"THE BERLIN CRISIS DURING THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION"

by Gregory Nicholson*

The "Berlin Crisis" was the label attributed to the growing animosity of the world's two greatest powers on Earth. It started in the late 40's and, for all intents and purposes, ended on August 13, 1961. The "Cold War" continued, but the threat of thermonuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union subsided with the building of the Berlin Wall on that Sunday in August 1961. The struggle began to grow in 1957 under the tutelage of the Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and the American President, Dwight D. Eisenhower. The tensions reached crisis dimensions soon after the election of the new U.S. President, John F. Kennedy.

Serious matters in the world do not necessarily start with bombs or rockets, yet this crisis achieved its momentum with a very special rocket—Sputnik 1. "Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite, was launched by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957.[1] The real shock came on October 6, 1957, when Russia tested a hydrogen bomb of a new design. Then, around November 6, 1957, they demonstrated a rocket able to carry such a payload—Sputnik II.[2] Eisenhower, in retaliation to this new threat, proposed the deployment of nuclear missiles in Europe. A very destructive dream became a reality. The Soviet Union now had the capacity to launch a nuclear attack on the United States from Russia. The spark needed to set off such worldwide devastation started to smolder in Germany.

Russia felt a peace must be reached with West Berlin which was a thorn in the side of East Germany, a state under the power of the Soviet Union.

The Russians created and used the crisis over Berlin to force the United States to pay attention to their alternatives of a regional disarmament of missles on their front porch.[3] The reason was that Bonn and Moscow had never come to terms on the final settlement of Germany after the war. Bonn wanted reunification of the two Germanies, while the Russian position is related by this note of November 27, 1958 which in essence remained the same throughout the conflict:

> The Soviet Government on its part would consider it possible to solve the West Berlin question at the present time by the conversion of West Berlin into an independent political unit—a free city, without any state, including both existing German states, interfering in its life. Specifically it might be possible to agree that the territory of the free city be demilitarized and that no armed forces be contained therein. The free city, West Berlin, could have its own government and run its own economic, administrative, and other affairs.[4]

This note implied that the division of Germany in the Soviet realm was normal following World War II. The U.S. however saw that, "Due to the *de facto* division of Germany, the entire situation in that country is abnormal,"[5] meaning the U.S.

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[1]Paul Y. Hammond, *Cold War and Detente, The American Foreign Policy Process Since 1945* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1975), p. 111.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Jack M. Schick, *The Berlin Crisis 1958–1962* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), p. 9.

[4]*Ibid*, p. 13,

[5]Department of State Historical Office Bureau of Public Affairs, "News Conference, June 22, 1961," *American Foreign Policy Current Documents, 1961* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), p. 588. In the future all other references made to this book will be described as Doc.

did not accept their solution to the German settlement. Along with this Soviet note came an ultimatium to answer the German question in six months from that date in November or to have access routes to West Berlin interrupted.[6]

"As the Berlin deadline approached, however, Khrushchev postponed the time limit, thus turning Berlin into a rolling crisis."[7] This rolling decision now delayed the Berlin Crisis.

The year 1959 showed Eisenhower moving slowly toward any resolution of Berlin. Then, in September, Khrushchev visited the United States and Eisenhower. Khrushchev agreed at that time to drop a fixed deadline for negotiations in Berlin.[8] This deferred a decision on Berlin until the planned summit meeting in mid-May 1960. The summit, however, was further postponed because of the U-2 Spy Plane incident. Thus, the new Kennedy administration came into power and, along with them, came Moscow's reemphasis on the crisis. The global power struggle was now fully underway, intensified by the conflicting attitudes of Kennedy and Khrushchev over the future of Berlin.

In trying to understand Kennedy's attitudes toward the Berlin confrontation one must first go back to Kennedy, the Presidential candidate. As early as December 9, 1959, in an interview with John Fischer of *Harper's,* Kennedy spoke of the possibility of war over Berlin:

> If we took the view which some Englishmen took, that Prague or the Sudetendeutsch were not worth a war in '38—if we took that view about Berlin, my judgment is that the West Berliners would pass into the communist orbit, and our position in West Germany and our relations with West Germany would receive a fatal blow. With West Germany neutralized, all Western Europe would soon be neutralized, and it would be a decisive victory for the Soviet Union. For us to think that what the central struggle is about is just Berlin would be a great mistake. They're fighting for New York and Paris when they struggle over Berlin. Therefore, I think we would have to make it cold—and mean it—that we would fight.[9]

