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BERLIN CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Statement to the North Atlantic Council by
the United States Permanent Representative
on Behalf of the French, United Kingdom,
and the United States Delegations

June 7, 1961.

1. The Three powers have recognized from the beginning that, because the other NATO countries would be vitally concerned in decisions to be taken, they should be consulted not only during course of a Berlin crisis itself but also:

- (a) If there were any essential change in the principles of contingency planning; or
- (b) If it appeared necessary to take any decisions to deal with contingencies which do not fall within the field of contingency planning proper and in which practical collaboration of the other member countries on certain aspects were required.

2. In accordance with these principles, the United Kingdom and French representatives made two fairly comprehensive reports to NATO about Berlin contingency planning on April 2, 1959 and September 21, 1960. In this third report, which was promised at the recent NATO Ministerial meeting in Oslo, there are no essential changes in the principles of contingency planning to report to the Council. The Council will recall that the planning has been guided by two main principles. The first is that expressed in the NATO declaration of December 16, 1958, namely, that denunciation by the Soviet Union of the inter-allied agreements on Berlin can in no way deprive the other parties of their rights or relieve the Soviet Union of its obligations.

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3. The second principle is that expressed in the three powers' notes of December 31, 1958, to the Soviet Union, namely, that the three powers cannot accept the substitution of the so-called GDR for the Soviet Union in respect to Soviet obligations regarding allied freedom of access.

4. As the Council will recall from the previous reports, a crucial phase of Allied planning involves the steps to be taken if allied traffic is refused passage on the pretext of noncompliance with some East German demand going beyond those formalities which the three powers have determined to be acceptable. Initially an attempt would be made to continue unarmed convoys until it became clear that such convoys would not be allowed to proceed. If such a situation developed, the three powers would then make a probe of Soviet intentions to determine whether the Soviets are prepared to use force, or permit the GDR to use force, to prevent passage of an allied movement. It is, of course, in the interest of the Alliance that the details of the military planning for this operation should be rigorously restricted to those who have to implement these plans.

4A. Planning for possible measures to maintain and reinforce access by air to Berlin is also envisaged so as to use to the best advantage all the means necessary for preserving liberty of access.

5. The Council may be assured that recent newspaper articles are not authoritative. Although, in one or two instances, they may have come close to the truth, they are highly speculative and misleading. The Council will not wish to give them any credence where they conflict with information previously given to the Council.

6. As Soviet intentions have become clearer, it has been necessary to adjust and add to contingency planning in order to keep it

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current. The Council will recall that the most recent principal target for Soviet encroachment has been the vital, if deliberately and necessarily somewhat vague and complicated, relationships between Berlin and the Federal Republic, and this may very well continue to be the case until the situation with respect to the resumption of negotiations is clearer. Since the bulk of our earlier planning has been directed toward the problem of maintaining US-UK-French access to, and rights in, Berlin, additional multilateral planning has been necessary to meet the new threat. It was for this reason that the economic counter-measures planning was initiated. Results of the Political Advisor's study of this subject are contained in C-M(61)45 May 29, approved May 31 by the Council for transmission to the Four-Power Working Group in Bonn.

7. In addition, plans for further non-military countermeasures have been made. A tripartite paper on this subject is nearing completion, and as soon as the US, UK and French governments have had a chance to approve it, the report will be made to NATO because, to be effective, most of the measures listed will require NATO support. As with the economic countermeasures paper, this will be done to get NATO advice and in order that the NATO governments may consider what action they could take to put themselves in the best possible legal and administrative positions so the Alliance will be able to move promptly, flexibly and unitedly if the occasion arises. Such non-military countermeasures would be taken in the hope they would lessen the likelihood that military countermeasures would be required. We must have at our disposal an entire arsenal of graduated countermeasures as large and as varied as possible so that the Alliance will be able to respond properly to whatever harassment is applied.

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8. The underlying theme of the study is as follows: the application of non-military countermeasures should be designed to make the Soviets weigh the consequences of their decision, to demonstrate the determination of the Western powers to defend their rights in Berlin, and to dissuade the Soviet Union and its satellites from establishing positions regarding Berlin issues which would involve the irrevocable commitment of Soviet prestige in the maintenance of these positions. To this end, the application of these countermeasures should seek to maximize the political and economic costs of interference with Berlin access to the USSR and its satellites, and to convey to them an impression of constantly mounting pressures which will prepare the political groundwork for, and will culminate in the application of military force, if necessary. They would best achieve this purpose if applied in ascending order of severity.

9. It is interesting, in this connection, to note that since the Allied restrictions on East German travel and the Federal Republic's announcement of its intentions to terminate the interzonal trade agreement, the Berlin situation has been relatively quiet.

10. The three powers are keenly aware of the importance of Berlin as the symbol of Western determination and ability to prevent further Communist expansion and, more specifically, of the earnestness of NATO intentions and capabilities with respect to further Soviet encroachments in Europe. The Council has recognized the importance of Berlin and expressed "its determination to protect the freedom of the people of West Berlin" most recently in its declarations of December 16, 1958, May 4, 1960, December 18, 1960 and May 10, 1961.

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11. As President Kennedy has stated, the United States is determined, in cooperation with its allies, to preserve the freedom of the people of West Berlin and to defend the Allied position in the city, upon which the preservation of that freedom to such a large extent depends. In order to be fully prepared for a Berlin crisis, the United States has been--and is now--urgently and thoroughly reviewing certain aspects of Berlin contingency planning with a view to the development of more precise governmentally-agreed courses of action.

12. We believe governments will have to consider this matter at the highest policy level, not just at the planning level, as if plans have nothing to do with policy. Although it is agreed tripartitely that implementation of Berlin contingency planning must be subject to judgment by governments in the light of the circumstances actually prevailing at the time contingencies arise, and although it is obvious that all decisions cannot be made in advance, the United States believes there must be agreement on the policies which should govern. In an actual crisis, Governments could not start from the beginning with discussions of policies and plans.

13. The President has concerned himself personally with the United States review, which is not yet fully completed. Just as soon as it is, in very near future, we wish to discuss it with the British, French, Germans, and our other NATO allies. This order is not so that our NATO allies can be presented with fixed positions, but is the result of basic tripartite responsibility for Berlin and is in accordance with the principles upon which the Council has hitherto proceeded.

United States Delegation
June 7, 1961

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