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PART III

PATTERNS AND PERSPECTIVES

KHRUSHCHEV'S STRATEGY ON BERLIN

Since the breakdown of the summit conference, Communist tactics on the Berlin issue have been gradually brought into line with the more aggressive posture toward the West adopted by Khrushchev. Following an initial period of reassuring gestures by Moscow, the bloc has mounted an extensive psychological warfare operation apparently designed to focus public attention on the dangerous aspects of the Berlin situation and to dispel any notion in the West that Moscow has retreated from its basic demands on the Berlin and German treaty questions.

The dominant element in this campaign remains the threat to conclude a separate peace treaty with East Germany, followed by East German assumption of access controls to Berlin. Public warnings to this effect by Khrushchev, although still imprecise as to manner and timing, have been buttressed by threats voiced in private to Western officials and by an intensified effort to create a state of anxiety and uncertainty in West Berlin, weaken its ties with Bonn, and generate dissension among the Western allies.

Early Post-Summit Tactics

The violence of Khrushchev's performance in Paris, his off-hand comments to the press there about a separate peace treaty with East Germany, and the announcement of a stopover in Berlin caused widespread speculation that he would follow through on his frequent pre-summit threats to take unilateral action and force a showdown on Berlin. Almost immediately, however, Foreign Minister Gromyko attempted in private to allay Western apprehensions. He informed British

Foreign Secretary Lloyd that the USSR would do nothing to worsen the situation during the six to eight months envisaged by Khrushchev before a new summit. In the atmosphere of heightened tensions, Khrushchev also probably felt compelled to spell out his position as soon as possible.

To the visible displeasure and astonishment of most of his audience at East Berlin, Khrushchev in his speech there on 20 May counseled patience and forbearance on a separate treaty. Asserting the bloc's "moral right" to proceed without delay, he nevertheless held out hope



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for a new summit meeting and stated, "In these conditions it makes sense to wait a little and to try, by joint efforts of all the victorious powers, to find a solution to the questions." More categorically, Khrushchev declared that the existing situation would have to be maintained until a new meeting, "which, it should be assumed, will take place in six to eight months."

As a condition to this pledge, however, the Soviet leader added that the Western powers would have to adhere to the same principles and take no unilateral steps which would prevent a meeting of the heads

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of government. He also warned that neither the USSR nor East Germany would wait forever on a peace treaty.

The East German leaders, who apparently had concluded that the Paris debacle signaled a sharp and immediate shift of position on Berlin and Germany, privately pressed Khrushchev for prompt action. Party boss Ulbricht is reported to have argued privately that another summit was unlikely unless Moscow gave the West ironclad guarantees against a repetition of the Paris events and that maintenance of the status quo in the meantime was senseless. Khrushchev reportedly refused to commit the USSR to any timetable on Berlin, but the two leaders apparently did agree that, after a period of reappraisal, Moscow would take up the issue through diplomatic channels.

In the foreign policy review which undoubtedly took place in the Kremlin, the Soviet leaders probably realized that agreement to maintain the status quo for six to eight months could deprive Soviet policy of a means of pressure to ensure continuing Western interest in negotiating a Berlin settlement. They may also have been concerned over increasing Western speculation that Khrushchev's torpedoing of the summit was designed to cover a retreat on Berlin.

To counter any such impression, Khrushchev used a press conference on 3 June to warn that the Western powers should not delude themselves into believing that if they delayed a summit meeting, a solution



of the Berlin and German questions would be "indefinitely postponed." He stated that at the end of the six- to eight-month period, "we shall meet, discuss, and sign a treaty" giving the East Germans full control over access to Berlin. In effect, Khrushchev attempted to put a new US administration on notice that it must be amenable to negotiations on Berlin or face a new and dangerous crisis.

The New Phase

As the more militant campaign against the United States gained momentum, Communist tactics on the Berlin question were considerably sharpened. The East Germans have used a wide variety of means to create a state of anxiety and uncertainty. The principal targets for harassment have been the Allied Military Liaison Missions in East Germany, whose personnel have been physically assaulted, closely watched,

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restricted in their travel, and subjected to insulting and irritating incidents. The East Germans have also pointed up the vulnerability of West German access to Berlin by detaining West German trucks and warning against "misuse" of the roads and air corridors.

The new moves have been undertaken against a background of East German claims to sovereignty over West Berlin and repeated assertions that the Allies have forfeited all rights through violation of the Potsdam agreements.