Kennedy, then, saw Berlin as the key to the Western position in Europe and had drawn the line where the Soviet Union could not pass over, without inducing U.S. military action. Kennedy campaigned around the country preparing the American people that the next administration should expect another and far more serious Berlin crisis. In a speech given on October 16, 1960 in New Castle County Airport, Wilmington, Delaware, Kennedy asked the audience, "Can you possibly say that our power is increasing when you know that next winter and next spring the United States will face a most serious crisis over Berlin at a time when our strength is not rising in relation to that of the Communists?"[10] Fifteen days earlier, on October 1, before the Polish-American Congress in Chicago, Illinois, Kennedy warned the Soviet Union that his task "is to encourage and pursue a policy of patiently encouraging freedom and carefully pressuring tyranny. . . ." He continued by

[6]Schick, p. 15.
[7]Hammond, p. 137.
[8]*Ibid*, pp. 139–40.
[9]Richard J. Walton, *Cold War and Counterrevolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy* (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1972), p. 76.
[10]United States Senate Committee on Commerce, *The Speeches of Senator John F. Kennedy: Presidential Campaign of 1960* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 613.

stating, "We must show in West Berlin that we have no intention of yielding to Soviet claims, that we believe that history will yield in time a free and united Berlin, and a free and united Europe. We must convince the Russians that we are rebuilding our defensive strength so that the route of military force can no longer be open to them."[11]

Throughout the campaign, Kennedy constantly spoke of the U.S. commitment to West Berlin. In a question and answer session during a statewide television appearance in Seattle, Washington on September 6, 1960, he was asked what his reaction would be, assuming he was President, if East Germany signed a defense treaty with the USSR. Senator Kennedy replied:

> I would think it would be a matter of serious concern because it could well lead to a blockade by the East Germans of the entrance into West Berlin. If that happens, our commitments are extremely clear. We have to make it clear, and I don't think we will have the eventuality, if we do—we have to make it clear and mean it that our guarantees to West Berlin are going to be maintained, that we are not going to permit—(Applause). Of course, the reason is clear. If we permitted the Soviet Union to drive us out of West Berlin, then our whole position in Western Germany and indeed in all of Western Europe, would be endangered, and since their policy since the end of World War II has been to secure control of Western Germany and Japan, and our objective has been to maintain West Germany and Japan, it is obvious that this security falls to the United States. I think we should make it extremely clear that if a peace treaty resulted in a blockade of Berlin, that it would be regarded as an extremely important act, involving the security of the United States.[12]

Kennedy had campaigned on the basis of a "missile gap" and genuinely believed in one and that Soviet armed strength was growing while the United States grew relatively weaker. After assuming office, Kennedy examined both Pentagon and CIA reports and found the contrary was true, but he still expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of the armed forces, both nuclear and conventional.[13] Kennedy recognized the value of military readiness. In 1960 Kennedy stated:

> If our military power remains paramount. . .then it might be possible to encourage the Russians and the Chinese to say farewell to arms. We can then expect the competition would shift to non-military spheres. It will then be a struggle between the two systems:. . . which system of political, economic, and social organization can more effectively transform the lives of the people in the newly emerging countries.[14]

These statements before his election indicate when he began thinking about the Berlin crisis after Moscow renewed the conflict. Although his thinking did not undergo a radical change on Berlin while in office, Kennedy's position on the German Democratic Republic (GDR) inferred a policy of two Germanies within the

[11]*Ibid*, p. 422.
[12]*Ibid*, p. 140.
[13]Schick, p. 141.
[14]James MacGregor Burns, *John F. Kennedy, A Political Profile* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, World, Inc., 1961), p. 271.

framework of the older policy supporting the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) as a NATO ally.[15]

During the Presidential campaign, Khrushchev was busy traveling through Europe gathering support for his German peace treaty. At a meeting of Moscow working people on April 4, 1960, Khrushchev remarked about his recent visit to France. He had met with President Charles de Gaulle, who shared his view that Germany should never rise again as a military power in Europe. Khrushchev stated:

> The President and I had a very frank discussion on the German problem. The main thing in connection with this problem is to do away with the last vestiges of the Second World War, to conclude a peace treaty with Germany, and this would mean ending the occupation regime in West Berlin as well.[16]

French General de Gaulle, still vindictive for the Nazi invasion of France, did not fully realize, as Kennedy and West German Chancellor Dr. Konrad Adenauer had, that the real threat to Western Europe was not Germany but the Soviet Union, and the creation of a strong pro-Western Germany would stand as a far greater deterrent to Soviet expansion than an ununified, weak Germany.

