts in exercise of direct state authority over the Western Sectors of Berlin.”

This provision states clearly that the Federal Republic will be forbidden to exercise direct state authority over the Western sectors. It does not say that organs of the Federal Republic may not function in those sectors. In other words, the Federal employees now living and working in the city, the Federal agencies which have their headquarters here, and the branch offices of Federal Ministries here are all authorized to continue their activities as before, as long as they do not exercise direct state authority over the Western sectors. Since the Federal Government has never been authorized to exercise authority over the Western sectors, this provision provides no change in the present practice. It does, however, secure the important administrative presence of the Federal Republic in this city.

Finally, the agreement also provides a mechanism for seeing that the provisions it contains are actually carried out. We felt it was necessary to provide a consultation mechanism which would make as clear as possible the linkage between the quadripartite agreement and the inner-German implementation arrangements and leave no doubt that it is the four powers who are responsible for seeing that the entire package will be implemented correctly.

I believe that we have been successful in doing so. The consultation clause is contained in the final quadripartite protocol, which will not be signed until the inner-German negotiations have been completed. This will enable us to make sure that the provisions of these arrangements correspond to the principles of the quadripartite agreement and fulfill all of the requirements contained therein. If we are not satisfied with the results of the inner-German negotiations, we will not sign the final protocol.

The protocol states the quadripartite agreement and the inner-German arrangements shall enter into force together, and they together constitute the settlement of the issues examined in the negotiations, and that they shall remain in force together. This makes clear that the results of the two rounds of negotiations form one integral package and the implementation of the inner-German arrangements is equally as important to correct operation of the Berlin agreement as implementation of the quadripartite agreement itself.

This is followed by a consultation clause which gives any one of the four powers the right, in case of

difficulties in application or cases of nonimplementation of either the quadripartite agreement or the inner-German arrangements, to conduct consultations with the other three governments “in order to ensure the observance of the commitments undertaken and to bring the situation into conformity with the Quadripartite Agreement and this Protocol.”

This is a direct statement of the need to solve difficulties in accordance with the provisions of the quadripartite agreement and of four-power responsibility for conducting consultations to insure that commitments in both the quadripartite agreement and the inner-German arrangements are carried out. I believe that with this final quadripartite protocol, the text of which has already been initialed by the four Ambassadors, we have secured a valuable tool in seeing that the Berlin agreement is implemented as correctly as possible.

How should we evaluate these negotiations? I said earlier that the agreement is equitable to all. I believe just as strongly, however, that we on the Western side obtained great satisfaction. Indeed, if we had not, we would not have signed the agreement. The important improvements I have outlined should in the years to come materially improve the lives of the Berliners, strengthen the ties with the Federal Republic which are so essential to the viability of the Western sectors, and greatly contribute to the prosperity and vitality of the city.

Because we sought a normalization of the situation in Berlin, we could not properly exclude the U.S.S.R. from the Western sectors. For this reason, we consented to the establishment of a consulate general which will have a staff limited to 20 Soviet nationals and which will not involve itself in political matters. The establishment of this office in no way alters the status of Berlin. We have made it clear to the Soviets that we will continue our contact with the Embassy of the U.S.S.R. in East Berlin on all political matters and on any question concerning the Allied administration of Berlin. The Soviet consulate will be accredited to the three Allied commandants. There is also nothing unique about one of the Allies having a consulate general in Berlin or, in fact, having one outside of its own sector; in fact, the French consulate general is located in the British sector. The British and the French have had consulates general in Berlin almost from the beginning of the occupation period. We now have a consulate and are giving consideration to raising its status to equate with the other two.

A question certainly arises as to what will be the practical effects of the quadripartite agreement. I should first point out that the agreement we signed on September 3 is only the first phase of a three-phase process. In the next phase, which began on September 6, officials of the Federal Republic of Germany and East Germany will work out the implementing details on the questions of access to Berlin and inner-Berlin arrangements. This stage will be followed by examination of the results by the four governments and the signature of a final quadripartite protocol, if these results are considered satisfactory.

You are all doubtless aware of the difficulties which have arisen over the question of the German translation of the text of the agreement. These difficulties are of some concern to us, since there was a German text agreed to by the two German sides on the morning of September 3. In fact, it was on the basis of the two German sides' arriving at an agreement on the German translation of the text that I agreed to sign later in the day on September 3. My strong feeling is that the agreed text should be adhered to and used as the basis for inner-German negotiations that lie ahead. It is a poor and unpromising beginning to any negotiation to have one side repudiate its given word. I am optimistic that these difficulties will be worked out, however, since the speedy conclusion of a complete Berlin agreement lies in the interests of all sides.

