

Talking Paper for the Chairman, JCS, on a paper under consideration by the NSC Executive Sub-committee - Berlin/NATO

Subject: Berlin in the Light of Cuba

Background - The paper under discussion was prepared by OSD (ISA) for the purpose of exploring a wide variety of courses which may be open to the United States and USSR toward obtaining a peaceful, long-term settlement of the Berlin issue. The subject paper has been discussed and revised by the Sub-committee to the Executive Committee of the NSC and a new draft is being prepared. Ambassador Thompson has suggested that the courses of action discussed be subjected to a realistic appraisal with a view toward elimination of certain approaches, for example, courses leading to destruction of NATO. It is understood that Mr. Nitze may discuss this subject with the President, possibly as early as today.

- The paper indicates that:

a. After a Cuba settlement, a summit meeting may be necessary and desirable within a reasonable period and that Berlin would undoubtedly be an item of discussion.

b. We need a theory of our Berlin interests from which a variety of positions can be developed, depending upon the actual setting which emerges and which is not accurately predictable.

c. It would be useful to have the broad lines of this theory tentatively agreed before Mr. Adenauer's visit of 7 November in order that questions put to him can be pointed to appropriate targets.

Discussion - The substance of the paper (TAB A) indicates that:

a. The people of the United States, as the result of its actions in Cuba, have increased confidence in their leadership. Consequently, the United States can take a firmer line with our Allies and possibly change its approach toward the USSR. In this situation, the US interest is:

(1) At the maximum, for a long-term solution of the Berlin situation (twenty years or more).

(2) At the minimum, for measures in other areas which will hold off serious Berlin discussion or pressures pending a more favorable time for negotiations.

(3) At the middle, for an agreed modus vivendi to reduce friction for some years.

b. The Soviet Union reaction to the Cuban experience, while uncertain, probably combines a new wariness about US response with a compulsion to recover lost prestige. While the possibility exists that the USSR may feel driven to exert strong pressures in the reasonably near future, the USSR may seriously attempt to stabilize the situation, prompted perhaps by the prospect of nuclear confrontation under disadvantageous circumstances and also for economic reasons.

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c. NATO Allies now have greater confidence in the United States as the result of its success through firmness and moderation. On balance, it appears that while US scope for unilateral action may be restricted, we have increased capacity, with consultation, to bring our Allies along with us. To unify Allied interpretations of the Cuban outcome, it is important to present and support US conclusions.

d. Long-term solutions must be examined in the light of the sources of instability and must be designed to cut as deeply as possible into them. The basic source of instability is the division of Germany; others are a divided Berlin, uncertain access to Berlin, unsettled boundaries and the absence of a definitive German peace treaty. A long-term solution will be possible only if the United States and USSR want to eliminate the important German and Berlin instabilities in a manner mutually agreeable. Possible approaches to these are:

(1) All-German Approach. This is presented as the best approach to the over-all problem. Toward achievement of this "we should be prepared to make substantial concession on our side, short only of removing Germany from the Atlantic and European political and economic communities."

(2) All-Berlin Solution. This would possibly involve removal of the wall, renunciation of hopes for a German reunification, settlement of German boundaries and recognition of GDR, after which it would be possible to remove occupation forces and rely on a UN presence. The above Western concessions are recognized as probably being excessive.

(3) Removal of West Berlin. This is conceived as a course wherein a substantial part of GDR territory is transferred to the FRG in return for removal of the West Berlin populace.

(4) Hold Off Serious Berlin Discussion. In this approach the United States refrains from any further initiative on Berlin, assuming the Soviets will also be willing to let the atmosphere cool. This hold-off does no more than postpone a possible Cuba-type crisis over Berlin.

§ e. Modus Vivendi. In addition to making provision for protection of Allied vital interests, as well as giving consideration to Soviet interests, minor adjustments could be made in the following areas:

(1) Joint declarations guaranteeing access, troop presence, the name "Free City" and a separate treaty.

(2) Some form of international access authority.

(3) Local arrangement affecting removal of the wall, guaranteed access, addition of UN forces and a separate treaty.

- Major implications of the paper are:

a. The general tenor of this paper seems to be based upon the assumption that the Cuban crisis has placed the Soviets in an unfavorable position and that they might accede to US and Allied demands to make concessions in the interest of regaining lost prestige. This may or may not prove to be valid since any of the following courses of action (TAB B) with respect to Berlin are open to the Soviets:

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- a. Take a hard line by increasing harassment, sign separate peace treaty, etc.
- b. Maintain the status quo.
- c. Seek negotiations which would lead to a stabilization of the over-all situation.