In his speech on ''The Communist Doctrine of Wars of Liberation'' given before a meeting of Party Organizations of the CPSU, Moscow, on January 6, 1961, Khrushchev warns the West of the growing military might of the Communist bloc:

> The world Socialist camp is making an ever-growing impact, through its economic might and its armed forces, on the solution of problems of war and peace. . . . the Socialist countries, which represent a mighty force, now oppose the imperalist camp. It would be a mistake to minimize the strength of the Socialist camp and its influence on the course of world events and thus on the solution of the question of whether wars will take place. In conditions where a mighty Socialist camp exists, possessing powerful armed forces, the peoples, by mobilization of all their forces for active struggle against the warmongering imperialists, can indisputably prevent war and thus insure peaceful coexistence.
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> A lot is being said nowadays in the imperialist camp about local wars, and they are even making small-caliber atomic weapons for use in such wars; a special theory of local wars has been concocted. Is this fortuitous? Of course not. Certain imperalist circles, fearing that world war might end in complete collapse of capitalism, are putting their money on unleashing local wars. . . . A small imperalist war. . . may grow into a world thermonuclear rocket war. We must therefore combat both world wars and local wars.[17]

This is an interesting statement in that Krushchev at first asserts the might of the Socialist armies, and then condemns the West for their reliance upon nuclear weapons to counter his conventional forces, specifically in Europe. Therefore, through his acknowledgement of NATO's development of small nuclear weapons for placement in Europe, Khrushchev shows his need to get Kennedy to the negotiation table to achieve a favorable settlement, and to pressure Kennedy just far enough without causing him to risk nuclear war.

[15]Schick, p. 144.
[16]N.S. Khrushchv, ''Peace in Europe—Peace Throughout the World,'' *Speech in Moscow on the Results of his Visit to France April 4, 1960* (London: Soviet Booklet no. 70, 1960), p. 4.
[17]''Meeting of Party Organizations of the CPSU, Moscow, January 4, 1961,'' Doc. pp. 555–56.

Khrushchev deliberately initiated the crisis after US Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson informed him that the new administration would need time to prepare for negotiations. But Khrushchev chose to reopen the crisis at an untimely period for Kennedy to restore the lever he needed for bringing pressure to bear on the United States.[18] Bonn received an aide-mémoire from the Soviets on February 17, 1961, thus officially initiating the Berlin crisis. Moscow insisted that the issue could not be postponed until after the West German elections in September 1961. ''It is now obvious,'' stated Moscow, ''that all the time-limits have expired for understanding the need to sign a peace treaty and thereby solve the problem of the occupation status of West Berlin, making it a free city.''[19] In March, Krushchev saw Ambassador Thompson and referred to the aide-mémoire to Bonn, saying he had placed the highest of priority on a Berlin settlement.[20] On April 10, in an interview with journalist Walter Lippman, Khrushchev stated that he urgently wanted a peace treaty. He insisted that the status of the GDR be consolidated and the frontiers of Germany defined before Bonn acquired nuclear weapons. After the interview, Lippman was left with the impression that Khrushchev wanted a ''showdown.''[21]

Kennedy began to seriously focus in on the Soviet pressures facing Berlin, only after his blunder at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. In recognition of these pressures, an announcement of the Kennedy-Khrushchev meeting at Vienna was issued by the White House on May 19, 1961.[22] The announcement stated:

> ''The President and Chairman Khrushchev understand that this meeting is not for the purpose of negotiating or reaching agreement on the major international problems that involve the interest of many other countries. The meeting will however afford a timely and convenient opportunity for the first personal contact between them and a general exchange of views on the major issues which affect the relationships between the two countries.''[23]

The day before this conference, during a press conference in Paris on June 2, 1961, Kennedy stated, ''We have to maintain our position. And therefore, I hope Mr. Krushchev is not misled by those signs of democracy which we understand but they do not, but instead recognizes that the United States of America. . . is united in its determination to fulfill its commitments and to play to role the history and its own free choice have brought upon it in these years.''[24]

At the conference, Kennedy and Khrushchev spent 12 hours together discussing a wide range of topics. During their conversations, Kennedy found that ''the Soviets and ourselves give wholly different meanings to the same words— 'war,' 'peace,' 'democracy,' and 'popular will.' We have wholly different views of right and wrong, of what is an internal affair and what is aggression, and, above all, we have wholly different concepts of where the world is and where it is going.''[25] But the ''most somber talks were on the subject of Germany and Berlin.''[26]

