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CRISIS OVER BERLIN

American Policy Concerning the Soviet Threats to Berlin, November 1958 - December 1962

PART II

The Geneva Foreign Ministers Meeting, May-August 1959

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FOREWORD

This is Part II of a comprehensive study, to be issued in eight parts, which, when completed, will cover American policy concerning the Soviet threats to Berlin, November 1958-December 1962. Each part is separately bound. Also separately bound is an Introduction which covers in broad sweep the developments between the final phase of World War II and the outbreak of the Berlin crisis in November 1958.

The study was requested by Martin J. Hillenbrand for the Berlin Task Force and the Bureau of European Affairs. The research and writing were done by Arthur G. Kogan.

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THE GENEVA FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, MAY-AUGUST 1959

Chapter I

THE FIRST PHASE, MAY 11-26, 1959

The East-West Foreign Ministers meeting agreed to after the Soviet Union failed to win Western consent to summit talks[1] opened at Geneva on May 11, 1959. It took up a broad range of political and security problems, in addition to the acute issue of the status of Berlin, and remained in session until the end of July, except for a three-day recess (May 26-28) for Secretary Dulles' funeral and another recess which lasted three weeks, July 13 to August 5. Because of these recesses, the Meeting divides naturally into three distinct phases.

The story of the Geneva Foreign Ministers Meeting, however, includes not only the formal and informal discussions held by the several delegations at Geneva, but also the concurrent, and sometimes more meaninful, developments in Moscow, Washington, and elsewhere. Chairman Khrushchev, in particular, often rushed to the center of the world stage to shift the spotlight from the diplomats at Geneva. This meant a continuing interplay between conference and extra-conference actions, an intricate pattern of talk and pressure and posturing, during the three months of East-West conclave.

A. Preliminaries

1. Definition of Western Objective

For the Western Powers, the objective of the Foreign Ministers Meeting had been defined in the revised Working Group Report approved by the Western Foreign Ministers on April 30.[2] That objective was "serious negotiation leading to an agreement with the Soviet Government, even if such an agreement has as

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[1] See Part I, chapter II, section E, pp. 63-67.

[2] See Part I, chapter II, section I, pp. 91-96.

its only result to help to make the status quo livable for a period of years." The Western Powers would "seek to envisage an area of negotiation within which the general Western position could be improved", and therefore, the Working Group Report continued, they should think "not in terms of concessions and 'fall-back positions', but rather in terms of new positions from which they themselves would derive advantage as well as the Soviet Government." If the afore-mentioned objective should prove to be unattainable at the Meeting, the Western Powers would "adopt the more limited objective of disengaging from the Conference in a way calculated to put them in the most favorable posture for securing the objective at a possible subsequent Conference at the Summit."

2. Question of German Participation

Before the Meeting could deal with the principal issues on the agenda, it had to settle two procedural issues which mirrored basic policy disagreements. The first issue, of German participation, was raised even before the Meeting opened. The second issue, that of Czech and Polish participation, confronted the Foreign Ministers as soon as they sat down to engage in substantive discussions.

In the meetings of a quadripartite liaison group in Geneva which dealt with arrangements for the forthcoming Conference, there developed a curious controversy over the shape and size of the Conference table. The United States and its Allies favored a square table which would serve the four participating Powers best, while the Soviet Union insisted on a round table big enough to seat more than four delegations.[1] The United States felt that the Soviet Union was using questions such as this to obtain full participation for the East German delegation at the Conference and considered it therefore important that no concessions be made on this point.[2]

When the liaison group met the day before the scheduled opening of the Foreign Ministers Meeting, it was still unable

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[1]From Geneva, tel. 1444, May 6, 1959, and tel. 1454, May 7, both confidential.

[2]To London, tel. 9860, May 7, 1959, confidential.

to resolve the issue, the more so as the Soviet Union now officially demanded that the East Germans be seated at the Conference table at the very beginning. Therefore, the next morning, only hours before the Conference was to begin, the three Western Foreign Ministers met with Gromyko to discuss the impasse. Failing to reach immediate agreement, the four Foreign Ministers had to postpone the formal opening of the Conference beyond the originally scheduled hour of 3:30 p.m. They did finally reach an understanding in the afternoon, however, on the following lines: There would be a round table for the four delegations and two separate square tables--close to, but not touching the conference table (six pencil-widths, as this was in fact executed[1])--for the two sets of German advisers. The German advisers, upon their request, could be given the right to speak unless one of the four Foreign Ministers objected. But it was also agreed with Gromyko that objections would not be raised unless the German speaker should abuse his privilege. This seemed to settle the matter, so that the Foreign Ministers could still convene the formal Meeting on May 11, at 6:00 p.m., although substantive discussions were not to be held until the second session on May 12. Secretary Herter felt that the agreement met the main requirement, namely, to limit the GDR delegation to an exclusively advisory capacity.[2] Nevertheless, until the opening of the second session, the Soviet Union's representatives in the liaison group kept demanding that 10 places be made available to each of the German delegations. In the end, however, they yielded to Western insistence that only six places should be given to each of the German delegations.[3]

To make clear their continuing attitude toward the East Germans, the Western Three also decided early in the Conference

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[1]See comments by Martin Hillenbrand in letter to Arthur Kogan, Aug. 11, 1966, top secret (P/HO project file).

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 11, May 11, 1959, confidential, and tel. SECTO 13, May 11, secret.

[3]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 24, May 12, 1959; tel. SECTO 31, May 13, and tel. SECTO 37, May 15, all confidential.

that their standard reference to the GDR would be "the so-called GDR". This practice proved obviously galling to both the Soviet and GDR representatives.[1]

3. Question of Polish and Czech Participation

The second session of the Conference, on May 12, though scheduled for the beginning of substantive discussions, was entirely devoted to the question of Czech and Polish participation. In raising the question, Gromyko referred to earlier Soviet statements[2] that elementary justice demanded the participation of Poland and Czechoslovakia in the capacity not merely of observers but of full participants. The Soviet Foreign Minister declared that this was not only a matter of procedure but also one of political importance. Secretary Herter pointed out that other countries besides Czechoslovakia and Poland had been victims of Hitler's aggression and that he therefore saw no reason for singling out those two countries as eligible for participation. The Foreign Ministers of Britain and France opposed the Soviet demand with similar arguments, and all the Western Foreign Ministers recommended that the subject be postponed for a later stage in the negotiations. Gromyko continued to press the matter in the next (third) session of the Conference, on May 13, but the Western Powers adhered to their position.[3]

The Soviet Foreign Minister returned to the issue of Czech and Polish participation on May 14 in the course of a discussion of nuclear tests, held among the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union outside the regular quadripartite sessions. Herter and Lloyd again pointed to the difficulty of limiting the number of participants once the Meeting was enlarged beyond the circle of the four Powers. Moreover, a broadening of the Foreign Ministers Meeting might set a precedent for wider

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[1]Comments by Hillenbrand in letter to Kogan, Aug. 11, 1966, top secret.

[2]See Part I, chapter II, section E, pp. 63-67.

[3]From Geneva, tels. SECTO 20, May 12, 1959, and SECTO 33, May 14, both official use only. See also Foreign Ministers Meeting, May-August 1959, Geneva (Department of State publication 6882), pp. 18-34.

participation in a Summit meeting. Herter and Lloyd therefore suggested that it would be best to explore first whether there was prospect of an agreement on larger issues. Gromyko urged the two Foreign Ministers to present specific proposals if they wished that other nations be admitted to the Meeting. He also denied that admission of other nations would establish a precedent for participation in a Summit meeting, stating that the latter issue should be considered separately at a later date.[1] Referring to Gromyko's request for Western counter-proposals regarding participation by additional nations, Secretary Herter stated in a telegram to the Department that he felt certain that "we can hold the present line for some time", as the negotiations were not likely to center soon on matters which would justify wider participation.[2]

B. Western Peace Plan and Soviet Draft Peace Treaty

1. Plenary Sessions of May 14-21

The Geneva Foreign Ministers Meeting turned to its main task beginning in the fourth session, on May 14, when Secretary Herter tabled the "Western Peace Plan", which was the new title for the "Phased Plan" drafted by the London Working Group and revised by the Western Foreign Ministers at their Paris meeting of April 29-30.[3] Lloyd and Couve de Murville, and the West German Adviser Ambassador Wilhelm Grewe, expressed support for the Plan, while the East German Adviser, Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Lothar Bolz, advocated a German peace treaty and a confederation of the "two German States".[4]

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 39, May 14, 1959, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 60, May 17, 1959, secret.

[3]See Part I, chapter II, section I, pp. 91-97. For Herter's statements on May 14 and for the text of the Western Peace Plan, see Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 50-60.

[4]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 43, May 15, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 60-61, 553-535, 564-565.

