

[This letter is fictional but authentically represents the ideas of the historical character.]

Berlin. Another nightmare of us versus them. Do we once again stand our ground or is it too much, too fast, and too dangerous? If we do stand, what avenue do we take? The communists have closed down their zone just as we were about to unite the **three western zones** under one government and with one currency. Now...nothing in or out – they are holding **West Berlin** hostage! The decision I must make has incredible implications. Do I hold another **Potsdam** and attempt to solve this by meeting face to face? Do we use our military and rattle the atomic saber (**Hiroshima**)? Is there another avenue that will work to contain communist expansion? Some say I would be unnecessarily risking a war with the Soviet Union and we must allow the Soviets their sphere of influence for their own protection; others that we must fulfill our destiny and lead the world, through constant strength and vigilance, toward economic and political freedom.

Much has changed in the three years I have served as president. When FDR was president, the war in Europe was ending and the Soviets were a much-needed ally. Stalin's support, gained by FDR at **Yalta** , was critical to ending the war in the Far East. Since **FDR's death** many questions have been answered, but many tough decisions still remain. The toughest yet lies before me.

President Roosevelt saw the world, and the Soviets, differently than I do. He negotiated. He had that luxury shared by allies, even if only allies by necessity. Today, as we stand on the critical edge of stabilizing Europe economically and politically through the **Marshall Plan** , negotiations must be more direct. Stalin is smart as hell and, as far as I can see, only respects strength. I have demonstrated again and again such strength as only the leading nation of the world can.

To end the war and save countless lives, we used the most terrible and most useful technology ever developed – the **atomic bomb**. When the war finally drew to a close, Western Europe began its slow journey to recovery and Eastern Europe, having been liberated by the Soviet Red Army, lived with the hope of free elections and a new future that were promised by Stalin at Yalta. Since this time I have faced the strain of almost constant attempts from Stalin to expand communist influence in Eastern Europe. When Great Britain was forced to abandon its support of those holding back a communist rebellion in Greece, Congress quickly joined with me to put our money where our mouth was. Our financial aid to this free government helped **contain the spread** of totalitarian communism. We marched onward in this crusade as my secretary of state, George Marshall, announced an **aid program** to place Europe on its feet economically. Not surprisingly, the Soviets refused to participate in this great endeavor, even though we were

willing to include them in the countries we assisted. Unwilling to embrace a free market economy, they walked out on the meeting!

A recent string of events has sped me to this critical juncture in history. Over the last ten months, the Soviets have revealed their hand. They have driven the last non-Communists from the Hungarian government and supported a communist coup in Czechoslovakia . This was the last democracy in Eastern Europe!

Now Berlin – the decision I must make for the future of the free world, or perhaps the whole world. Can we negotiate or are we obligated by Providential destiny to stand firm once again? What will happen if we commit troops and the Soviets do not back down in Berlin? Are we risking another devastating world war and, if this is the case, is it worth the terrible risk of using atomic weapons? If we step back for even a moment, do we face the greater risk of one free country after another tumbling into the abyss of communist totalitarianism? Do I let them have it for the sake of immediate peace? Negotiate? Use the military to confront them? Are there other options to rescue the people of West Berlin? At the bottom of all this lies the basic and troubling question: Is the U.S. justified in imposing its will in Europe, even if we feel it is for the good of the whole world? What do I do?