The bloc has also initiated a series of moves on the diplomatic level. Both the Soviet and East German regimes have dispatched notes protesting against alleged recruitment in Berlin of personnel for the West German armed forces and against West German plans to establish a radio station in West Berlin. Warsaw has challenged the NATO powers to explain any commitments given Adenauer on recovering territories beyond the Oder-Neisse line, and the Czechs have generally echoed East German statements and protests.

The East German leaders have reportedly made plans for a wide variety of actions ranging from mass disturbances to an outright coup if the Kremlin decides to force a showdown. In an apparent effort to capitalize on the physical vulnerability of the city, East German officials have planted reports that drastic measures will be undertaken and have publicly speculated that some move will be made "when the lilac and chestnut trees bloom."

During the meeting of bloc leaders in late June at Bucharest, Ulbricht is reported to have pressed Khrushchev for a commitment to definite action against Berlin. Vague hints


of future action are probably designed to recoup the prestige which the East German leaders have lost and to distract attention from serious internal problems. They may also be trying to bolster the sagging morale of the rank-and-file Communists who had expected more action from Khrushchev after the summit.

Bundestag Meeting in Berlin

The most serious threat of action in the immediate future came from Khrushchev during his visit to Austria. In reply to a planted question in his final press conference on 8 July, Khrushchev warned that if Bonn held its annual session of the Bundestag in Berlin this fall, "perhaps at the same time a peace treaty will be signed with East Germany, and thus all Bundestag deputies will have to obtain visas from (East German Premier) Grotewohl to be able to leave Berlin for Bonn."

Khrushchev had made a similar threat privately to Austrian officials, and he backed it up with an expression of disbelief that the Western powers would fight to save Berlin for Adenauer. He also informed the Austrians that when a separate treaty was signed, the East Germans would begin a step-by-step harassment in such a way that no single move would seem worth a war.

Khrushchev probably seized on this issue to test the unity and firmness of Western reaction.


Khrushchev probably anticipated that the issue would again prove divisive and provide Moscow with some indication of Allied policy in the event of a showdown on a separate treaty. As in the past,

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however, Khrushchev has been careful to avoid committing himself irrevocably in the event the meeting is held. This issue could be used as a pretext for unilateral action, however, should Moscow decide to seek a showdown rather than await new negotiations.

Widespread Western speculation that the bloc was moving toward some overt action concerning Berlin was probably responsible for Khrushchev's reaffirmation--

---of his qualified commitment to maintain the status quo pending a new attempt to negotiate at the summit.

Khrushchev appears to have gone out of his way to restate his position, including another warning that if the West refused to meet or prevented agreement, the USSR would "embark on the conclusion of a peace treaty" with East Germany.

Should Khrushchev decide that his political and diplomatic campaign is failing to generate sufficient pressure on the West, he could instruct the East Germans to provoke further incidents and serious disturbances to underline his claim that the West Berlin situation could "give rise to dangerous accidents." The East German regime can call on some 6,000 Communists already living in the Western sectors and can rapidly infiltrate, if need be, 12,000 to 16,000 members of the specially trained workers' militia (Kampfgruppen). Last October 1,000 to 5,000 Kampfgruppen members were brought over during the riots over the display of the new East German flag on the Berlin elevated railway, which is controlled by the East Germans.

Outlook

In the current phase of Moscow's policy, Berlin remains the test case of whether the Soviet leaders intend to pass from bullying behavior to actions involving grave risks. Khrushchev's handling of the issue thus far suggests that he continues to realize the danger of resorting to unilateral action to advance his objectives, and that he is in no hurry to implement his threats. Since the opening of the Berlin crisis in November 1958, the Kremlin has consistently employed the threat of a transfer of Berlin access controls as a pressure tactic to force negotiations and extract concessions. Since the lapse of the initial six-month ultimatum, Khrushchev has been careful to avoid committing the USSR to a specific time for a separate treaty.

Khrushchev's long and close personal identification with the issue, however, is a compelling reason for him to crown his two-year campaign on Berlin with some significant advance which would justify his past policies and demonstrate their continuing validity. The achievement of some gain by means of negotiation, preferably at the summit, probably has taken on a new significance for him in the face of continuing Chinese Communist criticism of both his methods and his strategy in dealing with the West.

Post-summit statements by Khrushchev and other Communist leaders suggest that the Kremlin may feel that insufficient effort was devoted to propaganda and agitation to build up pressure prior to the Paris meeting. That the Kremlin does not intend to make a similar error was recently evident in Pravda's republication of Italian Communist leader Togliatti's remarks:

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"While it appeared before that the leaders of all the Western powers, with the exception of Adenauer's Germany, realized the need for a summit conference, it now suddenly became impossible. Consequently a new struggle is required for creating conditions for convening a summit conference and its effective work. New public pressure upon the governments of main capitalist countries is essential...."