In the fifth session, on May 15, it was the Soviet Union's turn to present its proposal. Accordingly, Gromyko submitted the Soviet draft of a German peace treaty, which contained 48 articles and turned out to be the same plan already presented to the Western Powers with the Soviet note of January 10, 1959.[1] The fundamental assumption underlying the Soviet treaty draft was expressed in article 2, which stated that, pending German reunification, the term "Germany" as used in the draft treaty should apply to "the two existing German states", i.e., the Federal Republic and the GDR. Thus, the Soviet draft did not envisage a reunified Germany but the continued existence of the two Germanies, which were placed on the same footing, although they might combine in a confederation. Indeed, article 22, in stating the right of the German people to reestablish German unity, referred to the assistance to be rendered to "both German states" in achieving their goal "on the basis of a rapprochment and understanding between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany." With regard to Berlin, the draft treaty merely reaffirmed the Soviet position that, pending German reunification, Berlin should become a "demilitarized Free City with a special Statute of its own." The draft treaty also prohibited Germany from joining any alliance that did not include "all of the principal Allied Powers of the anti-Hitler coalition" (article 5) and from owning and producing nuclear weapons, missiles, bombers, and submarines (article 28). Similarly, it provided for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany not later than within one year from the coming into force of the treaty, or within time limits to be agreed upon by the interested parties, with the proviso that within six months the number of foreign troops stationed in Germany would be reduced by one-third. Finally, the draft treaty stipulated that all foreign bases on German territory must be abolished and that there must be neither foreign troops nor foreign bases on German territory in the future. As for the Western Peace Plan, Gromyko noted that it covered many problems but he objected to a method whereby "complicated questions which are different in character, are lumped together with the result that it becomes still more complicated--indeed impossible--to

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[1] Part I, chapter II, section A, pp. 40-41.

solve them". He stated, however, that the Soviet delegation would present more detailed views on the Western proposals later on.[1]

At the next session, on May 18, East German Adviser Bolz supported Gromyko's arguments for a German peace treaty and declared that an all-German settlement was impossible without negotiations between the "two German States". Bolz referred to the East German proposals for a German confederation, with an all-German council "to be established on the basis of parity" as the supreme organ. Herter, on the other hand, rejected the Communist argument. He pointed out that the Federal Republic and the GDR "do not either separately or in combination constitute an all-German Government authorized to act for and bind the international entity known as Germany" and that this could be done only "by an all-German Government freely chosen by the German people."

Gromyko, in turn, attacked the Western Peace Plan on the ground that it proposed to lump together a series of complicated questions instead of trying to solve them separately. He declared also that the Western Peace Plan could not serve as a basis of discussion at the Conference because it attempted to substitute discussions on German unification for discussion of a peace treaty. With respect to Berlin, he said, the Western plan was completely unacceptable because it would maintain the "occupation regime" of West Berlin and even extend it to the whole of Berlin at the expense of the "sovereignty" of the GDR. Gromyko conceded that the Western Peace Plan contained some provisions and ideas which would be worth discussing "independently from the artificially created package", but he insisted that the Conference must concentrate "on the two most pressing problems"--a peace treaty and West Berlin.[2]

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 55, May 16, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 63-88.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 68, May 18, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 94-112, 565-570. Premier Khrushchev, speaking in Moscow on May 16, stated that the Western Peace Plan contained nothing new and that "the true author" of the proposals was Adenauer; ibid., p. 300.

In the course of vigorous debate during the next few sessions of the Conference, May 19-21, the Western speakers pointed out that the Soviet peace proposal itself was a "package". Apart from discussion of the proposals, a great deal of debate in these sessions revolved around Soviet and East German attacks on the Federal Republic, which was accused of revanchism and militarism.[1]

2. Private Talks

While both sides affirmed and reaffirmed their positions on the basic issues in the plenary sessions of the Conference, attempts were made to deal with the same issues in the more relaxed setting of private dinner meetings or through discussions among the Foreign Ministers in a smaller circle.

On May 18 Gromyko had come to see Lloyd on a courtesy visit. According to the report which Lloyd made to the other Foreign Ministers later that day, Gromyko had spoken of three possible solutions for Berlin: (a) all Western troops leave Berlin, which becomes a free city; (b) Soviet troops join Western forces in West Berlin; (c) neutral troops replace Western forces in West Berlin. It was Lloyd's impression that Gromyko's mentioning of these three points was merely tactical. Gromyko had also stated that, after two to three more days of presentation and rebuttal, the current phase of the Foreign Ministers Meeting would be ended. On hearing Lloyd's account of this conversation, Herter remarked that Khrushchev had been saying all along that a Foreign Ministers meeting could not achieve anything. Gromyko should know, however, the Secretary said, that unless progress was made in the Foreign Ministers Meeting there would be no Summit meeting.[2]

At a dinner given by Secretary Herter for the other Foreign Ministers on May 21, in the course of which there was another

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[1]From Geneva, tels. SECTO 76, May 20, 1959; SECTO 82, May 20; SECTO 86, May 21; SECTO 94, May 22; all official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 113-173, 535-542, 570-573.

[2]U.S. Del. Minutes of meeting among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, and Brentano (US/MC/26), May 18, 1959, secret.

deadlocked discussion on the question of Czech-Polish participation in the Conference, Herter tried to induce Gromyko to accept the proposition that Germany should be united by free elections. Gromyko declared that he was not opposed to that proposition but that he felt that these were matters which should be worked out by the two German states. In the course of this dinner conversation Gromyko invited Western counterproposals and suggested that private talks should be set up.[1]

By May 22, after eleven sessions and two weeks of fruitless exchanges, the Western Foreign Ministers were agreed that Western and Soviet proposals, rebuttals, and counterrebuttals had carried the Conference as far as it could go in this semi-public phase and that continuing the Conference on this basis would be repetitious and sterile. It was accordingly arranged that one of the Western Foreign Ministers would sound out Gromyko the following week regarding the possibility of private meetings in the residence of one of the Foreign Ministers rather than in the more formal and public setting of the Palais des Nations. The Western Foreign Ministers also came to the conclusion that areas of a possible accord probably lay in an agreement to resume disarmament negotiations and in at least the outline of an agreement which would improve the situation in Berlin without impairing Western rights. The Foreign Ministers, therefore, decided that Couve de Murville would speak in the plenary session that afternoon (May 22) about the proposals regarding Berlin in the Western Peace Plan. It was expected that this would elicit a reply from Gromyko after which the Western Powers would be in a better position to judge the terrain.[2]

Although the timetable of the Conference was dramatically changed by the death of Secretary Dulles on May 25 and the subsequent decision of the Foreign Ministers to recess the Conference for two days to enable them to attend Dulles' funeral in Washington, the Foreign Ministers' plan regarding private meetings was not essentially changed. On behalf of the Western Foreign Ministers, Lloyd called on Gromyko on May 26 and arranged with him that a private meeting of the four Foreign Ministers

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 104, May 22, 1959, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 105, May 22, 1959, secret.

would be set up for May 29 (i.e., following their return from the funeral).[1]

3. Plenary Sessions of May 22-26

Meanwhile, the remaining plenary sessions before the Conference recessed continued the pattern of the earlier sessions and thus clearly indicated the need for more restricted meetings if any real negotiations were to be contucted. Gromyko did offer a concession--to include in the Soviet treaty draft a new article to the effect that the treaty would not prevent the Federal Republic and the GDR from participating in economic organizations, including regional ones. But the Western Foreign Ministers pressed for the adoption of the provisions on Berlin in the Western Peace Plan; that is, as Couve de Murville put it,for the solution of the Berlin problem through the reunification of Greater Berlin "in anticipation ... of the reunification of Germany."[2]

In the twelfth session, on May 26, the last one before the two-day recess, Secretary Herter spelled out in detail how the suggestions for reunification of Greater Berlin presented in the Western Peace Plan could be put into effect. Herter described the proposal as an "outline" which should not be regarded by the Soviet Government as "fixed or final." According to this "outline", the four Powers, after having agreed on the Western Peace Plan, would issue a joint proclamation which would provide that pending German reunification Greater Berlin, as defined by the Protocol on the Zones of Occupation in Germany of September 12, 1944, would be governed as one indivisible area. A Berlin Constitutional Council would be elected and would draft a constitution and an electoral law for Greater Berlin for approval in a plebiscite. Following approval of

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of a meeting of the Coordinating Group (US/MC/55), May 26, 1959, confidential; Chronology of the Geneva Foreign Ministers Meeting and Related Events, May 10-July 1, 1959 (2FMG B-1/53), July 8, 1959, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tels. SECTO 108, May 22, 1959, and SECTO 122, May 25, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 174-206.

the constitution, the four Powers would give the Berlin officials full authority to govern in accordance with that constitution, except in two respects: (1) the four Powers would continue to maintain forces in Berlin and ensure their security, the level of these forces being the subject of an agreement between the four Powers, and (2) the four Powers, by unanimous decision taken within 30 days after enactment, could nullify or suspend legislation enacted pursuant to the constitution. This right would be exercised, however, only when necessary in the fields of disarmament and demilitarization, relations with authorities abroad and matters affecting the protection and security of the Allied forces. Furthermore, the four powers would agree that free and unrestricted access to Berlin should be assured. On all matters relating to the forces of the four Powers in Berlin, those Powers would deal with the Berlin government. The Berlin government would be empowered to put into effect in Berlin any proposals of the mixed German Committee set up under the Western Plan to the extent that they were applicable to Berlin. Upon adoption of a German constitution and establishment of an all-German government, Berlin would become the capital of a reunified Germany. Finally, upon coming into force of the peace treaty, the stationing of forces of the four Powers would be subject to the provisions in the treaty relating to the stationing of foreign troops in Germany.

