

12 MAR 1962

TOP SECRET

To: Secretary General
 c.c. Deputy Secretary General
 DSG/ASG Economics and Finance

From: Executive Secretary

Summary Record of a Private Meeting of the Council
 held on 7th March, 1962, at 12 o'clock

The SECRETARY GENERAL said that the meeting had been called at the request of General Norstad to enable him to give the Council information on the latest developments in connection with the Berlin corridors.

2. GENERAL NORSTAD said he had asked for the meeting not because there was any crisis but rather because there had been significant developments and the situation could rapidly change for the worse.

3. When he had spoken to the Council on 23rd February, he had outlined Soviet action vis-à-vis the corridors from the 5th February to that date. Originally, the Soviets had tried to block off airspace in the corridors between 2,500 and 7,000 feet. Later, they had scheduled specific flights at specific altitudes and times designed to impede air traffic. Until today, however, all Soviet action had related to the airspace below 7,000 feet.

4. On Friday last, 9th March, there had been a significant development. The Soviets had scheduled twelve outbound and twelve inbound flights in the corridor between 2,500 and 6,500 feet. The West had responded in accordance with normal practice and had sent three military flights in and three out at the critical areas and times. This was a normal reaction and provoked no incident.

5. On Friday, 9th March, the Soviets had resorted to an electronic measure designed to block out the Western radar screens. Three Soviet aircraft, probably bombers, had, during the morning, crossed the corridors from North to South, west of Berlin at some 450 - 550 knots, dropping metal strips known as "chaff" or "winders". The aircraft had returned on a reciprocal course in the afternoon and carried out the same operation. The Western radar screens had been obscured but local control of incoming aircraft continued to be effective. This action was not entirely without precedent since it had occurred previously about a year ago. It was however

quite inescapable, and though chaff had also been dropped East of Berlin, it appeared to have been specifically laid across the corridors with the object of interfering with Western radars.

6. On the afternoon of Friday, 9th March, the Soviets filed a plan to fly two aircraft on the following day in the corridors between 4,000 and 5,000 feet. The West flew two aircraft in the same area and at the same time but of course observing flight safety rules.

7. On Saturday afternoon, the Soviets took an unusual step in that they filed plans 36 hours ahead, i.e. for flights today, Monday 12th. For the first time, these filed plans invaded the critical altitudes at which Western civilian transports operate, that is to say between 7 and 10,000 feet, respectively. The times and altitudes actually interfered directly with only one transport flight, an Air France flight, which was postponed by 20 minutes in order to avoid interference.

8. General Norstad emphasized that Soviet harassment in the air corridors had now been raised to a higher level of seriousness. Western aircraft would be operating today extensively in the 5,000 to 6,000 feet level and 7 flights were scheduled in the 8,000 to 10,000 feet level within the times notified for Russian flights. This new harassment had been reported to the three governments primarily concerned and the matter had, he understood, been taken up by Mr. Rusk with Mr. Gromyko in Geneva on the previous night.

9. General Norstad went on to say that it was the intention of the three governments to continue their operations, civil and military, without significant change, including a full civilian transport programme, but that these aircraft might have to fly higher than 10,000 feet if harassment below that level continued. He was reporting to the Council on this whole problem because should the Soviets interfere with Western operations, a new order of seriousness would follow.

10. General Norstad then reported on the move of U.S. battle groups into and out of Berlin, one relieving the other. This move had taken place in small packets. The Soviet authorities had introduced new rules for checking these movements. They had insisted that all but two of the men in each truck should leave the truck and stand in front of it while the check was made. This request has been complied with. Subsequently, the Soviets had insisted that only one man should remain in each truck. These tactics caused more than twice the normal delays and the Commanders concerned had been authorised in future to move their convoys forward after a reasonable time for check and after giving a warning. There had been no incident or new tactics employed in the last three days.

11. General Horstad then referred to the attack on a military vehicle carrying a U.K. officer who was a member of the British Military Mission in Potsdam. He was on a routine tour, returning at about midnight on Saturday 10th March, from Potsdam, in an unrestricted area when, without warning, five blasts of fire from automatic weapons were aimed at his vehicle. The driver, an RAF corporal, was seriously injured and was taken to an East German hospital, where an emergency operation was carried out and was returned, 24 hours later, by helicopter to a British hospital in West Berlin. The officer was held until 5 a.m. on Sunday morning and the East Germans took all the maps and other papers from the damaged vehicle.

12. In reply to questions, General Horstad made the following points:

13. Civil transport aircraft had, for the past sixteen years, traditionally flown at heights between 6,000 and 10,000 feet in the corridors. Interference at these heights was without precedent. It might be argued that the Russians had a right to fly at these heights but they had no reason and the record was all against them.

14. With regard to the possibility of Western civil aircraft having to fly above 10,000 feet, General Horstad said that the West had never accepted this height as an upper limit though they had normally flown below it. The West had not yet flown above 10,000 feet since in present circumstances, they did not wish to obscure the clear issue of their rights by using heights which were known to be controversial.

15. With regard to the effectiveness of "chaff", General Horstad said that its use by the Russians some 40 miles west of Berlin could, by obscuring the radar scopes used for bringing aircraft into Berlin, prove dangerous in bad weather. The West had taken as their purpose the maintenance of their own operations into Berlin and our reactions had been quiet and sensible. While the Soviets could argue that the use of "chaff" had been to test their own radars, there was no training or military reasons why it should have been used over the corridors except to provoke difficulties and trouble with the West.

12th March, 1952