[18]Schick, p. 139.
[19]*Ibid*, p. 140.
[20]*The New York Times*, March 18, 1961, p. 5.
[21]Schick, p. 140.
[22]''White House, May 19, 1961, Doc. p. 569.
[23]*Ibid*.
[24]*Ibid*; ''News Conference in Paris, June 2, 1961, p. 573.
[25]*Ibid*, ''Address to Nation by kennedy, June 6, 1961, p. 575.
[26]*Ibid*, p. 577.

The general outline for Kennedy's Berlin policy clearly favored negotiations between the two superpowers. As he had prepared for the conference, like British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, the insecurity of the access routes to West Berlin bothered him. Kennedy had previously stated:

> I think, hopefully, we would like to get a commitment, perhaps guaranteed by the United Nations, to reaffirm the concept of a corridor into Berlin and therefore free access to it which would be controlled either by the United Nations, or by the West Germans and the Berliners or by England, France, and the United States. In return for that, we might agree to some thinning out of troops in Berlin, but that would be rather meaningless because there are not many there now anyway. We might agree to cease propaganda activities.[27]

Kennedy recognized that a proposal for internationalizing these routes depended upon convincing the Soviet Union that the United States was prepared to risk war to preserve the continuance of the Berlin occupation: ''But you cannot possibly get an agreement there unless they think that we mean what we say; that if they attempt to drive us out, directly or indirectly, it would mean war, which could spread to the world. If that is clear, then possibly we could.''[28]

In Vienna, Kennedy continuously geared his energies to warning Khrushchev ''off a collision course over Berlin.''[29] Khrushchev, however, astonished Kennedy with his aide-mémoire, which was handed to him on June 4 at the conclusion of the talks. The memorandum called for an ''immediate conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany,'' which would solve the West Berlin problem by ''transforming it into a demilitarized free city.''[30] The Soviets stated, ''The occupation rights will naturally be terminated upon the conclusion of a German peace treaty, whether it is signed with both German States or only with the German Democratic Republic, within whose territory West Berlin is located.''[31] Furthermore, in the creation of a free city, the Soviet Union stated, ''Token troop contingents of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the USSR could be stationed in West Berlin as guarantors of the free city.''[32] They then set a deadline of six months for the two Germanies to negotiate a single peace treaty. But perhaps the most potent point the Soviets made was that the ''means of communication by land, water or air within territory of the GDR would have to be settled solely by appropriate agreements with the GDR. That is but natural, since control over such means of communication is an inalienable right of every sovereign State.''[33]

However, a peace settlement proposed with these provisions was totally unacceptable to the United States. And Kennedy tried to convince Khrushchev that the Soviets would never succeed in converting West Berlin into a free city. To persuade him even further, Kennedy drew the issue as narrowly as possible, focusing on the security of the access routes and saying that the United States would, if absolutely

[27]Schick, p. 143.
[28]*Ibid*, p. 144.
[29]*The New York Times*, June 5, 1961, p. 1.
[30]''Aide-memoire June 4, 1961,'' Doc. p. 584.
[31]*Ibid*.
[32]*Ibid*, p. 585.
[33]*Ibid*.

necessary, go to war to keep access to Berlin open.[34] Kennedy informed the American people of his view in his address to the nation on June 6:

> I made it clear to Mr. Khrushchev that the security of Western Europe and therefore our own security are deeply involved in our presence and our access rights to West Berlin, that those rights are based on law and not on sufferance, and that we are determined to maintain those rights at any risk and thus meet our obligation to the people of West Berlin and their right to choose their own future. . . . we are not seeking to change the present situation. A binding German peace treaty is a matter for all who were at war with Germany, and we and our allies cannot abandon our obligations to the people of West Berlin.[35]

Kennedy thus concluded that verbal warnings did not impress Krushchev and decided to push military contingency planning in earnest once he returned from Vienna.[36] Overall, he believed his talks with Khrushchev were useful, but he felt pessimistic about the possibility of an agreement over Berlin. The New York Times regarded the President's first ''journey into European diplomacy as a highly successful failure—successful in a personal sense for him but a failure in terms of any solid political achievements.''[37] Consequently, after the meeting, Kennedy had no more interest in continuing the practice of summit meetings.[38]