After having presented this outline, Secretary Herter proceeded to refute, on the basis of an analysis of the historical and legal developments leading to the establishment of the zones of occupation in Germany, the Soviet claim that Berlin was situated "on the territory of the so-called German Democratic Republic". The Secretary's exposition was followed by another restatement of the Soviet and East German position by the East German adviser.[1]

Thus ended the first phase of the Conference, with both sides still adhering strictly to their original Conference positions. However, an understanding had been reached that in the next phase the main emphasis would be put on an attempt to explore possibilities for a solution by means of private meetings of the four Foreign Ministers.

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 130, May 26, 1959, unclassified; tel. SECTO 132, May 26, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 207-213, 573-576.

Chapter II

THE SECOND PHASE, MAY 28-JUNE 20, 1959

A. Discussion of an Interim Berlin Agreement

1. Private Meeting of May 28

The new phase of the Conference actually began "in the air", namely, in the plane which carried Secretary Herter and, as his guests, the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, from Washington to Geneva.

Asked by Secretary Herter to set forth the reasons for Soviet dissatisfaction over Berlin, Gromyko stated the following: (1) The situation in West Berlin was unnatural from a geographic point of view. It was an island surrounded by GDR territory and occupied by foreign troops. (2) The occupation regime could not be justified under present conditions. To be sure, the Soviet Union recognized that the Western Powers had rights in Berlin, but conditions had changed in 14 years, and two new sovereign German states had emerged. (3) The situation was perilous, involving the danger of incidents that could arise from the presence of Western troops of occupation in Berlin. (4) West Berlin was a center for subversive and military intelligence activities carried on against the Soviet Union and the other Eastern Eruopean countries on behalf of the Western Powers. Gromyko took pains, however, to emphasize that this last point was not the most important consideration regarding Berlin.

After enumerating these grievances, Gromyko declared that the Western Powers ought not to continue an occupation regime involving all those dangers. The Soviet Union, he said, was willing to give guarantees for the status of West Berlin, to permit it to keep its social order, and to guarantee its communications with West Germany. The Soviet Union would even call on the United Nations to take part in the arrangements, and there could be a combination of UN and Four Power responsibility. The GDR would be prepared to take part in such guarantees and would carry out the agreements concluded. Gromyko added, however, that guarantees regarding communications should

not be in a form that was inconsistent with the sovereignty of the GDR. Throughout his presentation Gromyko emphasized that the Soviet Union was sincere in its proposals and would keep its word.

Gromyko stated that the most radical solution of the Berlin problem would be withdrawal of all troops. But if the Western Powers could not agree to this, the Soviet Union would consent to small symbolic units remaining there and was prepared to discuss what would constitute a symbolic unit. Gromyko referred to the possible stationing of mixed units in West Berlin and apparently suggested Soviet participation in the symbolic troop units in West Berlin. As a third alternative for West Berlin, Gromyko mentioned "neutral" troops, defining neutral as "any non-participant in NATO."

Gromyko's reasoning as to why changes in the Berlin situation were necessary was attacked by Lloyd, who stated that the argument from geography and the reference to the possibility of incidents were unimportant but that the subject of subversive activities might be discussed. The real difficulty, Lloyd said, was Gromyko's insistence that the occupation must end. The West was not prepared to sacrifice its rights of occupation in Berlin unless there was an agreement on German reunification. When Gromyko responded that the Soviet Union had shown flexibility and had given the Western Powers several alternatives, and when he implied at the same time that the proposals made were the Soviet Union's last word, Lloyd pointed to the implications for the prestige of the Soviet Union if agreements could be cancelled because they were outdated. Herter, for his part, referred to the strong feelings of the American people on the subject and declared that they were not prepared to give up their rights unless something was gained in their stead. Therefore, Herter insisted, a solution must be found within the framework of existing rights. In the discussion Gromyko advanced the familiar Soviet argument that the Western rights in Berlin derived from agreements which were no longer applicable to a changed situation. But he declared again that the Soviet Union was willing to guarantee Western access to Berlin and even to accept the presence of Western troops in Berlin, although only reluctantly.

On the subject of the presence of Western troops, Couve de Murville pointed out that, contrary to Gromyko's arguments, the danger of incidents might very well increase if Western troops

were no longer in Berlin. In discussing this matter the Western Foreign Ministers strongly emphasized the "symbolic" character of the Western occupation forces in Berlin. Secretary of Defense McElroy, who was also on the plane, stated that the Western troops in Berlin would not be able to support themselves if the Soviet Union should take action in Berlin and that Berlin had therefore no place in war plans.

The question of European security was touched upon once in this discussion on the plane. When Herter, in reply to Gromyko's question, declared that his proposals on European security were laid down in the Western Peace Plan, Gromyko replied that he had hoped the West would have "more realistic ideas" in the form of separate proposals which could be discussed.

In an attempt to hold on to possible points of agreement, Secretary Herter had pointed out several times during this conversation that Gromyko had acknowledged that the West had rights in Berlin and that it ought to be possible, therefore, to make adjustments within those rights. At one point in the discussions Gromyko had also admitted to Herter that the situation to be brought about by acceptance of the Soviet proposals on Berlin would only be temporary and would last only until German reunification. These and other possible areas of agreement Secretary Herter emphasized in a telegram sent to President Eisenhower on May 29. Herter stated that "three favorable developments" had occured as result of Gromyko's statements: (1) any agreement regarding Berlin would be temporary, i.e., until reunification; (2) the Soviet Union would give explicit guarantees regarding free access to Berlin and maintenance of the free order in the city, and the East Germans would adhere to these guarantees; (3) Allied troops could remain in West Berlin, although a Russian contingent would be added. With regard to this last point, however, Herter felt that "we can probably talk the Russians out of the Russian presence."[1]

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, McElroy, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, and Gromyko (US/MC/66), May 28, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tels. CAHTO 43, May 29, and CAHTO 48, May 30, both secret.

2. Private Meeting, May 29, and Plenary Session, May 30

The next private meeting, which was held in Gromyko's residence on May 29, opened with a summary of the talks on the aircraft and then proceeded along similar lines. The Western Foreign Ministers asserted that the Western contingents in Berlin were small and symbolic, that they had a right to be in Berlin, and that their presence preserved the confidence of the West Berliners as well as the way of life which they had chosen. Gromyko, for his part, insisted that regardless of the strength of the Western troops their mere presence constituted an occupation regime in Berlin and interference in the life of the city.

While the positions of East and West with respect to the presence of Western troops seemed far apart, the Western Foreign Ministers and Gromyko agreed in principle that there should be free access to West Berlin. The Western Powers, however, emphasized that Berlin already enjoyed guaranteed access under quadripartite agreements, while Gromyko declared that it was necessary to work out new access guarantees among the Four Powers and that the GDR should be associated with such an agreement. Gromyko, of course, visualized that such an agreement would be on the lines of the Soviet proposal for a free city. As in previous exchanges, Secretary Herter's attempts to make Gromyko admit that East Berlin should be treated the same way as West Berlin met with Gromyko's stubbornly held argument that there was no occupation regime in East Berlin and that it was the capital of the GDR.[1]

At this private meeting of May 29, Gromyko asked for a plenary meeting where he might reply to the Western proposal for a Berlin settlement which Herter had presented on May 26. Therefore, the thirteenth plenary session was held on May 30. Gromyko, after presenting the usual Soviet arguments about the "abnormal" situation in West Berlin, declared that the Western proposals regarding Berlin were "unacceptable from beginning to end" and could not form a subject for discussion. The only feasible solution, he said, was the Soviet proposal for a demilitarized free city, which he proceeded to set forth with all the familiar details. Included in the proposal was the

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[1]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 46, May 30, 1959, secret.

suggestion for a permanent commission consisting of representatives of the four Powers and the GDR which would have the task of watching over the status of the proposed free city without, however, exercizing any administrative or executive functions. This suggestion, not part of the Soviet note of November 27, had first been mentioned in the Soviet aide mémoire of January 5[1] which Mikoyan had brought along to Washington.

