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Current Soviet Tactics on Berlin

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DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
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CURRENT SOVIET TACTICS ON BERLIN

CONCLUSION

The Soviets have declared a "pause" in the negotiations over Berlin, thus marking the end of a phase which began with the Rusk-Gromyko talks last fall. At the same time, they appear to have ruled out a separate treaty in the next few months, and indicated that they envisage an eventual resumption of negotiations. However, it is likely that Khrushchev will continue to make various unilateral moves in order to accomplish piecemeal and *de facto* some of the changes which would flow from a peace treaty.

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DISCUSSION

1. The Soviet pronouncement of 11 September confirms the end of a phase in negotiations on the Berlin problem which began with the Rusk-Gromyko meetings in the fall of 1961. In acknowledging that these talks have failed the Soviets did not renounce further negotiations; they apparently envisage a renewal of contacts with the US later this fall. For the time being, however, the Soviets have almost certainly concluded that continuation of negotiations in the manner of the last year holds little promise of success. At the same time, the Soviets have not chosen, as they previously threatened, to proceed immediately to a separate treaty. The statement of 11 September appears to rule out a separate treaty in the next few months. It is probable that their appraisal of the situation at this time, perhaps associated with the increase of tensions over Cuba, has led the Soviets to conclude once again that a separate treaty which poses a direct challenge to the Western presence in and access to Berlin is too hazardous a course.

2. The deferral of a peace treaty, however, need not inhibit the Soviets from taking further action locally to advance their objectives. They have already taken one such step in abolishing their commandant's office in Berlin and replacing it with an East German authority. This step not only does away with one of the most important symbols of Four-Power responsibility for the whole of Berlin, but it also opens up a variety of possibilities for further encroachments, of which two seem especially significant.

Local Actions

3. First, a logical next step would be for the East German commandant to impose new conditions on Allied access to East Berlin, claiming that the Soviet departure had altered the

basis of entry rights. The Soviets almost certainly believe that they can pose this question in a way which will not provoke the Allies to use force to maintain access. Thus, this move would be designed to force the Allies either to acknowledge East German sovereignty in some fashion, an important victory in itself, or to give up the right of access to the eastern half of the city.

4. The Soviets would closely observe the outcome of this maneuver in order to judge how far they could safely go in involving East Germany in controls on allied access to West Berlin. For example, if the West acquiesced in new documentary procedures at the sector border, or accepted East German escorts for its trips into East Berlin, the Soviets would be encouraged to believe that similar measures on the autobahn would not be very risky. They might conclude that they could begin to involve East German authorities in Soviet controls over access to West Berlin even before a treaty.

5. Second, the Soviets already are taking steps which seem designed to create *de facto* what they have long demanded of the Allies, namely, a new status for West Berlin alone, guaranteed by Soviet as well as Western forces, to replace the occupation arrangements. They evidently intend to maintain and even intensify their activities in West Berlin and have threatened to retaliate against Allied ground access to the city if the West interferes with or denies Soviet access to West Berlin. They probably expect that, since the West wishes the Soviets to remain in the Berlin Air Safety Center, they can alter the access procedures to and within the city without being thrown out of West Berlin. And if the West does take such action, the Soviets have laid the groundwork for retaliating on the

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autobahn. To the degree that the Soviets are successful in maintaining their presence in West Berlin, while transferring to East Germany their responsibilities in East Berlin, they will have made a major advance.

6. This is a potent maneuver, not only because it advances Soviet objectives vis-a-vis the Western Powers, but because it also has an important effect on Berlin morale. West Berliners are especially sensitive to any suspicion that the USSR is acquiring a voice in their part of the city. The Soviets realize, of course, that a high state of Berlin morale is a vital ingredient in the Western position and the economic viability of the city.

General Soviet Tactics

7. For the next few months the Soviets are keeping open a number of possibilities including further negotiations; a UN debate, a Khrushchev meeting with President Kennedy, and unilateral encroachments in West Berlin. All this suggests that they are still probing, still assessing Western positions and reactions, and not firmly committed to any fixed course. However, we think it likely that Khrushchev will continue to make various unilateral moves in order to accomplish piecemeal and *de facto* some of the changes which would flow from a separate treaty. In this tactical prescription, the signing of a peace treaty might come at the end of the process and merely formalize it, or it might come at some intermediate point but in a manner which would not pose a major showdown. As we have previously estimated, the Soviets will hold open the possibility of negotiation at all stages. However, unless they conclude at some point that the West has become willing to entertain significant concessions, their own stated willingness for negotiations or participation in further talks probably will be largely *pro forma* and will not reflect any serious expectation that some sort of mutually tolerable compromise could be achieved in this way.

The UN

8. The Soviets have recently encouraged rumors that they will raise the Berlin issue this fall at the General Assembly. If they do so, it seems certain that they will not simply turn the entire question over to the UN for whatever solution it can devise. Instead, they will be seeking certain political results, and the manner in which they present the issue will depend upon their objectives.

9. If the Soviets are primarily interested in further negotiations, they would use the UN mainly as a means of generating wider pressures among the neutrals for Western concessions. In addition to arguing the merits of their case, they would probably urge the UN to take some role in Berlin along the lines of various Soviet proposals for an end to the occupation status. They would almost certainly anticipate that such a UN debate would prompt neutrals to urge a meeting between Khrushchev and President Kennedy and a temporary maintenance of the *status quo* while the parties negotiated. If the Soviets proceed in this general manner, therefore, we would conclude that they were prepared to delay a treaty for a longer time and to continue negotiations, possibly under some UN mandate.

10. If, however, the Soviets intend to rely principally on additional unilateral measures, and perhaps ultimately sign a separate treaty, then any resort to the UN would be intended mainly to inhibit the West from sharp and possibly dangerous reactions. In this case, they would probably make some definite moves toward a treaty before raising the question in the General Assembly. By proceeding in this fashion, they would hope to focus debate on the "threat to peace" represented by Western insistence that the Allies would tolerate no diminution of their rights.

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