As the summer months began growing hotter, so did the rhetoric between the two superpowers. On June 15, Khrushchev once again gave the United States six months to negotiate a German peace treaty. In his speech to the Soviet people, he seemed to go out of his way to ridicule Kennedy's sense of obligation to West Berlin; consequently, shrugging off Kennedy's warnings of U.S. willingness to go to war over access routes:

> In the talks with me, President Kennedy made reference to the fact that the Western powers have obligations of some kind to the residents of West Berlin, and that these obligations cannot be affected even by the conclusin of a German peace treaty. It is natural, however, to ask the question: what obligations can it be a matter of retaining if they all stem from the fact of Hitlerite Germany's surrender and from provisional allied agreements and, consequently, can be valid only pending conclusion of a peace treaty?[39]

On the same day, East German party leader Walter Ulbricht held a press conference, in which he brushed aside any suggestion of Western rights in Berlin: ''As regards the state frontier—our frontier runs along the Elbe and so on, and the territory of West Berlin forms part of the territory of the GDR.''[40] Ulbricht continued to express the Soviet line in reference to the peace treaty and access routes: ''. . .if a peace treaty is achieved, then those states interested in communications with West Berlin have no other course but to conduct negotiations of that kind with the GDR Government. . . . That is to say, nobody can avoid negotiating on this problem with

[34]Theodore L. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 585–86.
[35]''Address to Nation By Kennedy, June 6, 1961,'' Doc. p. 577.
[36]*The New York Times*, June 6, 1961, p. 1.
[37]*Ibid*.
[38]Sorensen, pp. 585–86.
[39]''Address to Soviet People by Khrushchev, June 15, 1961, Doc. p. 581.
[40]Robert M. Slusser, *The Berlin Crisis of 1961: Soviet-American Relations and the Struggle for Power in the Kremlin June-November 1961* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 9.

the GDR.''[41] During the conference Ulbricht found it absurd that the U.S. would go to war over West Berlin: ''We would be pleased if certain people were to refrain in the future from answering our many peace offers time after time with foolish saber-rattling of other weapons. We would like to tell them amicably: stop that noise with your weapons, stop the rattling, and wait until we have reasonable negotiations on equal terms.''[42]

Khrushchev raised the tempo once more while speaking on the military anniversary of Hitler's invasion of Russia on June 21. He appeared in uniform as a sign of his personal identification with the Soviet military and promised them that they will be given whatever they need for defense. As Khrushchev stated ''. . .they (the military) must have everything necessary in order immediately to smash any opponent who encroaches on the liberty of our Motherland. Let those who are hatching aggressive plans with regard to the Soviet Union know what fate awaits them if they unleash war and commit aggression.''[43]

The following day brought about the U.S. response to the increasing Soviet military threat. This was delivered by Secretary of State Dean Rusk during a news conference:

> The Soviets talk constantly of peace but threaten the obvious peace which exists in West Berlin. Having purported to turn over East Berlin to the so-called German Democratic Republic, in violation of existing agreements, they now propose to move in upon the position of West Berlin. If the world is full of anxiety and uneasiness over Berlin, this arises directly from the threat of the Soviets to the rights of others and to the liberty of the West Berliners rather than to anything in the present situation in Berlin.[44]

Khruschchev's first nuclear threat during the crisis was given at a reception in the Kremlin on July 2 to the British ambassador Sir Frank Roberts. In his conversation with Khrushchev, Sir Frank countered the Soviet advocacy of a German peace treaty as a ''logical step.'' He stressed the responsibilities for Berlin vested in the four occupying powers by the Potsdam Agreement and the need for free elections in all of Germany as a basis for eventual reunification.[45] Khrushchev characteristically brushed aside these arguments as ''unreal'' and ''irrelevant to the present situation,'' stating that wherever the NATO forces place one division, he will place a hundred. Then raising the threat to a nuclear level, he pointed out Britain's vulnerability: ''Only six of his H-bombs'', he declared, ''would be quite enough to annihilate the British Isles, and nine would take care of France.''[46]

Meanwhile, upon Kennedy's return from Vienna, he assigned former Secretary of State Dean Acheson to prepare a report on Berlin. The best summary of Acheson's report is provided by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. in *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*.[47] ''Acheson's basic thesis,'' he states,

[41] *Ibid*.
[42] *Ibid*, p. 10.
[43] *Ibid*, p. 17.
[44] ''News Conference, June 22, 1961,'' Doc. p. 589.
[45] Slusser, p. 44.
[46] *Ibid*.
[47] *Ibid*, p. 32.