The British Foreign Secretary and the French Foreign Minister provided the rebuttal of Gromyko's arguments. Lloyd pointed out that the "abnormal situation" in Berlin was only a reflection of the abnormal situation in Germany which could be ended by adoption of the Western Peace Plan. Lloyd also contrasted the small size of the Western contingents in Berlin with the strength of the Soviet Army in East Germany which was "more than twenty times that number." Couve de Murville emphasized that the situation in Berlin was tense only because the Soviet Union had raised the issue "in a somewhat sudden manner." The West had not requested any change in the Berlin situation but was willing to listen to Soviet proposals. The French Foreign Minister stated that the "free city" proposal would create a third German state which would be at the mercy of the East German authorities and the USSR. Referring in this connection to a statement made by Gromyko that the best solution for West Berlin would be absorption by the GDR, he declared that this statement "gives me cause to think."[2]

3. Dinner Meeting of May 30

Following the plenary session of May 30, the three Western Foreign Ministers, von Brentano, and their advisers met to coordinate their tactics for the dinner meeting with Gromyko to be held the same evening. The program presented by Herter, to which all agreed, provided that the Western Foreign Ministers should make it clear to Gromyko that they were still talking

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[1]See ante, Part I, chapter II, section A, p. 38.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 149, May 30, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 215-233.

within the framework of the Western Peace Plan, which contemplated only an interim solution for Berlin pending reunification of Germany.[1]

The dinner meeting of May 30 started out with the familiar arguments advanced by both sides. Gromyko stated once more that he could neither accept the Western proposals on Berlin nor discuss an extension of the "occupation regime" to East Berlin and disputed Herter's contention that the Soviet Union wanted to deprive the Western powers of their rights. After a heated discussion between the Secretary and Gromyko regarding the nature of the East German regime, Gromyko suggested that the Foreign Ministers desist from discussing "ideology."

Lloyd and Couve de Murville tried to bring the discussion around to the exact nature of the Soviet complaints. In so doing Lloyd emphasized more than the other Western Foreign Ministers that the situation in Berlin was "abnormal", at least until German reunification. After Lloyd and Gromyko had attempted to draw out one another as to what each side had in mind, the British Foreign Secretary, stressing that he was speaking for himself only, declared that the Western Powers wanted the Soviet Union to reaffirm Western rights of access as well as the right of the West Berliners to lead their own lives. Lloyd stated that the Soviet Union was entitled to expect the Western Powers to examine whether Berlin represented a political or military threat to the Soviet Union. The West was willing, he said, to look at those aspects of the Berlin question which related to propaganda and subversive activities. Gromyko replied, however, that it was impossible to separate military and political aspects and that the "occupation regime" itself was a political factor. This prompted Couve de Murville and Lloyd to declare that the Western Powers could not change this, that they were committed to maintain their occupation until Germany was re-unified, and that their troops in Berlin presented no military threat.

Secretary Herter suggested that they talk on the basis of a maintenance of Western rights in Berlin. Within this frame-work, however, the number of Western troops to be retained

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 148, May 30, 1959, secret.

could be reviewed in order to lessen tension. Gromyko then raised the question whether the Western Powers wanted to keep troops in Berlin because they were worried about the internal order in the city. If they wanted to keep the present order unchanged, this could represent a constant threat. At Herter's suggestion the Foreign Ministers agreed in the end to meet again to discuss, in the context of the maintenance of Western rights, including the right to keep troops in Berlin, what could be done to relieve Soviet fears and political tensions. Gromyko stipulated, however, that Herter not raise "questions of ideology", to which the Secretary agreed.[1]

B. Western and Soviet Proposals on Berlin, June 1-8

1. Private Meeting, June 1, and Plenary Session, June 2

The Foreign Ministers, as agreed, met privately on June 1. After Herter had spoken in considerable detail about espionage and subversive activities centered in East Berlin, and about East German attacks on Western leaders, he declared that the Western Powers were prepared to talk about the main issues within the following limits: They would not give up their rights, including presence of Western troops in Berlin, would not recognize the GDR, and did not assume that the Soviet Union would unilaterally break the agreements on access. Herter also reminded the Soviet Union that it had artificially created the existing tensions by its threat to turn over control of access routes to the GDR, and he expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would not consider cutting off Western access to Berlin.

Couve de Murville likewise reminded Gromyko that agreements and established practices regarding access were in force with which the Western Powers were fully satisfied. He said that the Western Powers were willing, however, to consider Soviet proposals.

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/67), May 30, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 57, June 1, secret.

Lloyd, for his part, again emphasized that the Western position in Berlin was abnormal and not very satisfactory and that the problem was to see how it could be improved. The Western Powers were therefore willing, he said, to consider ceilings for their forces, the problem of tensions created by propaganda and subversion, the refugee question, and improvements in the situation regarding access to Berlin. But Lloyd insisted that the presence of Western troops in Berlin was a safeguard for peace and stability.

Gromyko limited himself mostly to asking questions during this meeting, except for his repeated emphasis that the presence of Western troops in West Berlin was the principal issue. Toward the end of the meeting he presented a paper setting forth the ideas of the Soviet delegation regarding the free city proposal and the question of guarantees. The ideas set forth were as follows:

(1) The four Powers would jointly guarantee the status of the Free City of West Berlin.

(2) The four Powers (or neutral states agreed on by the four Powers) would maintain small military contingents in West Berlin. Presence of these contingents should not be considered as "occupation", and they should not interfere in the affairs of the Free City.

(3) A permanent international commission composed of representatives of the four Powers and the GDR would supervise observance of the status of the Free City, especially with respect to its demilitarization and to prohibition of hostile activities "directed against any state".

(4) The commission would submit annual reports to the four Powers, the GDR, and the U.N. Security Council.

(5) The commission would inform the parties to the protocol of any violation or threat of violation of the status of the Free City. The parties, after consultation, would take appropriate measures to ensure observance of the status of the Free City.

Following presentation of this proposal, Gromyko suggested another private meeting, this time with the addition of the German advisers. As Herter absolutely refused to agree to a private meeting with the East Germans present, the Foreign Ministers decided to hold a plenary session on June 2 in which the Germans could make statements. Consideration of the Soviet proposal was reserved for a subsequent private meeting.[1]

The only novel argument advanced in the fourteenth plenary session on June 2 was the assertion made by the East German adviser that the four-Power agreements on the occupation of Germany clearly showed that Berlin was intended to be part of the Soviet Zone of occupation, not a "fifth occupation zone". Secretary Herter merely suggested at this point that the East German adviser should familiarize himself with the basic German surrender documents and that the Soviet Foreign Minister might assist him in this undertaking. The West German adviser, for his part, pointed out that the Soviet argument in favor of a peace treaty with two German states was inconsistent with previous positions taken by the Soviet Union regarding the German question. The rest of the session was taken up with restatements of the familiar positions of East and West by Gromyko and Lloyd, respectively.[2]

2. Continuing Disagreement and the President's Statement of June 3

The unsatisfactory progress of the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference prompted Secretary Herter to examine the possibility of redressing the situation by action outside the Conference proceedings. The apparently unbridgeable gap between the positions of East and West at Geneva became even clearer when Premier Khrushchev declared, in an address delivered at Tirana

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC69), June 1, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 60, June 1, secret. A summary of this meeting and of the Foreign Ministers meetings of June 2, 3, and 4 is contained in tel. 178 from Geneva, June 4, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tels. SECTO 166, June 3, 1959, official use only, and SECTO 178, June 5, secret; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 235-244, 542-549, 577-580.

on May 31 during a visit to Albania, that the Western proposals on Berlin did not contain "a single element for negotiation" and that the authors of these proposals misunderstood the heart of the matter.[1] Secretary Herter, in a telegram which he sent President Eisenhower on June 2, referred to the "threatening noises" Khrushchev had been making from Albania, which were "far from being helpful." The main point of Herter's message to the President was, however, that the private talks "have gotten us very little further than the public talks", except for the fact that the Russians were beginning to believe that the Western Powers would not give up their rights of occupation in and of access to Berlin. Herter therefore felt that the President could effectively assist the Western delegations at Geneva by making it clear at his press conference that developments to date did not make him feel that a summit conference was justified. Such a statement, the Secretary believed, would enhance the possibility of making progress with respect to the Berlin situation, which then, in turn, might justify a summit conference.[2]

President Eisenhower immediately agreed that the time had come to see "whether or not we can stir up a little action at Geneva." Accordingly, he took the opportunity of his press conference on June 3 to declare that there had not been any detecable progress at Geneva "that to my mind would justify the holding of a summit meeting." In reply to questions as to whether there should be a clear Soviet commitment regarding Western rights in Berlin as a condition for holding a summit meeting, the President stated that, while he did not like to speak of a condition, he could not see how the head of any self-respecting government could go to an international conference "in response to any kind of thing that can be interpreted as a threat."[3]

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[1] Foreign Ministers Meeting, p. 306

[2] From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 62, June 2, 1959, secret.

[3] To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 63, June 2, 1959, secret; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 310-312.

