CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

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PART III
PATTERN AND PERSPECTIVE

THE PROBLEM OF WESTERN ACCESS TO BERLIN

The Soviet Union has exploited the absence of a clear-cut agreement on access to Berlin to establish mechanisms which enable it to block all forms of surface transportation to the city. East Germany has gone to play a considerable role in the regulation of surface traffic, particularly West German civilian traffic. The Communists could readily block all surface routes by destroying bridges, overpasses, and canal locks. An airlift could supply Allied garrisons, even if Communist electronic measures against air navigational systems made all but visual flights impossible, but the West Berlin civilian population could not be sustained by such a limited airlift.
PART III
PATTERNS AND PERSPECTIVES

THE PROBLEM OF WESTERN ACCESS TO BERLIN

The Western powers' rights of access to Berlin derive from their participation in the defeat of Germany in World War II and the agreements reached with the USSR concerning the postwar occupation. These are embodied in a number of documents including the London Agreement of September 1944 and an exchange of letters between President Truman and Stalin, and a verbal agreement between General Clay, Marshal Zhukov, and a British representative. The memorandum of conversation resulting from this meeting was never authenticated, however. The agreement has, in practice, been interpreted to mean that the Allies would submit to Soviet traffic regulations and document checks but not to inspection of vehicles or cargo. Zhukov stated at the

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meeting that he did not deny the right of Allied causes, but that the Soviet Union would not "give a corridor." The agreement is vague enough to be open to honest differences of opinion by both sides and has given the U.S.R. manifold opportunities to harass traffic.

All Allied road traffic must travel via the Holstein-Berlin autobahn. There are three other routes open to non-Allied nationals, but 90 percent of all road traffic goes via Holstein. Some 87 percent of Berlin's imports and 87 percent of its exports by tonnage go by road. Of military interest is the fact that the 10-mile stretch in East Germany includes 49 bridges (the Elbe bridge is over 1,200 yards long, including 160 yards over water) and 21 overpasses. There are Allied, East German, Soviet, and East German barriers or checkpoints at each end.

After passing the Western checkpoints, Allied vehicles come to a halt behind a barrier manned by the East German which normally is raised automatically. Then comes the Soviet checkpoint, where the movement of identity cards is countersigned by Allied military authorities—as stamped, but the delay is generally longer than would seem necessary. The Allied vehicle driver or convey commander is given a small white form when he leaves the Soviet checkpoint. This is surrendered at another East German barrier—some 75 yards farther inside East Germany—which normally is raised without question.

The form appears to be no more than permission from the Russians to the East Germans to permit the vehicle to proceed. This procedure for passing through an East German manned barrier gives the East Germans a foot in the door toward full control of access. Thus Allied vehicles leave East Germany going east or west, the East Germans merely raise the barriers and no white form is involved. The Russians, however, check the travel documents at their checkpoints.

All Allied rail traffic and all rail freight goes via the Marienborn-Berlin rail line, which roughly parallels the Holstein autobahn. There are five other internationa,l rail lines in use. Some 82 percent of East Berlin's imports and 81 percent of its exports, by tonnage, as well as 86 percent of Allied freight to the Berlin garnisons, are handled by rail. Allied trains while in East Germany are hauled by East German locomotives with East German crews.

The Allies operate 26 regularly scheduled trains per week, with the arrangements being made between East and East German railway officials. There are a considerable number of similar low-level trade and commercial agreements between the two railroad systems. There is only one checkpoint on the rail line, four miles from the main border at Marienborn. Allied trains have no contact with East German officials; processing is handled by the Russians.

**Air Access**

The question of air access is the only one governed by a properly authenticated document. This was approved by the Allied Control Council in 1945 and updated in 1948. There are a number of points, however, which are not entirely clear as to whether the Allies have exclusive or priority rights to the three air corridors. Thus far the Russians have, in general, appeared to recognize that the Allies have exclusive rights, since they have seldom used the corridors themselves.

The most pressing question is that of uranium and uranium

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altitudes. A maximum altitude of 10,000 feet was mentioned in a draft of the 1948 agreement, but did not appear in the final document. There is a 10,000-foot altitude limit within 30 miles of Berlin.

The air space around Berlin, known as the Berlin Control Zone, is administered by one of the two remaining quadrilateral bodies: the Berlin Air Safety Center (BASC). The group administering airspace exists in the other such body, the BAGC, located in West Berlin, covering traffic in and out of the three airfields in West Berlin and one airfield just outside West Berlin but within the Berlin Control Zone. This does not mean, however, that the Soviet Union normally submits its flight plans to the BAGC, as the Allies do; the USSR schedules its flights so as not to conflict with Allied flights.

In addition to military traffic, three civil air lines from the three Allies regularly operate to and from West Berlin. None of the navigational aids, such as beacons or radars, servicing the three corridors are in East Germany.

Air travel to Berlin is the only mode of travel which is not subject to Communist control. This freedom made possible the Berlin airlift.

The Allied paratroops could be supplied almost indefinitely by airlift if a surface blockade were enforced—just as if the Communists jammed Allied air navigational aids, making all but visual flights impossible. An airlift could not, however, sustain the West Berlin civil population if surface access were denied.

**Canal Traffic**

Barge traffic via the extensive canal and river system is of considerable importance to West Berlin, although not to the Allies. Some 8,500 West German barges are licensed for interfluvial movement, and last year they carried some 86 percent of all freight in and out of West Berlin. All canals and locks in East Germany are controlled by the East Germans. As in the case of rail traffic, arrangements for barge traffic are made at a technical level between West and East German authorities. The canals were closed during the Berlin blockade, and since then the East Germans have from time to time harassed traffic by closing the locks "for repairs."