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27 October 1961

CURRENT
INTELLIGENCE
WEEKLY
SUMMARY



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

BERLIN

Since 15 October, the Ulbricht regime has made a systematic effort to force US officials to acknowledge the right of East German guards at the Friedrichstrasse checkpoint in East Berlin to exercise control over US-licensed vehicles driven by civilians. At the outset, Soviet authorities appear to have made an attempt to dissociate themselves from the East German actions; on 25 October, however, the USSR indicated that it was firmly backing the East German claims.

US officials maintain that US official license plates are in themselves sufficient identification as far as the East Germans are concerned. In accordance with long-established practice and US rights under the occupation agreements, the US takes the position that only Soviet officials may control movements of US personnel, whether uniformed or not. In contrast to the Americans and the French, the British have been in the habit for several years of flashing identification documents when requested, but they have never actually handed them over to the East German guards.

Sector Border Incidents

The first serious incidents occurred on 15 October, when East German guards on four occasions refused to pass US-licensed vehicles operated by civilians. In one case, they subsequently permitted one vehicle to pass the checkpoint after a uniformed driver took the wheel.

On 17 October, US political Adviser Howard Trivers called upon the Soviet political ad-

viser, Lt. Col. Lazarev, to protest the incidents and outline the US case. Lazarev, unusually courteous, said Soviet authorities lacked adequate descriptions of US official license plates. He thought everything would be all right if US authorities would supply complete sets of descriptions and photographs of plates currently in use by US personnel. He said he would undertake to see that facsimiles were provided to East German authorities at the Friedrichstrasse checkpoint as well as to Soviet officials at the Marienborn checkpoint on the Autobahn.

In the light of Lazarev's implicit recognition of Western rights of free circulation in Berlin, Trivers after the meeting immediately forwarded the necessary information on US license plates.

Despite Lazarev's assurances to Trivers, further incidents occurred in which East German sector border guards refused to permit US civilians to pass through the Friedrichstrasse checkpoint without showing identification.

On 22 October, the East Germans demanded identification from E. Allen Lightner, assistant chief of the US Mission in Berlin. After long delays and failure by the East German guards to summon a Soviet officer, as requested by Lightner, the American commandant in Berlin dispatched an armed escort of US military police to escort Lightner into East Berlin. Lightner and his escort twice went into the Soviet sector and withdrew.

Soon afterward, Lazarev arrived at the Friedrichstrasse

~~SECRET~~

27 Oct 61

WEEKLY REVIEW

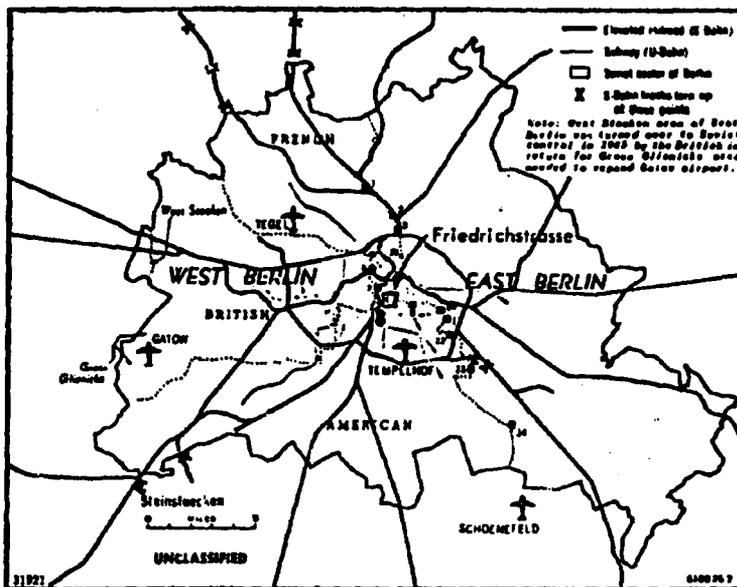
Page 11 of 29

27 Oct 61

GENERAL ARTICLES

Page 1 of 16

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



AUTHORIZED BORDER CROSSING POINTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS
AND OCCUPATION FORCES ONLY | ORIGINAL CROSSING POINTS
OF 13 AUGUST NOW CLOSED |
| 8. Friedrichstrasse | 1. Kopenhagenerstrasse |
| WEST GERMANS ONLY | 2. Wallenstrasse |
| 3. Bornheimerstrasse | 4. Brunnenstrasse |
| 9. Heinrich Heine Strasse | 7. Brandenburger Tor (Gate) |
| WEST BERLINERS ONLY | 11. Puschkin Allee |
| 5. Chausseestrasse | 12. Eisenstrasse |
| 6. Invalidenstrasse | 14. Rudowerstrasse |
| 10. Oberbaumbruecke | |
| 13. Sonnen Allee | |

Authorized East Germans and East Berliners presumably can cross at any Border Points still open.

checkpoint and conferred with the US provost marshal. Lazarev admitted that the East Germans had made a mistake and that it would be corrected. Lightner then drove his car across the sector border and returned, without escort or hindrance.

