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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
24 November 1956

TO : Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Soviet Interference with Berlin Rail Access



The Soviet commander at the East German check point at Marienborn has informed the British that Soviet authorities intend to start exercising their "right" to board Allied trains running between Berlin and West Germany on the night of 25-26 November. Another threat to start boarding trains on the night of 23-24 November apparently was not carried out.

Colonel Kotsiuba, the Soviet acting commandant in Berlin, asserted on 22 November it would be necessary for Soviet authorities to board trains in order to inspect passengers' documentation. He also asserted the Soviet right to pass judgment on whether specific individuals should be authorized to travel under orders issued by Allied authorities. These are the two major points of Soviet-Allied disagreement.

Allied officials in Bonn decided on 24 November to send a further protest to Colonel Kotsiuba, stating that Allied train commanders would not permit Soviet authorities to board the trains. On 22 November the Allied ambassadors agreed that trains should turn back rather than permit Soviet authorities to board them or take off passengers.

Soviet authorities appear to be testing Allied reaction to pressure, and may impose further restrictions on surface travel if successful at this. They claim that persons have been traveling on military trains, and under military orders on the autobahn, who are unauthorized because they are not directly connected with the military garrison in Berlin, while the Allies claim the sole authority to decide who has such travel rights.

If the Soviet authorities do not yield and the Allies are forced to send trains back to prevent their being boarded, the Allies might find themselves maneuvered into becoming the victims of a self-imposed partial blockade of Berlin.

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By ARK NLE DATE 9/30/76

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