> was that West Berlin was not a problem but a pretext. Khrushchev's démarche had nothing to do with Berlin, Germany or Europe. His object, as Acheson saw it, was not to rectify a local situation, but to test the general American will to resist; his hope was that, by making us back down on a sacred commitment, he could shatter our world power and influence. This was a simple conflict of wills, and, until it was resolved, any effort to negotiate the Berlin issue per se would be fatal. Since there was nothing to negotiate, willingness on our part to go to the conference table would be taken in Moscow as evidence of weakness and make the crisis so much worse.

Acheson thus called for a prompt, serious, and quiet build-up of both conventional and nuclear forces. He argued that the President must convince Moscow that he would, in fact, go to nuclear war rather than abandon the status quo.[48]

Kennedy decided to mix his options; to allow for negotiations but to also slowly increase military pressure, to play for time, and hope that Khruschchev would back down. Thus, in a statement issued by the President on July 19, he toned-up his rhetorical attack on the Soviet position;

> Today the continued presence in West Berlin of the United States. . . is by a clear legal right, arising from war, acknowledged in many agreements signed by the Soviet Union. . .They (the US's rights) cannot be affected by a so-called ''peace treaty,'' covering only a part of Germany, with a regime of the Soviet Union's own creation—a regime which is not freely representative of all or any part of Germany and does not enjoy the confidence of the 17 million East Germans. The steady stream of German refugees from East to West is eloquent testimony to that fact.[49]

In addition to condemning the legitimacy of the East German Government, Kennedy addressed the nation on July 25 to outline and propose concrete measures to deal with the situation and give Khrushchev something to think about. His six-step program included: (1) requesting from Congress an additional $3,247,000,000 in appropriations for the Armed Forces; (2) requesting an increase in the Army's total strength from 875,000 to 1 million men; (3) requesting an increase of 29,000 and 63,000 men in active duty strength for the Navy and Air Force; (4) ordering that the draft calls be doubled and tripled in coming months, as well as calling up the reserves and National Guard; (5) ships and planes headed for retirement are to be retained and re-activated, including delaying the deactivation of B-47 strategic bombers; and finally (6) some $1.8 billion will be used for the procurement of nonnuclear weapons, ammunition, and equipment.[50] Kennedy does present a militaristic attitude toward the crisis, but he also keeps his foot in the door for negotiations; of course, within acceptable guidelines, when he added:

> We have previously indicated our readiness to remove any actual irritants in West Berlin, but the freedom of that city is not negotiable. We cannot negotiate with those who say, ''What's mine is mine and what's yours is negotiable.'' But we are willing to consider any arrangement or treaty in Germany consistent with the maintenance of peace and freedom and with the legitimate security interests of all nations.[51]

[48] *Ibid*.
[49] ''Statement by Kennedy issued on July 19, 1961,'' Doc. p. 601.
[50] *Ibid*, ''Address to Nation by Kennedy, July 25, 1961,'' Doc. p. 607.
[51] *Ibid*, p. 609.

By mid-summer 1961, both the administration and the Kremlin were making preparations for a possible war after the December 31 deadline. Although both superpowers preferred to negotiate, Khrushchev again turned to public threats to induce the West to settle on Soviet terms. In his August 7 speech, Khrushchev referred to West Belin as a ''convenient loophole to obstruct the development of the GDR as a socialist state.'' He charged the West with subverting the GDR: ''Stop gentlemen. We know exactly what you want, what you are after; we shall sign a peace treaty and close your loophole in the GDR.''[52]

To fully comprehend the Soviet basis for reopening the crisis, one must examine the reality as it existed behind the rhetoric. West Berlin is an enclave 110 miles inside the iron curtain and perhaps its most disastrous aspec to the Eastern bloc was its ability to become a refuge for unsatisfied Germans escaping from communism. The actual drain on manpower was stagering for the GDR and other Eastern bloc countries. While the more Khrushchev spoke of closing the ''loophole,'' the greater the drain became. Those East Germans who wanted to escape to the West read his statements as their last chance. In July, 30,000 East Germans fled and in the first twelve days of August, 20,000 more ''voted with their feet'' as they arrived in West Berlin. [53] However, Khrushchev only stimulated the flow; the traffic actually resulted from the GDR's decision to reorganize the economy along Soviet lines, which meant nationalization of private farms for the development toward a system of cooperative labor and collective farming.[54] The farms were reorganized within three months in 1960. Most farmers slowed production and fled to West Berlin. Thus, the agricultural economy ran short of manpower; that resulted in a supply crisis. In 1961 the state enacted a new labor code to lower costs, increase production, and worsen labor conditions. Soon workers were joining the farmers in protesting or fleeing to West Berlin. [55]