The President also expressed these views in a telegram sent to Macmillan on June 3, stating that a summit meeting "based on nothing more than wishful thinking would be a disaster." The President declared that the very minimum condition justifying a summit meeting would be that the four Foreign Ministers produce a "reasonable paper" for the heads of government to work on at the summit conference, "together with the assurance that there will be no further attempts to restrict our rights and privileges with respect to Berlin."[1]

3. Private Meeting of June 3

On June 3 the Foreign Ministers met again privately at Geneva. The British Foreign Secretary, speaking for the Western Foreign Ministers, criticized Gromyko's proposals of June 1 on the grounds that they seemed to extinguish all Allied rights in Berlin, would establish a third German state, said nothing about East Berlin and thus offered no solution for the problem of Berlin, would bring Soviet troops into West Berlin without providing for corresponding action regarding East Berlin, would associate the GDR with the agreement by including it in the proposed commission, and made no provision for political freedom and economic stability in West Berlin or for access to it.

After some discussion, in which the other Western Foreign Ministers supported the main arguments advanced by Lloyd, the French Foreign Minister declared that, although it ought to be up to the Soviet side to make further proposals, the Western Powers had put on paper some points to serve as a basis for discussion of how the Soviet Union's worries could be met. The points set forth in the paper he submitted were as follows:

(1) No modification of the rights of the Western Powers, including the right to maintain troops in Berlin and the right of free access to the city.

(2) Under certain conditions the Western Powers would be prepared to state their intention not to increase the level of their forces in Berlin.

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[1]Letter, Eisenhower to Macmillan, sent as tel. 10647 to London (TOCAH 68 to Geneva), June 3, 1959, secret.

(3) The Western Powers would be prepared to consider ways in which arrangements might be made "in the Greater Berlin area" to avoid "illegal or clandestine" activities which might disturb public order or seriously affect the interests of the different parties.

(4) The Western Powers would be prepared to examine Soviet Proposals for modification of procedures regarding access arrangements.

(5) The various arrangements which might be agreed to would continue in force until German reunification.

Gromyko, in the ensuing discussion, apparently agreed to point (5). Moreover, he indicated that the Soviet Union, while it envisaged substituting Germans for Russians in the control of military traffic to Berlin, would guarantee the access rights of the Western Powers under a new agreement with which the GDR would be associated. He would give no precise explanation, however, of the meaning of the Soviet guarantee or a clear answer to the question of whom the Western Powers should have recourse to in case of difficulties over access. When Couve de Murville tried to press the point that if the East Germans took over the functions formerly performed by Soviet personnel with respect to access to Berlin they would be responsible to the Soviet Union, Gromyko made it clear that he did not accept the idea that the GDR would act as an agent for the Soviet Union. He likewise stated that the Soviet proposal on access was within the fremeowrk of the general Soviet proposal on Berlin.

Gromyko also reverted to two issues discussed earlier in the conference: (1) the question of Czech and Polish participation, which he briefly mentioned and which he said he wished to keep open; and (2) the question of an all-German committee, which he said should be established by the Germans themselves, upon recommendation of the four Powers, but on a basis of parity and not at a ratio of 25:10. The proposed committee would discuss for one year German reunification by stages as well

as a peace treaty, but there would be no question of submitting matters to elections if the committee should disagree.[1]

4. Meetings of June 4-6

Further private meetings were held on June 4 and 6 and a plenary session on June 5. In the private meeting held in the afternoon of June 4, Gromyko elaborated on his position, with special reference to the Western paper of June 3. He made the following points:

(1) His statements regarding access had to be taken in conjunction with the Soviet proposals for West Berlin. The question was what kind of Berlin there would be with respect to which access arrangements were to be made.

(2) Any new arrangement would take the form of an agreement, procotol, or declaration.

(3) The matter of rights might not be mentioned at all and there might simply be an agreement on specific arrangements.

(4) There was no question of new arrangements applying to both East and West Berlin.

(5) His interpretation of the notion of symbolic troop units was on the order of one platoon for each Power.

The Western Foreign Ministers, however, emphasized the necessity for a clear recognition of Western rights. They also attempted unsuccessfully to induce Gromyko to discuss

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/75), June 3, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tels. CAHTO 64 and CAHTO 65, June 4, both secret; from Geneva, tel. 178, June 5, secret.

point (3) of the paper tabled by Couve de Murville, regarding arrangements to end subversive activities allegedly being carried on in West Berlin.[1]

At the private dinner meeting in the evening of June 4, the Western Foreign Ministers emphasized that they had listed three possible concessions, namely, their willingness to consider an improvement in the propaganda situation, to place a ceiling on their forces, and to discuss Soviet proposals on access. Besides, they pointed to their willingness to consider an interim agreement on Berlin outside the Western Peace Plan.

With regard to the thorny question of Western rights, Gromyko proposed that it be put aside and that only the matter of arrangements be considered. When Herter inquired whether the Soviet Union would consider that the Western Powers had given up their rights if they should sign a satisfactory agreement without mention of rights, Gromyko replied evasively that there should be neither positive nor negative indication with respect to Western rights. Herter thereupon declared that it would be impossible for him to face American public opinion and the Congress if he were unable to say what exactly the Western rights would be.

As for the concessions offered by the Western Foreign Ministers, Gromyko ridiculed those with regard to troop ceilings but admitted that the statements regarding clandestine and illegal activities represented a certain step forward.

The meeting ended with the Western Foreign Ministers emphasizing that the main question was the acknowledgment of Western rights while Gromyko insisted that it was rather the presence of Western troops in West Berlin.[2]

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/77), June 4, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tels. CAHTO 67, June 4, and SECTO 178, June 5, both secret.

[2]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/80), June 4, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 70, June 5, secret.

In the private meeting of June 6, the Western Powers continued to press for a definite answer from Gromyko regarding their rights in case this matter was not touched upon in a new agreement. But Gromyko was merely willing to say that whatever agreement was reached would be observed fully until German reunification had been achieved. The Soviet Union, he said, was not in favor of either affirming or denying Western rights; but any agreement among the Four Powers regarding Berlin would be observed regardless of any other agreement. Gromyko did not say, however, that such an agreement would preclude the signing of a separate peace treaty with the GDR. The most that Gromyko was willing to concede on the subject of Western rights was that the Soviet Union did not deny the existence of such rights.

With regard to a ceiling of forces, Gromyko asserted that it was not a solution to the problem of Western troops in Berlin. Rather, it was a step backward since the Western Powers had earlier been willing to talk of a reduction of troops to a symbolic number. Gromyko also indicated that the level of troops was a political and not a technical question.[1]

Meanwhile, at the plenary session (the fifteenth) held on June 5, Herter had criticized the Soviet plan for Berlin and had also delivered a well-documented indictment of East German espionage activities carried on in East Berlin. Lloyd, at the plenary session, appealed to Gromyko to reconsider the Soviet position on Berlin against the background of a world-wide desire for an easing of tensions. He also emphasized the Western purpose of safeguarding the freedom of the West Berliners, which made it impossible to accept the Soviet proposal for withdrawal of the Western garrisons and for introduction of Soviet or neutral troops into West Berlin. The remainder of the plenary session was taken up by Gromyko's reply to Herter and by statements of the two German advisers. The East German adviser expressed his willingness to enter into negotiations with the Federal Republic, while Grewe merely referred to his Government's stated policy that the West German

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/86), June 6, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 79, June 6, secret.

adviser at the conference would not engage in discussions with representatives of the "so-called German Democratic Republic."[1]

5. Western Proposals of June 8

On June 8 the Western Foreign Ministers met with von Brentano and agreed on a paper which Couve de Murville would present at a private Foreign Ministers meeting later that day. This document was a revised version of an earlier draft of June 6 and was in the form of a 5-point draft declaration by the Four Foreign Ministers along the following lines:

> (1) The Four Foreign Ministers have examined the Berlin question to find mutually satisfactory solutions to the problems which derive essentially from the division of Germany and Berlin. The Four Ministers recognize that the present agreements which are based on rights acquired through Germany's unconditional surrender could by supplemented in certain respects without prejudice to the continued validity of the rights themselves.
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> (2) The Soviet Foreign Minister has stated his government's intention to withdraw its forces from Berlin. The Western Foreign Ministers declare that it is the intention of their governments not to increase the combined total of forces which they maintain in Berlin. They also declare that they may be able to reduce such forces to the extent that developments in Berlin and maintenance of their responsibilities permit.
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> (3) The Ministers consider that measures consistent with fundamental rights and liberties could be taken in both parts of Berlin to avoid activities which might either disturb public order or seriously affect the rights and interests of the different parties.

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 188, June 5, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 245-259, 550, 580-582.

(4) The Ministers reaffirm the existing rights and obligations regarding free and unrestricted access to Berlin by land, water, and air, including those of the Western forces stationed in Berlin. These rights shall continue in force with respect to all persons, goods, and communications. The procedures applied should be those in effect in April 1959. These procedures, however, "may be carried out by German personnel, it being understood that none of the existing responsibilities are changed." The Ministers likewise reaffirm the maintenance of continued free access between East Berlin and West Berlin. All disputes regarding access shall be settled between the four Governments. The latter will establish a quadripartite commission which will meet in Berlin to facilitate the settlement of disputes arising from the application of this paragraph.

(5) The Ministers agree that arrangements agreed to will continue until the reunification of Germany.

