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AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY  
IMPLICATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE USES OF FORCE  
TO MAINTAIN ACCESS TO BERLIN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper deals with four alternatives with respect to the use of force at some stage after military access to Berlin has been unacceptably interfered with. It does not discuss the criterion of unacceptability.

A. A Substantial Effort to Reopen Ground Access by Local Action.

1. Force Required: Up to a reinforced division with tactical air support as required, composed of US-UK-French contingents.

2. Method of Employment: The Allied force would remain on the autobahn and not fire unless fired upon. If fired upon, it would deploy and seek to overcome such resistance as feasible without use of nuclear weapons. If faced with insuperable resistance, the Allied force would seek to remain in the Soviet Zone during UN or other emergency consideration of the crisis.

3. Bloc

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3. Bloc Reaction: If passive obstruction failed, the USSR would probably use its own and GDR forces to drive the Allied force from GDR territory.\*

4. Free World Reaction: There would be considerable though varying public disapproval in the non-Communist world generally, stemming primarily from fear of war. NATO public reactions would be mixed and would depend largely on how far the issue at stake appeared to be survival of a free Berlin, rather than the technicality of GDR supervision of access. NATO governments probably would approve, but most neutralists would be opposed. The UN would probably call for a compromise solution.

5. Conclusion: We would probably not be able to reopen and maintain ground access with the forces committed, in the face of the estimated Bloc reaction.\*\*

B. A Substantial Effort to Reopen Air Access.

6. Force Required: A graduated Allied effort, including use of a limited number of combat aircraft.

7. Method of Employment: The Allies would respond to harassing measures by counter-jamming and by restricting air transport operations to visual flight conditions. If  
necessary

\* The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, believes that the Soviets would back down.

\*\* JCS reserve on this conclusion.

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necessary, combat aircraft would be used to shoot down barrage balloons and, if the Bloc took further action, to destroy anti-aircraft positions and/or drive off harassing aircraft.

8. Bloc Reactions: The Bloc would probably continue harassing action but would avoid fighter and anti-aircraft attacks, unless Bloc aircraft were fired upon or unless Western aircraft left the corridor.\* The Bloc would be unlikely to impose a blockade on civil access. If a long-continued garrison airlift developed, the USSR would find itself faced with a continuing handicap to its "peaceful co-existence" policy without concrete gains. It might take more drastic action against the airlift, but would be more likely to seek some peaceful alternative method of ending Berlin tensions.

9. Free World Reaction: If the Soviets had used physical interference or threatened to shoot down Western transport planes, free world opinion would probably approve the Western counter-measures.

10. Conclusion.

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\* The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Army, and the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Special Operations, believe that the USSR would probably respond with the force deemed sufficient to destroy or drive out Western aircraft.

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10. Conclusion: We would be able to re-establish and maintain military air access with the force committed in the face of the probable Bloc reaction, although not without serious risk of air combat.\* This use of force would not have directly removed the issue of military ground access. However, if long continued, such a garrison airlift would be more likely to induce the Bloc to seek some peaceful outcome than to take more drastic action.

C. Naval Reprisals Against Soviet and GDR Shipping.

11. Force Required: Initially a modest commitment of US, UK and French naval forces, but depending upon the nature and scope of Soviet counteraction, a considerable portion of our sea forces could become involved.

12. Method of Employment: Restraints and harassment would be applied to Soviet and GDR shipping, proportionately with restraints and harassment on Allied access to Berlin: delay of passage or denial of passage in such specific locations as the Straits of Gibraltar, Danish Belts, Aegean approaches, and/or Turkish Straits. Force would be used as necessary to overcome resistance or to defend Allied forces.

13. Bloc

\* JCS reserve on this conclusion.

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13. Bloc Reaction: The USSR would probably not desist from restrictions on access to Berlin and indeed would probably retaliate in kind against Western shipping where it could. It would probably use armed escorts for Soviet shipping and even use submarines to harass, detain, and threaten Allied shipping. It would probably not shrink from armed encounters at sea, and would exploit politically whatever opposition developed.

14. Free World Reaction: Much would depend on the nature of the Soviet blockage of access to Berlin. Initially there would probably be less opposition stemming from fear of war than to the other courses of action, but reactions would probably be increasingly unfavorable if and as reprisals mounted the scale toward armed action.

15. Conclusion: Naval reprisals would provide the Three Powers with an added bargaining counter, but would probably not significantly alter the Soviet position on Berlin. They would involve a major risk of retaliation and naval counteraction, as well as of Soviet political exploitation. If a high requirement for naval forces developed, additional forces would have to be mobilized.

D. General

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D. General War Measures.

16. Final Preparations: Although certain preparations for general war would already have been undertaken, additional and final measures would be required in order to achieve full US and Allied politico-military readiness for general war, thus intensifying the threat to the USSR.

17. Method of Employment: If the above measures, which would include alerting the people, the Congress, and Allied governments to the imminence of general war, did not cause an acceptable shift in the Soviet attitude, we would either (1) inform the USSR that if our grievances had not been redressed in 24 hours, we would consider ourselves at war, or (2) proceed immediately to military operations in accordance with NSC 5904/1.

18. Bloc Reaction to the Threat of War: If the full measures postulated were actually carried out and the chief NATO allies appeared in agreement, the Soviet leaders would almost certainly be convinced that general war was imminent and probably would retreat sufficiently to assure re-opening of negotiations. However, the danger of miscalculation would be great. If, moreover, the Soviet leaders had not backed down and were then presented an ultimatum, they would

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would find it very difficult to back down. They might unleash a pre-emptive attack, but it still seems more likely that they would make the minimum concessions deemed necessary to renew negotiations.

19. Free World Reaction to the Threat: There would probably be widespread alarm among the NATO peoples, and profound disapproval in much of the rest of the world. While the NATO countries would probably accept the measures if convinced that defense of the free world were really involved,\* it is not possible to judge whether such reactions would outweigh those of fear and opposition.

20. Conclusion: The full range of measures contemplated--including the explanation of final military preparations to Western publics as reflecting the probable need to go to war at any moment--would probably convince the USSR of the Allied willingness imminently to proceed to general war and thus lead to Soviet concessions. The risks of miscalculations are such, however, that the US should undertake this course only if it is in fact prepared to proceed to general war at any moment.

\* The Acting Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, has a reservation on this estimate of probable NATO acceptance.

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