We believe that if the necessary goodwill and flexibility are demonstrated, the inner-German negotiations will be successful and the final quadripartite protocol will be signed — perhaps even before the year is out. The willingness of the Soviet Union to conclude the quadripartite agreement has given rather convincing evidence of the seriousness of Soviet leaders in conducting what we may call the Western policy of the Soviet Union — their policy toward Western Europe and the United States. The existence of this policy of improving relations gives, we feel, some assurance that the agreement will have a constructive, practical effect.

No one can say what the longer range results will be; this will depend on the overall development of East-West relations over the longer term. But I think it is fair to predict that the successful conclusion of the entire Berlin agreement should have a positive effect on other East-West negotiations, including the inner-German talks on the overall relationship between the two German states, the preparation of a conference on European security, and even on the envisaged negotiations on mutual balanced force reductions. There is, I believe, some prospect that the process of piece-by-piece dismantling of the East-West confrontation, begun with President Nixon's call for an era of negotiations and continued with his initiative to start on negotiation on the specific problem of Berlin, will continue to bring specific results in other fields.

In looking to developments after the Berlin agreement, I do want to warn against assuming that this accord provides a final solution to all or even many of the problems of Berlin or of Europe. This is a partial agreement, negotiated with limited aims, to provide, above all, practical improvements for the people of Berlin. We should not proceed from this agreement as if all threat of East-West conflict has been removed. We must continue our vigilance and take all measures necessary to guard our security.

I have heard it suggested that conclusion of this agreement means that the United States can now withdraw its troops from Europe. I can assure you that nothing could be further from the truth. In the uncertain period ahead, there will be many opportunities for concrete steps to reduce tensions in Europe. There will also, however, be much potential for miscalculation and confrontation. A strong defense will be even more necessary in this changing period than it was during the era of hard positions which preceded it.

If I may make a comparison: To reduce our level of troops now would make no more sense than if we had withdrawn the 6th Fleet from the Eastern Mediterranean at the very moment that a ceasefire was reached between Israel and its Arab neighbors last year. With the Berlin agreement, we have taken only one step along the long road to real peace in Europe.

I have expressed to you my satisfaction with the result of the negotiations; I would be remiss, however, if I did not refer to one further and highly important aspect of the negotiations. I would like to state publicly my appreciation to the unseen Western partner in the Berlin negotiations — the Federal Republic. Without spending hours on the subject, I simply could not describe fully for you the magnificent cooperation we on the Allied side received from the Federal Republic of Germany during the course of these negotiations. We were faced with what at times seemed an impossible task of cutting through the decades of conflict which surrounded the problems of Berlin in an effort to work out a really binding agreement.

We, of course, received superb support from our own governments and our personal staffs, but I can say without hesitation that our negotiation could not have been successful without the understanding and cooperation of the Government of the Federal Republic. The leaders of all major parties, including the opposition parties, showed the fullest understanding for the problems we were facing and acted with great responsibility in calculating the effect our actions would have on the German interests in Berlin. Throughout the negotiations we received the fullest support from political leadership in the Federal Republic, and I am gratified to see that it has also accepted the result of our labors.

I should like with equal gratitude to thank Mayor Schuetz and the Berlin Senate for their magnificent and steadfast support throughout every phase of the negotiations. They and the leadership of the Government and major opposition parties in Berlin demonstrated exceptional understanding and cooperation during the long, hard months of our negotiations.

I have this evening spoken extensively about our negotiations and the Berlin agreement; I have given you my views on some of the legal and political consequences which I believe they will have; and I have shared with you my hopes for the future. In doing this, however, I did not want to give the impression that I was in any way forgetting the real object of our efforts — the brave citizens of the city of Berlin. I want to extend to you also my deepest appreciation. It is you who over the decades of uncertainty and crisis have made this city the vibrant, prosperous entity that it is today. It is you who made possible the important steps I have described this evening. For without your support and the clear evidence that Berlin was not going to give in and that the Berliners would never crumble under threats from the East, the hard bargaining we conducted

with the Soviets to achieve this agreement would never have been possible.

Through 18 months of hard negotiations, your interests were foremost among the considerations which guided us. We judged every part of the agreement in light of the possible benefits it could bring to this city and its inhabitants. And I am convinced that the results of our efforts will bring real improvements for the people and economy of the Western sectors of Berlin.

I can also assure you that we will do everything within our power to build from the beginning here in Berlin toward a wider understanding among the two parts of Europe. Our hope is that someday an agreement will be reached not only to tear down the wall dividing this city but also to lead to a general reduction of tensions which will permit people in both parts of Germany — and indeed all parts of Europe — to enjoy the benefits of peace and freedom which have always been cherished so dearly here in Berlin.