- A comparison of the Soviet and Allied assets or rights in the Germanies are at TAB C. In as much as the assets of both the Allies and Soviets are diametrically opposed with the exception of access rights it appears that the only negotiable asset lies in the area of access.

- With respect to Possible Approaches (page 6, TAB A) the following comments are pertinent:

a. All German Approach. A concession mentioned for our side would take Germany out of NATO which is unacceptable.

b. Removal of West Berlin (page 7, TAB A). This approach would be improved if it provided that the boundary between East and West Germany be established along the line which separated Soviet and Western Allied forces as of the end of WW II.

- The approach (page 8, TAB A) which deals with holding off discussions on Berlin while attempting to improve the climate in other areas is questionable. If we emerge from the Cuban action in a strong position vis a vis the Soviets we should capitalize on this fact, undertaking to improve our situation in Berlin.

- The suggestion of a Latin American nuclear-free zone is unsound because it degrades our military flexibility in our own back yard while having no comparable effect on the Soviets. The Soviets would undoubtedly welcome negotiations on this point as they would have nothing to lose.

- The Soviets have demonstrated clearly their aggressive intentions in Cuba. If it can be ascertained that the demonstration of our willingness to use force in Cuba has motivated the Soviets to strive for solutions to some of the major problems, then there should be no slack-off in pressure.

- In summary it is considered that should the Soviets demonstrate a serious desire to resolve some of our outstanding differences we should be similarly inclined but at the same time approach the matter with extreme wariness.

Conclusions - It is concluded that:

a. In general, the proposals contained in the subject paper have been considered before in respect to Berlin but prior to the Cuban contingency.

b. The paper seems to assume a desire on the part of the Soviets to negotiate a solution to outstanding problems. This assumption may or may not prove to be valid.

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c. Prior to adoption of any proposal contained in the paper, further development will be necessary to provide a basis for an over-all assessment by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

- Taking into account the foregoing conclusions, the paper is considered satisfactory for discussion purposes.

Recommendations - It is recommended that:

a. Subject paper be considered suitable for preliminary discussion purposes only.

b. Subject paper be developed further prior to presentation to the Executive Committee of the National Security Council or to the President.

Approved by J. H. Stullman Director, J-5

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TAB A - Attachment to CM-81-62; not on file in Joint Secretariat  
TAB B - Attached  
TAB C - Attached

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TAB B

SOVIET COURSES OF ACTION OPEN  
AS A RESULT OF CUBAN CONTINGENCY

1. Take a hard line - increase harassment, sign peace treaty, etc.

REASON: To achieve a victory in the eyes of the world to compensate for their back-down in Cuba.

2. Maintain with respect to Berlin a "status quo" with respect to Allied rights - normal processing on autobahn, BASC normal, failure to generate incidents near wall, etc.

REASON: An appreciation of the tenseness of the world situation and recognition that a confrontation in Berlin involves US as well as Soviet vital political and military interests to a far greater degree than in Cuba where US vital political and military interests were engaged while the Soviet vital interests were not committed.

3. Prepare to negotiate in the hopes of obtaining a situation in Berlin which would stabilize the situation.

REASON: Soviets underestimated US and Allied firmness and solidarity as well as realistically accepting and acknowledging the existing imbalance in strategic forces and/or internal Sino-Soviet Bloc difficulties which necessitates the Soviets obtaining a degree of stability in Berlin thus permitting their energies to be devoted elsewhere.

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ALLIED AND SOVIET ASSETS OR RIGHTS IN THE GERMANIES WHICH CAN BE CONSIDERED IN NEGOTIATIONS

Allied

1. Allied rights with respect to Berlin (access and presence).
2. Military forces in West Germany.
3. Political orientation of West German Government.

Soviets

1. Capability to deny Allied/West German access to Berlin.
2. Military forces in East Germany.
3. Political control of East Germany (including East Berlin).

Discussion

Allied: Item 2 if surrendered probably would result in destruction of NATO. Such withdrawal without corresponding withdrawal by Soviets would be interpreted as a sign of weakness. Item 3 would not be considered negotiable since this action would, without doubt, be unacceptable to the West German population. The access portion of Item 1 could be considered negotiable provided arrangements could be made which would assure free and unhindered access to the Allies and West Germans. This must include: autobahns, air, rail and barge.

Soviet: Items 2 and 3 if surrendered by Soviets result in ultimate loss of East Germany to the Soviet Bloc. Any evident weakening of these controls jeopardize Soviet position. Item 1 would appear to be negotiable provided any settlement could be made to appear as though it was a Soviet/GDR political victory.

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