From the office of
U.S. Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr. (D-N.C.)
(Telephone: CA. 4-3121, ext. 3154)

FOR RELEASE:
July 27, 1961

SENATOR ERVIN SUPPORTS

THE PRESIDENT'S STAND ON BERLIN

Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., (D-N.C.), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and Chairman of two Armed Services Subcommittees, today in a Senate speech pledged his full support to President Kennedy in meeting the threat to Berlin. The text of Senator Ervin's speech follows:

Tuesday night President Kennedy outlined to the American people the measures which he feels are demanded for the preservation of freedom and the security and honor of the United States.

The President's program requires sacrifices of us all but it is necessary for our national survival. President Kennedy presented a compelling argument for his program of action. I believe that it deserves and will receive the enthusiastic support of the American people, and indeed, of freedom-loving men everywhere who realize the dangers confronting the free world. I, for one, pledge the President my full support as he leads the nation in meeting this grave crisis. I might add that it has been inspirational to me to encounter the confidence which many members of this body, without regard to party affiliation, have expressed concerning the President's proposals. The Senate Armed Services Committee, of which I am a member, has already taken action on the President's program and I am hopeful that it will be considered by the Senate in the immediate future.

Our President spoke for all Americans when he said that we do not want to fight but that we have fought before and I agree with him that the American people, ever alert to the encroachment of tyranny, would be willing to fight again to preserve the individual liberties and the democratic institutions which we hold so dear.

The people of this great land realize that we are no longer an island unto ourselves. We have seen the anguish which beset our nation when, at the end of World War I, rife isolationism caused us to refuse the mantle of world leadership and to reject Woodrow Wilson's wisdom and guidance. Under the direction of Franklin Roosevelt the American people assumed, for the first time, the role of world leader, and resolved never again to be guilty of such folly as engulfed us following World War I. At the end of the second World War President Truman inaugurated a series of programs designed, among other things, to assist the nations of the free world in maintaining their independence from Soviet imperialism. The programs were in a large measure successful and were continued by President Eisenhower. These measures alone, however, are no longer sufficient to combat the position which the Soviets threaten to take in regard to Berlin. Such action as the Russians contemplate would be violative of their commitments to us and our allies. To accept such flaunting of international agreements could lead only to a deterioration of our world position and, as a concommitant, increased communist agitation and effectivemess.

In discussing the crisis before us, President Kennedy emphasized the willingness of our government to settle all international disputes by peaceful means. He indicated that he is willing to submit the Berlin issue to adjudication by the United Nations, but regardless of our willingness to negotiate, the President is correct in feeling that successful negotiation comes only from a position of strength. As he has said earlier, we must never fear to negotiate but by the same token, we must never negotiate from fear.

It would be tragic indeed if the Soviets were led to believe that they could usurp our prerogatives because of our inability to protect ourselves. We should be prepared to negotiate, and we must be prepared, if necessary, to defend the principles for which Americans have always stood.

The President's was a dispassionate speech. There was no saber-rattling. There was no coercion. There were no threats. There was no intimation that our government will depart from its consistent policy that nuclear weapons will be used only as a last resort. Even so, we are constantly aware that the possibility of massive nuclear retaliation is our best deterrent to the communist threat. Although nuclear power is our best defense, our reluctance to employ it requires the increase in conventional forces and the other defense measures outlined by the President.

The financial burden placed upon our people by the increased defense expenditures may be accompanied by other requests for additional sacrifices. I am reminded that the President, in his inaugural address, said that we should ask not what our country can do for us but rather what we can do for our country. By showing the free world that we are willing to bear our share of the burden, we should indicate also that they must bear theirs. The concerted action by the United States and her allies in replying to the Soviet threat over Berlin is, I believe, a portent of our allies' intention to assume their fair shares of this burden.

Premier Khrushchev has told the world that a communist has no right to be a mere onlooker. In a free society we know that this is not the case; we have the right of choice; we can be either onlookers or doers. However, in these precarious times, it seems to me that there is a moral obligation which impels each of us to contribut his utmost in the contest for the survival of free men. The American people have the responsibility and opportunity, heretofore unequalled, for service to their country, and, indeed, to all mankind. I know that they will accept this challenge.

I know that the people of my state of North Carolina stand fast by their heritage and pledge to President Kennedy their undaunted support. We must not falter; we cannot afford indecision; mustering all of our resources, let us proceed with dispatch to perform those duties which may well determine the fate of freedom. The President has charted the nation's course and the American people will not be deterred from it.

#