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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC No. 01656-85  
27 March 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: George Kolt  
National Intelligence Officer for Europe

Fritz Ermarth  
National Intelligence Officer for USSR

SUBJECT: US Strategy on Berlin Air Corridors and USMLM

1. In the USMLM incident we are talking tough, asking for a full investigation and Soviet apology, are prepared (along with the British and the French) to confine to Soviet missions in West Germany to their compounds for a few days, but have not formulated a strategy designed to produce meaningful Soviet actions.

2. The shooting of the USMLM officer also comes at a time when the USG, after over a year of relative passivity, is finally getting ready to tell the Soviets at the Dobrynin and possibly Gromyko level that it will no longer tolerate the unilateral Soviet imposition of reservations in the air corridors and will stage demonstration flights through these reservations to prove its point.

3. It is very possible that the Soviets will interpret this new US determination on the air corridor issue to be an outgrowth of the USMLM incident. In our view we should encourage this Soviet perception and try to take advantage of it to improve both the air corridor and the MLM situations. Specifically:



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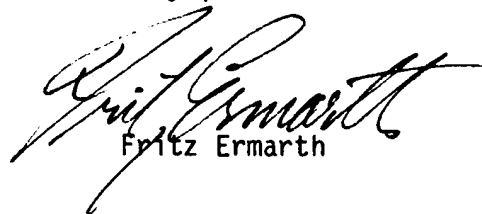
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- When SECSTATE sees Dobrynin he should tell him that Soviet actions are undermining the quadrapartite arrangements in and around Berlin. He should detail the year long Soviet unresponsiveness to our air corridor concerns. We want the unilateral imposition of reservations to stop and a mutually acceptable solution worked out. He should then point out that Soviet actions are also endangering the continued existence of the Missions (for instance, the imposition in spring 1984 of expanded and extremely bothersome PRAs, the intentional ramming by an East German truck of a French Mission car that resulted in the death of a French NCO, the Glienicke Bridge affair, and now the unacceptable use of firearms by a Soviet soldier). He should conclude by saying that unless the Soviets change their behavior, we will be forced to conclude that they are intent on unilaterally changing the four-power arrangements and we will be forced to take appropriate action. He can add that CINCUSAREUR will be approaching his Soviet counterpart on the MLM issue.
  
- Simultaneously, CINCUSAREUR should be instructed to seek a meeting with his Soviet counterpart CINCSFG and tell him that, for their own protection, the Soviet Mission in Frankfurt (and hopefully in the French and British zones as well) is confined to its quarters. Until the Soviets take satisfactory steps to ensure that the Missions can continue to operate safely within the terms of the agreements setting them up. Specifically we want to talk about strict instructions to all security personnel about the treatment of Missions and about a mutual build-down of the permanent restricted areas that, as now designed, greatly impede and even endanger the travel of the Missions by forcing upon them lengthy detours, some on very poor minor roads. If we cannot get a CINC-to-CINC meeting, we should request a meeting at the next-lower military level.

4. There is no guarantee of success in this approach, and indeed we are not likely to get all we want. But we should try to extract the maximum advantage of the defensive position into which the Soviets have been forced by the action of one of their soldiers. To have any chance of success, this strategy must be implemented without delay ( Rick Burt is seeing Soviet DCM Sokolov this afternoon and SECSTATE will probably see Dobrynin Saturday.)

  
Fritz Ermarth

  
George Kolt

NIC No. 01656-85  
27 March 1985

MEMO FOR: DCI

FROM: NIO/EUROPE  
NIO/USSR

SUBJECT: US Strategy on Berlin Air Corridors and USMLM

Distribution:

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**ROUTING SLIP**

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8	DDS&T				
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22	D/SOVA/DI		X		
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Date

Remarks

Executive Secretary  
26 Mar 85

Date

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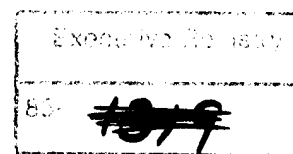
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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505



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26 March 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Jeffrey Gallup  
Office of Central European Affairs  
Bureau of European Affairs  
Department of State

SUBJECT: CIA's Comments on Draft State Memorandum  
for Mr. McFarlane on Berlin Air Corridor Planning

1. As stated in the DDI typescript of 20 March 1985, subject Soviets Take Tougher Line on Berlin Air Corridors, we believe that "the Soviets probably will not move to break the deadlock on the (corridor) issue unless faced with stronger Allied pressure." We, therefore, agree with the basic intelligence judgment of State's draft memorandum, namely that "further firm pressure on the Soviets" will be required to obtain "greater (Soviet) cooperation and consideration of Allied rights and requirements."

2. We would wish to add, however, that the recent shooting of a USMLM officer in East Germany should be taken into account when deciding on a precise US course of action. Although the shooting and the air corridor issues are not directly related, we believe that the Soviets may well perceive any firm US action in the air corridors now -- after over one year of general passivity -- has been precipitated by a US/Western desire to get tough in the wake of the shooting. In undertaking the firmer course on the air corridors posited in the State draft memorandum, we should take this possible Soviet perception into account -- either to disabuse them of it or to encourage it for our own ends.