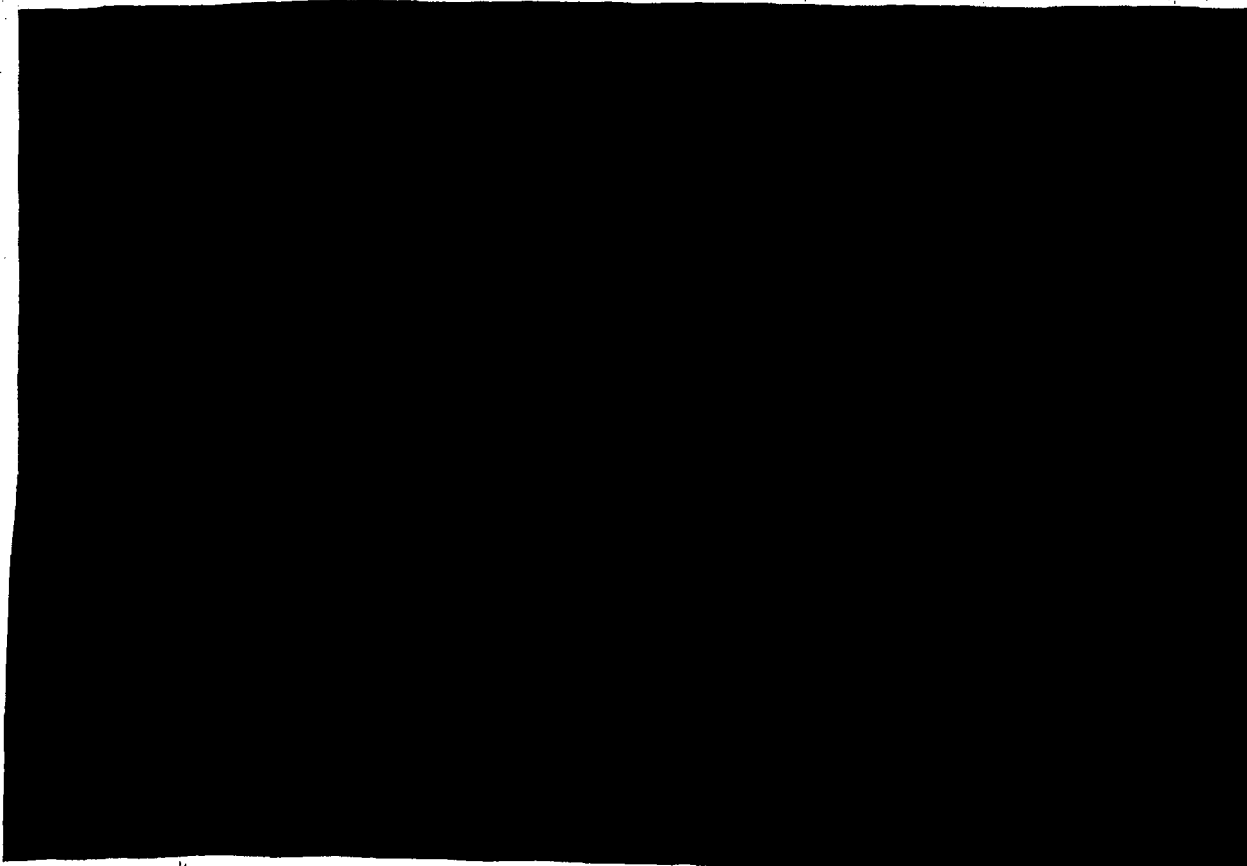
With negotiations temporarily in abeyance, Communist tactics will probably continue to reflect Togliatti's call for struggle and pressure.

Despite Khrushchev's apparent intention to hold open the possibility for new negotiations,

a long and bitter anti-Western campaign will have the effect of erecting barriers against an attempt to work back toward the conference table. Khrushchev may well overestimate the ease and speed with which he can shift gears. While Moscow probably continues to prefer a further round of negotiations as a necessary prelude to a separate treaty, the day of decision cannot be postponed indefinitely without a substantial loss of prestige for Khrushchev in the eyes of his bloc and Chinese colleagues.

In anticipation of renewed diplomatic pressure to force negotiations in the spring of 1961, the campaign of harassments, probing actions, and political warfare can be expected to intensify. [REDACTED]

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