In presenting the Western draft at the Foreign Ministers Meeting of June 8, Couve stressed the fact that point (1) represented a compromise between the Soviet and Western positions and that the Western Powers in point (4) had gone far to meet the Soviet view by agreeing to the substitution of Germans for Russians as long as the Soviet Union kept the responsibility for access and implementation of the agreement. Lloyd likewise pointed to those features of the Western proposal which represented attempts to meet Soviet wishes. Gromyko, however, declared that the new proposals did not constitute any change in the Western position.

The discussion which followed once more revealed Gromyko's unwillingness to reaffirm Western rights. In this context Gromyko read a statement made by Khrushchev in Budapest on June 6 and published on June 8 to the effect that the Soviet aim was to liquidate the occupation regime in West Berlin. This indicated to Herter a hardening of the Soviet attitude, as did the fact that Gromyko now declared that the Soviet Union could not talk about rights until the character of other agreements to be reached by the four Powers had been determined. Yet in earlier meetings, as Herter pointed out, Gromyko had declared that the Soviet Union did not take a negative attitude toward Western rights even though it did not wish to mention

them in any new agreement. Throughout the meeting Gromyko stressed the importance of ending the "occupation regime" while the Western Foreign Ministers continued to insist on the maintenance of Western rights.[1]

C. Conference Deadlock: Allied Tactics

1. Herter's Proposals to the President

As the fifth week of the Geneva Conference opened Secretary Herter informed the President that he had reached the conclusion that "we are at the crossroads which requires a new initiative on our part." Herter then proceeded to present to the President the situation at the Conference and in the end requested approval for a proposed course of action.

The essence of the problem, as Herter saw it, was that a Berlin agreement with the Soviet Union which lacked any reference to Western rights and to agreements and arrangements based on these rights would make it difficult to contest any future Soviet claim, in the event of a separate peace treaty with the GDR, that all rights and obligations not specifically covered in any agreement reached at Geneva would be extinguished. Herter professed to be dubious that some other way to protect Western rights on this point could be found, such as a Western declaration which the Soviet Union might accept without a denial.

Herter believed that a new attempt to break the deadlock was required in these circumstances and that it must be made by the United States. Therefore, he requested the President's approval for a proposed course of action. He would tell Gromyko:

(1) That the Conference was getting nowhere.

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/88), June 8, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tels. CAHTO 78, June 6; CAHTO 90, June 8; CAHTO 93, June 8; and SECTO 213, June 9; all secret.

(2) That the Allied position on the following points was immovable and not open to negotiation:

(a) Any agreement reached at the Conference must be without prejudice to the continuation of Western rights and presence in Berlin or access to Berlin.

(b) The Western Powers might consider some "modest reduction in the strength of our garrisons", but they will not let a Soviet detachment join them in West Berlin nor reduce their forces to a level which Gromyko calls "symbolic".

(c) The Western Powers have no intention of recognizing the GDR. Hence, the Soviet Union will have to work out with the GDR in a form acceptable to the West provisions to the effect that the GDR will respect any agreement reached between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union.

(d) There will be no agreement on propaganda and similar activities since the Soviet Union attaches little importance to this, but each side might undertake to exercise restraint so as not to aggravate tensions.

(e) The Western Powers could accept the Soviet Union's turning over its "functions" relating to military traffic to the GDR on the understanding that no Western recognition of the GDR was involved and that the Western Powers in the event of any future complaints would continue to have recourse to the USSR.

(3) That he, the Secretary, believed that if an agreement taking the foregoing into account were reached at the conference the President would be prepared to agree to a summit meeting by this summer or fall. Herter would ask Gromyko to consider his statement in all seriousness and would also mention the possibility of a brief recess in case Gromyko should want to consult Moscow. Finally, Herter would suggest that the prolongation of a sterile conference would add little to a relaxation of tensions.

The Secretary also requested the President's approval for his seeking the agreement of Lloyd, Couve de Murville, and von Brentano to a talk with Gromyko along the lines suggested.[1]

2. Views of the Western Foreign Ministers

While Secretary Herter was waiting for a reply to his request for instructions from the President, he had occasion to discuss with Lloyd and Couve de Murville the state of affairs at the Conference, first on the evening of June 8 and then at noon the following day. The French Foreign Minister expressed his conviction that the Conference was at a dead end and urged an immediate adjournment until mid-July. In the first meeting Lloyd strongly opposed this suggestion and instead proposed a recess of 4 to 5 days for reflection and consultation. The next day, however, Lloyd had come around to Couve's position and now likewise favored adjournment for about one month. But on both occasions Lloyd emphasized that a summit meeting was more than ever necessary, and he also proposed that the Four Foreign Ministers should work out the details of a Berlin agreement at Geneva but should leave the controversial question of the basic rights of the Western Powers for decision by the Heads of Government at the summit. In arguing his point Lloyd expressed fear that the Berlin population would be subject to slow strangulation in the absence of new access agreements, while new agreements, on the other hand, would ensure freedom and a viable economic life for West Berlin until reunification.

In his report to the President regarding these meetings, Herter stated that he found Lloyd's arguments "in good part unacceptable" but that neither Couve de Murville nor he gave any encouragement to the British Foreign Secretary's eagerness for a summit meeting. The Secretary had told his colleagues that while he had to reserve his position until he had received instructions from the President he believed that some action was necessary to impress Gromyko with the seriousness of the Western attitude. Couve de Murville had mentioned in this connection General de Gaulle's lack of interest in a summit

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[1]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 91, June 9, 1959, secret.

conference which he considered as destined for failure as matters stood at the moment.[1]

3. President Eisenhower's Instructions

President Eisenhower's reply to Herter's request for instructions was first conveyed in a telegram of June 9 from Under Secretary Dillon. The President, after discussing the matter with Dillon, had asked him to tell Herter that in view of the rapidly changing circumstances at the Conference the decision should be left in his hand. The President agreed with Herter's idea of a private talk with Gromyko, provided Couve de Murville and Lloyd concurred, and he also approved the general line of the proposed démarche vis-a-vis the Soviet Foreign Minister. The President indicated that he would be satisfied with any manner of maintaining Western rights which Herter would find satisfactory. Specifically, the President saw no objection to the idea of preserving the rights by a unilateral declaration to which the Soviet Union would raise no objection. The President also expressed hope for some agreement at Geneva regarding increased contacts between East and West Germany which could do nothing but benefit the West.[2]

The President affirmed his views regarding a summit in a telegram which he sent directly to Herter on June 10. After emphasizing that he could not attend "any so-called summit meeting" unless sufficient progress was made at the Foreign Ministers Conference, the President suggested that the other Foreign Ministers might be reminded of the fact that the United States did not send its Secretary of State to an international conference "to act as an errand boy." The President stated that there was no validity to the argument that a summit meeting would produce beneficial results while a Foreign Ministers meeting was certain to end in complete failure. Within the limits of a policy approved by the President, "the Secretary of State has considerable latitude as to tactics and substantive detail."

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[1]From Geneva, tels. CAHTO 92 and CAHTO 95, June 9, 1959, both secret.

[2]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 90, June 9, 1959, secret.

Regarding Western rights and responsibilities the President again professed to be indifferent to the manner in which the matter was dealt with "so long as there can be no possible mistake of our common understanding." As for a conference recess, the President concurred that it would be tactically preferable to complete cessation of the Foreign Ministers meetings.[1]

D. Soviet Proposal To Link Interim Agreement on Berlin with All-German Negotiations

1. Soviet Proposals of June 9-10

Before Secretary Herter had the opportunity of carrying out his proposal, now approved by the President, of talking to Gromyko alone, the latter had introduced a grave complication by presenting a new set of Soviet proposals in the private meeting of the four Foreign Ministers on June 9. These proposals were as follows:

The Soviet Union would not insist on immediate and complete abrogation of the occupation status of West Berlin and could accept temporary maintenance of certain Western rights for a one-year period. During this period an all-German committee consisting of representatives of the Federal Republic and of the GDR on a parity basis should work out the problem of reunification, agree on the principles of a peace treaty, and facilitate the development of contacts between each other. A one-year limit would be set for the successful completion of negotiations in order to prevent West Germany from delaying a peace treaty indefinitely.

Soviet recognition of certain occupation rights in West Berlin was based on the following conditions: (1) The Western Powers to reduce their forces and armaments to a symbolic number. (2) Hostile propaganda against the GDR and "other Socialist countries" from the territory of West Berlin to be stopped. (3) All organizations in West Berlin engaged in espionage and hostile activities against the GDR and other "Socialist countries" to be liquidated. (4) The Western Powers to undertake not to station atomic or rocket installations in West Berlin. If these

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[1]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 93, June 10, 1959, secret.

conditions were accepted, the USSR would be prepared to maintain the currently existing communications between West Berlin and the outside world.

The foregoing provisions would constitute the provisional status of West Berlin which would be guaranteed, first, by the Four Powers on the basis of a protocol of guarantees submitted by the Soviet Union, and secondly, by the GDR government which had expressed willingness to respect the agreed status of West Berlin. The Soviet Union would be willing to make commitments regarding access, either as part of the general agreement on the status of West Berlin, or in a separate document if the Western Powers should so desire. The documents would be registered with the United Nations.