Executive Secretary

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MESSAGE NO 000954 CLASSIFICATION SECRET No. Pages 2

FROM: Jeffrey Gallup EUR/CE 632-2310 4228  
(Officer name) (Office symbol) (Extension) (Room number)

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION Draft Platt-McFarlane for Clearance

TO: (Agency)	DELIVER TO:	Extension	Room No.
CIA	George Eolt		7E 62 25X1
OSD/ISP	Randy Bell	697-7203	1D 469 Pent.
JC: /JS	Col. Wade Williams	697-9427	2D 956 Pent.
USAF/XOORF	Col. Palmer	697-0163	PF 988 Pent.
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FOR: CLEARANCE ☒ INFORMATION ☐ PER REQUEST ☐ COMMENT ☐

REMARKS: Please provide appropriate policy-level clearance today,

March 25.

S/S Officer: CC Johnson

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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC No. 01602-85  
25 March 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: George Kolt  
National Intelligence Officer for Europe

SUBJECT: USMLM Shooting Incident

1. What Happened?

- A little over three years ago a USMLM officer had gotten inside Soviet tank sheds and obtained excellent photographs of a Soviet tank.
- The MLM team that went to the Ludwigslust area on Sunday, 24 March, had the standard composition of the officer in charge and a Sergeant-driver. As the officer reconnoitered around tank sheds, the driver maintained a lookout from within the vehicle and spotted a Soviet soldier. Without warning the Soviet soldier fired first at the Sergeant (a shot which did not hit) and then twice at the officer. One of these last two shots proved fatal. The Soviets prevented the US Sergeant from administering first aid to the US officer and did not begin treating him until at least half an hour after the shooting. They pronounced him dead an hour after the shooting.

2. Analysis. Based on my personal knowledge of USMLM operations I believe the following circumstances led to this tragedy:

- The USMLM team was probably taking advantage of a normally quiet Sunday afternoon to reconnoiter a fairly sensitive target.



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- The Soviets may have become sensitized to US collection against their tanks, which could have induced the Soviet high command to demand higher vigilance from its Security personnel.
- For whatever reason, the Soviet guard who spotted the US team was probably "trigger-happy" and disregarded the standard Soviet practice of firing warning shots and immediately shot to kill. Alternatively, he may have considered the shot fired in the vicinity of the vehicle a warning shot and may then have shouted an order to halt, which was not heard by the Sergeant in the vehicle nor by the US officer.
- The shooting was not deliberately instigated by the Soviet high command but was the result of an unfortunate combination of circumstances - something that has happened before in Mission history, but up to now had fortunately never resulted in the death of USMLM personnel. (A French officer was killed by East German troops in a ramming incident in 1983.).
- The Soviet refusal to let the US Sergeant administer first aid is inexcusable. It probably resulted from unreasoning application of the normal Soviet practice of keeping Mission personnel apart when they are detained separately and from the high state of excitement among the Soviet enlisted men on the scene.

3. Where do the Soviets go from here?

- The almost immediate dispatch of the Chief of Staff of the Soviet forces in Germany to the scene shows Soviet realization that they have a major problem on their hands.
- The Soviet rejection of any blame in the incident is a natural diplomatic tactic. The statement of the Soviet Chief of Staff to the USMLM chief that "you are doing everything possible to damage relations between our two countries" suggests some nervousness about Moscow's possible reaction to the incident.
- At the same time the statement by the Soviet Embassy in East Berlin that the incident was a matter solely for the US and Soviet military commands indicates a desire to keep the incident at the lowest level possible.

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- The most recent Soviet statement at the scene to the effect that, regardless of who is to blame, the incident is a deplorable tragedy also suggest a desire to play the incident down.
- If this last interpretation is correct the Soviets may declare the Sergeant persona non grata but do not want to use the incident to endanger the further operation of the Missions.

#### 4. What Should the US Do?

- The real reason for this tragedy is the operational context created by Soviet secrecy which requires the Mission to be aggressive. Tempting as it may be to use the incident to castigate the Soviets, doing so will not get us much. First, as inexcusable as the shooting and the delay in administering first aid are, the US team was clearly caught in an intelligence operation. This is not a second "KAL". Second, if they wish, the Soviets could publicize some incidents in which some Soviet soldiers have been hurt in encounters with Mission vehicles.
- USAREUR has made a strong protest to the Soviet military, demanded an explanation, and held it responsible for any further deterioration in relations. This is the right channel and the right approach.
- We should refrain from responses that might escalate to the point that the continued existence of the Missions is jeopardized. The Mission has provided and will continue to provide some of our best intelligence on the Soviet general purpose forces.
- Our objective now should be to get the incident off newspaper pages as soon as possible. It is imperative that no USG official give any backgrounders or "off the record" sessions to journalists. There can and probably should be a prepared press statement castigating the Soviets for their callous resort to firearms but we should not let ourselves be tempted into going beyond this.
- In sum, we should not let our revulsion over Soviet brutality make us lose sight of our objectives. From an intelligence perspective, this should be to get the USMLM back into operation, preferably in a climate where the

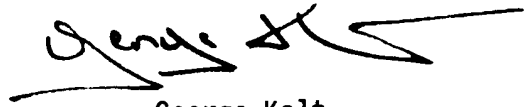
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Soviets are less apt to use force against the Missions. At best, this will probably take a few months. During that time we should reexamine whether the USG has done everything it could to restore as wide an area of operation as possible for the mission (that is a diminution in the size of permanent restricted areas) with as wide a margin of safety as possible. Paradoxically the shooting may make the Soviets more amenable to suggestions in this regard.



George Kolt

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