For Ulbricht, however, the Berlin question was a cluster of related goals: (1) the elimination of a dangerous manpower drain of the GDR; (2) the enhancement of the international prestige of the GDR; and (3) the stabilization of the regime's shaky economic and political position.[56] The international aspects of the Berlin crisis were seen as secondary interest to Ulbricht; his eye was fixed on a definite target—the absorption of the Western sectors of Berlin.[57]

The crisis in agriculture generated the rise in refugee traffic. Ulbricht now felt compelled to find a way to halt the traffic rather than halt his economic policy, as he had done in the early 1950's. He asked for Khrushchev's help in closing down the refugee traffic. Khrushchev counseled caution in dealing with the situation because of the uncertainty of U.S. military intervention. On August 1 three checkpoints were erected: one at the local station, one enroute, and one at the terminal in East Berlin.[58] By August 9, Ulbricht had failed to curtail the traffic using internally

[52]Schick, p. 159.
[53]*Ibid*.
[54]*Ibid*.
[55]*Ibid*.
[56]Slusser, p. 9.
[57]*Ibid*.
[58]Schick, p. 160.

applied controls. Therefore, on August 11, the GDR Volkskammer ratified Ulbricht's proposal to halt ''the head hunting and man-trade organized by the West Germany and West Berlin.''[59] A little after midnight on August 13, Pankow published the declaration which the Warsaw Pact had approved on August 6 that placed the blame for the GDR's internal problems on Bonn:

> The present traffic situation on the borders of West Berlin is being used by ruling quarters of the German Federal Republic and intelligence agencies of NATO countries to undermine the economy of the GDR. The Government bodies and military concerns of the German Federal Republic, through deceit, bribery, and blackmail, induce certain unstable elements in the GDR to leave for West Germany. These deceived people are. . . recruited for the intelligence agencies of different countries to be sent back to the GDR as spies and saboteurs.[60]

Simultaneously with the declaration came a decree issued by Pankow establishing border controls: (1) East Germans could only crossover with ''special permission,'' that is, not at all; (2) East Berliners could only crossover by obtaining a ''special permit'' or in other words not at all; (3) the 1960 travel ban over West Berliners became permanent; (4) ''revanchist politicians and agents of West German militarism'' were banned from entering East Berlin; (5) the 1960 travel ban became permanent over all West Germans entering East Berlin; (6) non-Germans would be unaffected. [61] Thus, the physical construction of the Wall began shortly after midnight on Sunday August 13 under the watchful eyes of the GDR army.

Although it would be several months after the construction of the Berlin Wall before diplomats would realize its affect in diffusing the crisis, its presence was probably the best possible solution in avoiding war. The Wall allowed Khrushchev to relax over Berlin because it ended his biggest headache, that of extensive East German emigration to the West. The ''loophole'' obstructing the development of the GDR was now nonexistent.

Soviet policy at this time was directed towards ensuring that the West would not risk war over the construction of the Wall, by continuing to speak of a negotiated solution to the Berlin problem. The Wall was built gradually and after carefully testing Western reactions step by step.[62] The first U.S. reaction issued on August 13, 1961 stated:

> The authorities in East Berlin and East Germany have taken severe measures to deny to their own people access to West Berlin. . . .Limitation on travel within Berlin is a violation of the four-power status of Berlin and a flagrant violation of the right of free circulation throughout the city. . . .These violations of existing agreements will be the subject of vigorous protest through channels.[63]

By stating that the administration's will to protest through channels became a clear sign to the Soviets to continue building the Wall. And the U.S. will not intervene, but will publicly condemn it and formally protest it. However, to assure that the

[59]*Ibid*, p. 161.
[60]*Ibid*, p. 162.
[61]''Declaration Issued by Warsaw Pact on August 13, 1961,'' Doc. p. 620.
[62]Slusser, p. 134.
[63]''Statement by Secretary of State Rusk on August 13, 1961,'' Doc. p. 621.