If an understanding should be reached on making West Berlin a free demilitarized city in accordance with the Soviet proposal set forth at this conference, the commitments regarding access would be kept until the reunification of Germany. Also, there would be a quadripartite supervisory commission to watch out for violations of the agreements and ensure fulfillment without touching on the sovereign rights of the GDR.

Gromyko declared that if the Western Powers should not agree to these proposals the Soviet Union would not consent to the continuation of the existing occupation regime in West Berlin. If the Western Powers or West Germany hampered the achievement of a peace treaty within the time limit set, the USSR and other belligerents in the war against Germany would be forced to sign their own peace treaty with the GDR.

The Western Foreign Ministers characterized the newest offer as a threat. Herter declared that it amounted to transforming the Soviet ultimatum with a May 27 deadline into a new one with a one-year time limit from the time the all-German committee would begin its work. Gromyko denied that the offer was an ultimatum and compared Soviet procedures favorably with the West's unilateral actions with respect to the Paris accords of 1954 with the Federal Republic, and the Japanese Peace Treaty of 1951. Gromyko finally expressed the wish to advance his proposals in the presence of the German advisers and it was therefore decided to arrange a plenary session for that purpose.[1]

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/90), June 9, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 97, June 9, secret.

In the sixteenth plenary session of June 10, Gromyko put forward once more the proposal he had made at the private meeting on June 9. In the discussion Herter called the Soviet proposal "extraordinary" and "wholly unacceptable" on grounds of substance and because of its "threatening nature". Herter declared that the latest Soviet proposal set negotiations back not only to May 11, the opening date of the Conference, but to November 1958 "when the Soviet Union fabricated the Berlin crisis." He emphasized that the Western Powers were unwilling to negotiate under this threat but expressed hope that the Soviet Union would reconsider its position. The Foreign Ministers of Britain and France expressed their agreement with Herter's position and voiced their surprise and dismay over the Soviet proposal. Lloyd raised the question whether Gromyko's speech indicated a desire to terminate the negotiations.

The East German adviser expressed his support for Gromyko's proposal, emphasizing the need for parity in the composition of the all-German committee. The West German adviser, for his part, referred to his previous criticism of the Soviet-East German idea of an all-German committee and agreed with the contention of the Western Foreign Ministers that the proposal contained an element of threat. Gromyko attempted to reply to the Western criticism along the familiar lines and again denied that any threat was involved.[1]

2. Herter-Gromyko Meeting, June 11

The private meeting between Herter and Gromyko for which the Secretary had requested instructions from the President took place on June 11 against the background of the threatening Soviet proposals of June 9-10. Prior to this meeting the Secretary held a conference with the other Western Foreign Ministers and with Grewe, the West German adviser, and it was agreed that Herter would not propose a recess but would impress upon Gromyko the seriousness with which the Western Powers regarded his most recent proposal.

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 220, June 11, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 260-278, 550-551, 582-585.

At the outset Herter made it clear to Gromyko that he considered the latest Soviet proposal an ultimatum which made continuation of the current negotiations almost impossible. To emphasize this point, Herter mentioned that he had ordered an aircraft for return to Washington to be placed on a four-hour alert.

The Secretary stated that he had come to Geneva with authority from the President to negotiate an agreement but only within the framework of certain principles such as the following: (1) There would be no negotiations under threat; threats would also make a summit meeting impossible. (2) Allied rights and Soviet responsibilities in Berlin could not be unilaterally abrogated. (3) The West Berliners regarded the Allies not as occupiers but as protectors against hostile forces surrounding them. The Secretary went on to say that the President had reaffirmed to him that as Secretary of State he had the authority to enter into agreements and that unless the Foreign Ministers made progress in their negotiations the Heads of Government could not be expected to make any either. Herter emphasized that the purpose of his call on Gromyko was not to negotiate but to make it clear to him that any progress at the conference would necessarily have to be within the limits of what the United States could agree to. His other purpose, he said, was to clarify the apparently ultimative aspect of Gromyko's latest proposal. He wanted to satisfy himself that Gromyko's statement constituted a proposal for negotiations and not the fixing of conditions with a time limit, accompanied by an announcement that specific actions would be taken at the end of a specific time limit. The last plenary session had turned the conference situation back to last November.

Gromyko declared that he had already clearly stated that the proposal was neither a threat nor an ultimatum and that he understood that the Western Powers would not negotiate if confronted by either. Turning to the subject of a summit conference, Gromyko said that such a conference was too important a matter to be made an object of bargaining and that any country that raised artificial barriers to a summit conference would assume a heavy responsibility. Gromyko even succeeded in turning the Western arguments around by asserting that making a summit meeting dependent on the outcome of the Foreign Ministers meeting meant forcing the Soviet Union to pay a price for the summit and thus was tantamount to confronting it with an ultimatum.

In reply to Gromyko's utterances on the subject of a summit, Herter reminded him of the exchange of notes prior to the Geneva Conference in which it had been emphasized that the Foreign Ministers meeting should prepare the way for a summit which would decide those issues which had been narrowed down.[1] Herter said that President Eisenhower had set no specific condition except that the Foreign Ministers would have to provide some hope that the summit could achieve positive results.

Throughout the meeting Herter pressed for assurances from Gromyko that his proposals did not constitute an ultimatum. Gromyko finally said that he had no objection to Herter's telling the press that his proposal contained no element of ultimatum or threat.

But Gromyko also told the Secretary that he was inclined to believe that the West had no serious intention of reaching an agreement and he assured him that the Soviet Union, for its part, would never agree to putting its signature under an indefinite continuation of the occupation regime of West Berlin. Herter remarked at this point that agreement might be reached on the term "indefinite" as the Western Powers had no intention of keeping troops in Berlin indefinitely. Thus, there could be further discussions on this matter even though the West was unable to accept the Soviet position that reunification was a matter exclusively for the Germans to discuss. Gromyko expressed willingness to work hard during the next week to reach a settlement and also denied any intention on the part of the Soviet Union of ending the Conference.

Reporting about this meeting to President Eisenhower, the Secretary said he had the distinct impression that Gromyko was stalling, presumably for the reason that he had not yet received any new instructions from Moscow with respect to the situation resulting from the strong Western reactions to the Soviet proposals of June 9-10.[2]

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[1]See Part I, chapter II, section E, pp. 63-67.

[2]From Geneva, tels. CAHTO 105, June 11, 1959, and CAHTO 106, June 12, both secret.

3. Plenary Session of June 12

The seventeenth plenary session of June 12 showed no advance beyond the positions taken on both sides in the plenary session of June 10 and the Herter-Gromyko meeting of June 11.

The British Foreign Secretary in his presentation of the Western position attempted to emphasize those areas where the West had shown willingness to meet the Soviet Union's wishes. Stating that both sides agreed that the Berlin situation was abnormal, Lloyd referred to the Western proposals regarding the presence of Western troops and subversive activities in Berlin and remarked that if the Soviet Union objected to the formulations that agreements on those subjects should cover Greater Berlin it would be possible to define them as covering East and West Berlin, thus providing for reciprocity which was essential. With respect to access, Lloyd declared that the Western Powers thought it possible to work out a way by which the Soviet Union could give up some of the functions it now performed, although they could not accept a unilateral denunciation of existing agreements by the Soviet Union. By way of replying to Gromyko's repeated question as to the kind of Berlin that would be involved in the question of access, Lloyd stated that it would be a Berlin that posed no military threat, where troops would not interfere with the internal life of the city, and where there would be safeguards for the freedom of West Berlin but no incitement to violence and no subversion of its neighbors.

After Secretary Herter had called on Gromyko to repeat in this session what he had told him privately the previous day, namely, that the latest Soviet proposals did not represent a threat, the Soviet Foreign Minister indeed made such a statement. In so doing, he stressed that the Soviet proposals for a temporary regime in Berlin were only aimed at facilitating the liquidation of an outdated regime. Regarding the Western objection to a one-year limit, Gromyko asserted that the Western Powers themselves had proposed a 2 1/2-year time limit for the existence of an all-German committee in their Peace Plan, thus accepting the principle of limitation. If the one-year period proposed by the Soviet Union was too short, Gromyko asked, why didn't the Western Powers suggest a longer one? Finally, Gromyko again reaffirmed that the Soviet Union would not sign any document "which would have as its purpose the perpetuation of the occupation regime in West Berlin."

The West German adviser expressed the view that the Soviet proposals were designed to end private talks and accused the Soviet Union of trying to put the blame for the failure of the conference upon the shoulders of the Federal Republic by combining the parity formula for an all-German committee with Berlin proposals. The French Foreign Minister expressed his discouragement with the state of the conference and pointed to the inconsistency of the Soviet position of objecting to an occupation regime on one hand and asking for the stationing of token forces of the Four Powers in Berlin on the other hand.