The following day the East German news agency carried an announcement of the Interior Ministry attacking US authorities for the incident of the preceding day. It stated that the regime's police are under instructions to permit foreigners

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

to pass only after showing their passports and claimed that "persons in civilian clothes" were trying to evade these regulations without "proving" membership in the Western occupation forces.

On 24 October, East German guards on two occasions turned back US-licensed vehicles driven by officials in civilian clothes. On the second occasion, the US provost marshal drove to the scene but was unable to induce East German police to let the automobile pass. The following day the East Germans again halted a US vehicle. When the US provost marshal demanded a Soviet officer be summoned immediately, the East German guard declared that the regime does not recognize US license plates.

Trivers then telephoned Soviet headquarters to demand a Soviet officer. A new Soviet political adviser, Col. Alekseyev, arrived, accompanied by Lazarev. Alekseyev took a belligerent tone with US officials from the outset. He told the US provost marshal that the East German government had made a decision not to recognize license plates of US forces and repeated this assertion to Trivers. Lazarev, moreover, denied he had given Trivers assurance on 17 October of no further difficulties. When the US provost marshal warned that an armed escort would be sent to shepherd the

American vehicle into Berlin, Alekseyev declared: "No, you won't!" Nevertheless, US military police escorted the car into East Berlin and back without interference.

Major General Watson, American commander in Berlin, saw Soviet commandant Solovyev that afternoon to protest the series of incidents. Solovyev strongly backed East Germany's claim to the right to exercise controls at the sector border and maintained that Soviet authorities cannot influence or interfere with East German actions there. He rejected General Watson's contention that the license plate was adequate identification and demanded that civilians henceforth show their identification documents.

While Watson was conferring with Solovyev, the East Germans halted two US Army sightseeing buses and demanded that the civilian occupants identify themselves. Although the East Germans heretofore have asked for identification from such clearly marked vehicles, they have not actually denied entry.

On 26 October, the East Germans again attempted to deny entry into East Berlin to a US-licensed vehicle, and again military police escorted the car from the Soviet sector.

~~SECRET~~

27 Oct 61

WEEKLY REVIEW

Page 13 of 29

27 Oct 61

SPECIAL ARTICLES

Page 1 of 16

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

Bloc Comment on Berlin

In contrast to the belligerent behavior of the Communists at the Berlin sector border, Soviet and bloc leaders have continued to follow Khrushchev's lead in avoiding extensive polemical treatment of Berlin and Germany pending further exploratory talks with the US in Moscow. In his speech to the party congress on 25 October, Foreign Minister Gromyko stressed that the Soviet Union would spare no efforts to "find a common language with the Western powers on the question of a German peace treaty." At the same time he warned that the bloc would conclude a peace treaty with East Germany if it proved impossible to reach agreement with the Western powers. His statements on Soviet policy also reflected the more moderate line toward the West which marked Khrushchev's initial address on 17 October.

Gromyko emphasized that Soviet foreign policy had been successful because of its "flexibility and desire to take into consideration the interests of partners in talks." He also claimed that the meeting between President Kennedy and Khrushchev in Vienna was "one of the most outstanding events of our time," and went to some lengths to point up "the great importance" the Soviet Government attached to the state of its relations with the US.

Both First Deputy Premier Mikoyan and East German party leader Ulbricht stressed the

urgency of a peace settlement with Germany but without mentioning a deadline. Like Khrushchev, Mikoyan and Ulbricht claimed that there had been some shifts in the position of the West, and Mikoyan attributed this to Khrushchev's efforts. Ulbricht stated that "it is a very good thing" that talks had begun between the US and USSR. He warned, however, that Paris and Bonn aimed at postponing negotiations in order to gain time for equipping West Germany with atomic weapons.

In line with the general de-emphasis of Berlin at the Soviet party congress, the Polish and Czech party leaders, Gomulka and Novotny, in their speeches mentioned these issues in a brief pro forma manner.

A Soviet official in Paris who returned from Moscow on 20 October told an American representative that the question of access to Berlin could easily be solved by a four-power agreement guaranteeing free access. He stressed that this was of minor importance to the "main interest" of the USSR in obtaining a peace treaty with both Germans, which would confirm the Oder-Neisse line and recognize the existing border between East and West Germany. While he noted the importance of an early four-power foreign ministers' conference, the Soviet spokesman also stated that the conference could not be called to deal only with Berlin but should have as its main purpose the preparation of a German peace conference.

~~SECRET~~

27 Oct 61

WEEKLY REVIEW

Page 14 of 29

27 Oct 61

SPECIAL ARTICLES

Page 1 of 16