

# Today & Tomorrow

By Walter Lippmann

## PREPARING FOR THE SUMMIT

This week in Washington the leading Western Foreign Ministers will be holding the first of three meetings to prepare for the summit in Paris on May 16. The second meeting will take place in Istanbul early in May, and the third in Paris just before the summit meeting itself. Secretary Herter has declared that at these preparatory meetings the Foreign Ministers will be "trying to resolve among ourselves, the Western powers, what issues we feel it is desirable to raise at the conference" in May.

As the series of meetings begin, the controlling fact is that there is no big issue which all the Western powers think it is desirable to raise. There is nothing that all of them, indeed any of them, urgently want to do. At bottom they are united in the feeling that on the crucial question - which turns on the two Germans and the two Berlins - the situation as it is, is good enough, and that the best thing to do would be to leave it alone.

Adenauer and de Gaulle most insistently, Macmillan and Eisenhower acquiescing, believe that the Western position at the summit must be to stand pat on the status quo, and to be prepared to make tactical moves to repulse or to divert any Soviet move to change the status quo.

**IN THEORY**, the Western nations want more than the status quo. In theory, they want the re-unification of the two Germans. In theory, they want the liberation of Eastern Europe. In theory, they want a reduction of armaments. But in fact they have no hope that any of these goals can be reached at a price which they are willing to pay.

In fact, Western Europe is prospering mightily although Germany and Berlin are divided. In fact, Western Europe is not afraid of war although the Red Army is on its frontiers. For the status quo appears to them to be so secure and is in fact so profitable that the problem of the summit meeting is how to go there and how to come away from there without changing anything and without losing face.

**THE** unresolved question about the summit is whether the Soviet Union is so dissatisfied with the status quo that it will run any serious risk in order to change it. Nobody knows. We can only guess.

The worst that Mr. K. has threatened us with is that he will sign a separate peace treaty with the East German state, will leave it to the East Germans to argue it out with us about our access to West Berlin, and will stand ready to support the East Germans if they provoke us into using military force. This threat, which originally had a time limit attached to it, was very considerably softened at the Eisenhower-Khrushchev meeting at Camp David.

The Soviet threat is now indefinite and rather ambiguous. It is not a very terrifying threat because the risk, if the worst came to worst, is fully as great for the Soviet Union as for the United States and its allies. Mr. K. must know by this time that while we cannot stop him from signing a treaty with East Germany, signing that treaty will not change the status quo. Western access to West Berlin cannot be blocked. At most it can be harassed.

**APART** from the special problem of Berlin, there is an underlying agreement with the Soviet Union. This agreement can never be admitted and formalized in a treaty. The agreement is that the status quo with the two Germans is tolerable. It is not the best that either side wants. But it is not the worst that either side fears. This unspoken and unworkable consensus reflects the balance of power which, for the time being at least, is equal enough

**FOREIGN CURRENCY PAY**  
Washington - (AP) - The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted Wednesday to authorize the government to pay American troops abroad in foreign currency. The measure was aimed at halting black market activities in U.S. dollars.

**ELECTED MALAYA KING**  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - (AP) - The 62-year-old Sultan of Selangor was unanimously elected King of Malaya today.

of the situation, it follows that the problem of the summit will be a little like the problem at the Republican convention in July. It is to find something interesting and useful to talk about. "Disarmament" is the obvious subject to talk. For it

is an inexhaustible subject for diplomats who have to talk - because talking helps to keep the peace. It is a subject about which no one expects serious and far-reaching agreement. Dr. Adenauer, for example, who wants to do nothing about the central issue in Europe, wants

to talk about disarmament. For disarmament, like the synthetic dog bones flavored with ham which are now for sale, gives the diplomats something to chew on.

**THIS** is not a cynical view of the summit meeting. If it sounds cynical, that is be-

cause the Western powers want to be united and therefore have to be unanimous; they are going to the summit not to make things better but to prevent them from becoming worse. They are preparing the tactics of a defensive campaign - no retreat but also no advance - and they will be

well-satisfied if the net result is nobody's gain and nobody's loss. The best that can be said of this defensive position is that it can probably be held for some little time to come. The worst that can be said of it is that it cannot be held indefinitely and that it is not a

policy with which to look forward to the future. For there is no slightest reason to think that in a place like West Berlin or in the morbid relationship of the two Germans, time is on the side of the West.  
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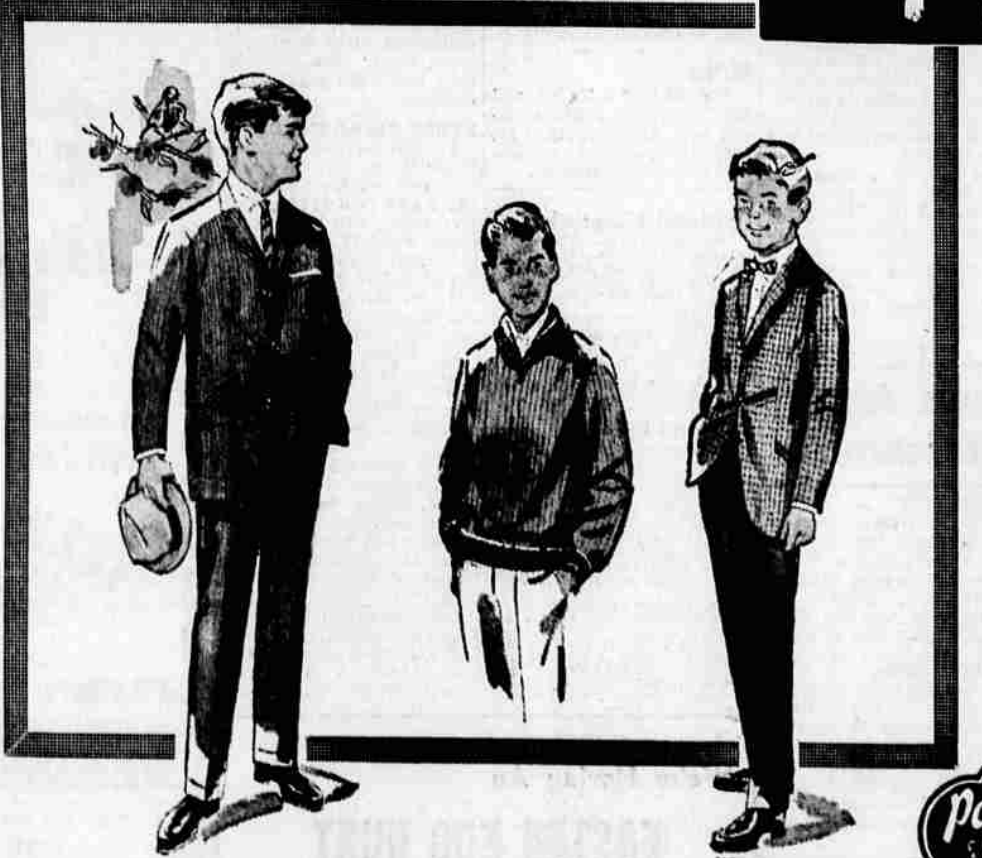
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