

UNITED STATES DELEGATION
TO THE
NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

October 1, 1962

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Dear Colleague:

Attached is a copy of the United States
assessment of current Soviet intentions regarding
Berlin as conveyed to the Council by Ambassador
Finletter on September 27, 1962.

Sincerely yours,

Byron P Manfull
Byron P Manfull
Secretary of Delegation

cc: All Delegations
Lord Coleridge

Secretary General
Deputy Secretary General
T. Fiegh
J. Hooper
J. Kendall
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NATO SECRETU. S. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SOVIET INTENTIONS REGARDING BERLIN

The TASS statement of September 11 postponing further pressure for negotiations until after the U.S. November elections indicates that the Soviets are apparently deferring the signature of a separate peace treaty for several months. It is likely that they contemplate some further discussions on the Berlin problem before actually signing a treaty, which in turn would postpone treaty action to sometime beyond November. The U.S. does not believe that this postponement excludes interim Soviet unilateral action on the local Berlin scene designed to achieve further de facto changes prior to an eventual peace treaty but probably does preclude major steps likely to entail serious risks. Limited infringement on Allied access to Berlin, attempts to involve the GDR in control of Allied access, harassment of local helicopter flights in the Berlin control zone, or maneuvers designed to affect West Berlin morale as a vital ingredient of the economic viability of the city are still possibilities at the moment.

Intelligence sources indicate the existence of various Bloc security preparations scheduled for completion between September and November. The preparations appear to be such as could be utilized either to implement individual measures designed to heighten tensions considerably, or to cope with tensions resulting from moves up to and including the signing of a peace treaty. However, although the preparations are being made and a planning deadline may exist (reportedly November) the current Soviet and Bloc military posture does not indicate anticipation of any imminent steps which might be expected to provoke violent Western countermeasures.

In any event, Soviet willingness to revert to bus transport for its War Memorial guards on September 14 suggests that Moscow is opposed to an exacerbation of the Berlin situation at the moment. However, the Soviets may also believe that they have established the principle of the Commander-in-Chief's channel for Berlin matters with this episode and thereby have maneuvered the West into tacit acceptance of the abolition of the Soviet Kommandatura in East Berlin. The Kommandatura abolition thus far represents only a demonstrative alteration of certain institutional aspects of Berlin's status but the Soviets may now be encouraged to attempt additional de facto changes implicit in this measure (for example, Allied dealings with the GDR in East Berlin.)

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Recent indications point to a Soviet consideration of the UN General Assembly as a suitable vehicle for exerting pressure on the West to be more forthcoming in negotiations. Furthermore, the Assembly could provide the Soviets with a forum for presenting their case and for ascertaining the reaction of or exercising influence on UN members. The possibility also exists that the Soviets may be contemplating a UN initiative after some unilateral Berlin move in order to deter Western countermeasures. However, the Soviets still appear undecided about raising the Berlin issue in the UN, probably because they doubt that the UN can be confined to mere discussion without bringing about direct UN interference in the Berlin and German questions. The September 5 Soviet note blaming Berlin tensions exclusively on the Western powers and the West Germans, without venturing serious proposals for alleviating tensions, suggests the preparation of a case for the public record. Such an approach would be a logical preliminary if UN involvement is under consideration. But it is likely Moscow will, in fact, wait as long as possible before making a final decision on taking the issue to the UN. In any event, if Khrushchev were to come to New York to present the Berlin or other issues to the General Assembly, the U.S. believes his major interest would be a summit meeting with President Kennedy on Berlin rather than the UN debate.

US Delegation
September 28 1952

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