Wall would not cut off US access to West Berlin, Kennedy on August 18 ordered a battle group of 1,500 men to proceed to the United States garrison in West Berlin through the Helmstadt-Berlin Autobalm. The sending of a token force was the administration's way of symbolically acknowledging the trade-off— ''you keep your Wall separating East Berlin from West Berlin, and we keep our access to West Berlin.'' U.S. policy in Berlin was not directed toward preventing the Soviets and the East Germans from splitting Berlin and sealing off its Western sectors, but as before, the US commitment was toward defending Western rights in West Berlin and maintaining the city's morale and economic viability.[64]

The Western powers had sent the Soviet Union formal protests based upon appeals to postwar quadripartite agreements on Germany and Berlin, however, the USSR had uncompromisingly rejected their appeals on the grounds that the Western powers had abrogated these agreements by their policies in Germany. But Moscow also noted in its final paragraph that the ''measures taken by the Government of the GDR'' are ''temporary,'' and again indicate the possibility for a German peace treaty:

> The Soviet Government repeatedly has emphasized that the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and normalization on such a basis of the situation in West Berlin will not infringe the interests of any of the parties and will contribute to the cause of peace and security of all peoples. To this and it appeals to the Government of the USA.[65]

Thus, a perfect example of Moscow portraying its willingness to negotiate once more to prevent any further risk of war during the construction of the Wall.

The crisis further cooled down, when the Soviet Union discontinued to publically threaten the access routes to West Berlin in October and then followed through by lifting the Berlin deadline. Therefore, it is safe to assume that because of the construction of the Wall, war, possibly nuclear, was prevented. The Kennedy administration was pleased because: (1) war was averted; (2) Berlin did not become a free city, where even the Soviets could place a token army; and (3) the U.S. did not loose their occupation rights in West Berlin as well as their access routes, thus maintaining the status quo in Europe. Khrushchev was also pleased in that East Germany had effectively stopped the huge manpower drainage that was ruining the GDR's economy, and because now it was realized that the reunification of the two Germanies was an event thrust far into the future.

[64]Slusser, p. 137.
[65]*Ibid*, 139.

U.S. SECURITY AND STRATEGIC MINERALS DEPENDENCE:

The South African Dilemma

by Steven Metz*

If the interests of speculators are an accurate indicator of coming issues for the U.S. economy, then strategic metals—non-fuel minerals necessary for defense production and heavy industry and for which the United States relies heavily on imports— are an imminent problem. A full-page add in *The New York Times* for a book entitled *Get Really Rich in the Coming Super Metals Boom* claimed that ''strategic metals are the gold of the 1980s!'' Issues of publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Fortune*, the *New York Magazine*, and *Reader's Digest* have all devoted space to the economic and political implications of the strategic metals problem. Even though no formal market exists for the trading of strategic minerals, companies specializing in this type of speculation, such as Strategic and Industrial Metals Inc. of Florida, have sprouted.

From a speculator's viewpoint strategic metals, even if not the ''gold of the 1980s,'' may at least prove to be the soybeans of the next decade. And the rush to invest in this area is just beginning. While Strategic and Industrial Metals Inc. handles only investors with a minimum of $25,000, the book *Get Really Rich* provides groundfloor information for the investor with only a few hundred dollars in capital.

There is, however, a crucial difference between speculation in soybeans, real estate or pork bellies and investment in strategic metals. Most speculation has little, if any, effect on issues of U.S. foreign policy or national security; but with speculation in strategic minerals this is not true. The very value of these commodities is based on their importance in defense production and other forms of industry, and thus the ''coming super metals boom'' may prove crucially important to vital issues of national security.

In addition to this potentially dangerous interplay between speculation and national security, there is another political dimension to the strategic minerals problem. The growing demand for strategic metals, both from speculators and as an element of improved military capability, when combined with the trend toward greater dependence on foreign sources of these metals, intercepts other problems confronting U.S. policy-makers—specifically the issue of South Africa.

Although periodic protests about the status of the U.S. stockpile of strategic minerals have surfaced with regularity since the inception of the stockpile after World War II, these metals have generally been a neglected topic. As with oil in the pre-1973 period, low prices and abundant supplies bred complacency toward the potential danger which the minerals situation represented. Wild fluctuations in the stockpile levels have been the norm, with the stockpile frequently used to manipulate the market for a particular mineral.

Why then has this issue suddenly entered the limelight? In order to answer this question two other questions must be confronted. First, what exactly is the American situation on strategic minerals?; and second, how have changes in the concept of American security and power contributed to this increased attention paid

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