At the close of the session it was agreed that the next meeting would be private and would take place on June 15.[1]

E. Conference Impasse and Summit Prospects

1. Herter's Suggestion of an "Informal Summit" Meeting; President's Reaction

The "hard-line" Soviet proposals of June 9-10 presented to the Western Powers after one month of conference sessions and private meetings seemed to herald an early collapse of the Foreign Ministers conference, notwithstanding Gromyko's denials, in the meetings of June 11 and 12, that any threat or ultimatum was involved. These prospects of a complete failure stimulated new diplomatic efforts outside the conference. There was, of course, the idea of saving the conference from collapse through a direct appeal to Moscow by the Western leaders. But the crisis of the conference also greatly diminished the chances for a summit meeting, thus complicating matters for the Government of Prime Minister Macmillan, who was committed to a summit meeting. These factors explain the steps which were being taken by the Western leaders.

On June 12 Lloyd told Herter that, while he agreed with him that nothing had emerged from the conference which would justify going to the summit, he was afraid that a break between the three Allies might nevertheless occur because Macmillan was committed to a summit meeting regardless of the outcome at Geneva. Herter thereupon advanced suddenly the suggestion that Macmillan

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[1]From Geneva, tel. 232, June 12, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 279-294, 551-553.

might perhaps accomplish his ends by inviting the President, de Gaulle, and Khrushchev to London for talks on matters of mutual concern without an agenda. Herter pointed out that such an arrangement might spare the West many embarassments connected with a summit and might appeal to the President, provided Macmillan was persuasive enough.

Reporting this conversation to the President, Herter emphasized that he had thrown out this suggestion at the spur of the moment and that he made it clear to Lloyd that he had not talked about it with the President or anybody else. But he had made this "off-the-cuff-suggestion" because Gromyko could be expected to discuss a summit conference and the West should be firm in not discussing it unless something was accomplished at Geneva.[1]

On June 13 Acting Secretary Dillon informed Herter that the President had telephoned him regarding Herter's idea and had said that he would find it hard to agree to for the simple reason that a meeting in London of the type suggested would be regarded by everybody as a summit. Instead, the President thought, a proper move for him might perhaps be the dispatch of a conciliatory message to Khrushchev in which he would state that the Soviet position at Geneva was creating an impossible situation for the United States in view of the position it had taken regarding a summit meeting. The President had outlined the substance of such a message and had told Dillon that some kind of concession by the Soviet Union was essential if a summit meeting was to be held.[2]

The Secretary fully approved the step. He suggested, however, that the letter not be sent until Gromyko had made his next move at the private meeting scheduled for June 15. The President fully agreed with this suggestion. Following the inconclusive outcome of the private meeting on June 15 (see below), the letter was dispatched to the Embassy in Moscow late on June 15 for immediate delivery to Khrushchev.[3]

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[1]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 107, June 12, 1959, secret.

[2]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 102, June 13, 1959, secret.

[3]To Geneva, tels. TOCAH 104, June 13, 1959, and TOCAH 105, June 14; from Geneva, tels. CAHTO 111, June 14, and CAHTO 114, June 15; all secret.

2. The President's letter of June 15 to Khrushchev

In his "personal and private" note to Khrushchev the President declared that recent developments at Geneva were imperiling the objectives of a summit conference, which, he had hoped, would be justified by the progress made at the Foreign Ministers meeting. But the Soviet Delegation at Geneva after weeks of public and private meetings had now come forward with proposals regarding Berlin which were "a clearly unacceptable challenge to our position in the city." At the same time, the President said, Gromyko had expressed the view that there was no link between the results of a Foreign Ministers' conference and a summit meeting. Gromyko's position, which implied that a summit meeting could be convoked "without prior progress of any kind", was creating an impossible situation for the United States. Reminding Khrushchev of the Soviet-American understanding on the basis of the American note of March 26 and the Soviet note of March 30, the President expressed the hope that both sides would continue to adhere to the spirit of that understanding and to assure that the Foreign Ministers produced satisfactory results. The President conceded that final agreement on critical questions affecting world peace could probably be best concluded at a meeting of the Heads of Government, but he emphasized that the Secretary of State had gone to Geneva with full authority from the United States Government to engage in negotiations and that the American purpose in going to the Foreign Ministers meeting had been "to clear the way for a fruitful or at least hopeful meeting of Heads of Government."

The President assured Khrushchev that he was not attempting to bargain or to establish conditions but that he was urging him to consider the situation as it stood. He stated that it would give him "great satisfaction" to meet later in the year to see whether they could reach settlements in "some of the issues that divide us" and thus bring about a relaxation of tensions. But the President stressed that such a meeting, if it were to offer hope of success, would have to take place in an atmosphere where neither side posed a threat to the other and on the basis of such preparatory work by the Foreign Ministers "as could give us reason to believe that the Heads of Government could reach agreement on significant subjects."[1]

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[1]Letter, Eisenhower to Khrushchev, sent to Moscow as tel. 2117 (to Geneva as tel. TOCAH 108), June 15, 1959, secret.

3. The President's Exchange with Macmillan, June 16-17

The text of the President's letter to Khrushchev had been given to the other Western Foreign Ministers at Geneva in the strictest confidence.[1] The fact that the President had implied that there would be no summit meeting unless the Geneva deadlock was broken prompted the British Prime Minister, not unexpectedly, to convey to the President his own views regarding a summit meeting in a letter of June 16.

Macmillan expressed hope that the President's letter would have a salutory effect and enable the Foreign Ministers to reach agreement, but he confessed that he saw small grounds for optimism. It was likely that no further progress on the Berlin problem would be made at Geneva. In these circumstances, Macmillan said, Khrushchev would be expected to call for a summit meeting without delay and the Western Powers would find it difficult either to accept or to refuse. The Western Powers, however, could avoid such a situation and forestall Khrushchev's move by proposing a meeting of the Heads of the Four Governments to consider the situation arising from the deadlock at Geneva. The Prime Minister emphasized that this would not be a formal summit meeting with official advisers, "assessors for the two Germanies, and arguments about the Poles, Czechs, and Italians", but an informal gathering to talk over the situation and to find a way out of the difficulties.

Macmillan thought that either the President or he himself might advance the suggestion for such a meeting. But he felt most strongly that the Western Powers should be ready for a fresh move in case of a breakdown at Geneva and warned that "our public opinion in the free World and "certainly in this country" would expect the Western leaders to do something.[2]

When the President received Macmillan's letter, he decided to dispatch an interim reply even before the next private meeting had taken place at Geneva and before Khrushchev's reply to the President's letter had been received. The President told

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[1]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 109, June 15, 1959, secret.

[2]Letter, Macmillan to Eisenhower, June 16, 1959, forwarded to Geneva in tel. TOCAH 115, June 16, 1959, secret.

Macmillan that he could not and should not retreat from the Western position as set forth in his letter to Khrushchev and emphasized that this was the U.S.-UK position which he and Macmillan had jointly agreed to at Camp David. A reversal of this position by going to the summit in the absence of the stated prerequisites would seriously impair any influence which he, the President, might exercise with Khrushchev and, moreover, would be interpreted in the United States as a dangerous exhibition of weakness,"as indeed I would interpret it myself."

The President declared that the public would not see any difference between an informal gathering of the kind suggested by Macmillan and a more formal summit meeting and that he personally saw no advantage in the "informal" formula. Conceding that Macmillan had some political difficulties regarding domestic public opinion, the President pointed out that the West would not be limited to a yes or no answer if Khrushchev should demand a summit meeting. One could suggest, for example, that the Foreign Ministers conference be resumed after a few weeks' recess and could impress upon Khrushchev how seriously the West would consider a failure to resume the work of the conference. The President stated in this connection that if Khrushchev should visit the Soviet exhibit in New York he would be willing to meet him--assuming the Allies concurred--in an effort "to get the Foreign Ministers meeting back on the tracks."

The President stated in conclusion that the continued unity of the West was the essential element in the situation. Therefore, he had conveyed to Secretary Herter his belief that the Foreign Ministers should not take any initiative toward breaking up the conference but, if necessary, should seek a recess during which an agreed Allied position regarding the next moves could be developed. The President expressed the hope that Macmillan would instruct Lloyd along similar lines.[1]

The Prime Minister replied the following day and agreed to the President's suggestion that the Western Powers should aim for a short adjournment of the Foreign Ministers conference if there was no Soviet move at Geneva as a result of the President's letter. Instructions had been sent to Lloyd to proceed

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[1]To Geneva, tels. TOCAH 115 and TOCAH 116, June 16, 1959, both secret.

in concert with Herter in this matter. Acknowledging this message from Macmillan, the President telegraphed him that they were doing all that humans could do and that they must "hope for the best".[1]

4. Private Meetings, June 15 and 16

While the Western leaders waited for the outcome of President Eisenhower's initiative with the Soviet Premier, the developments at Geneva gave no indication that the Soviet Union would eventually display a more accommodating attitude.

On June 15 the Foreign Ministers held another private meeting which was as inconclusive as earlier ones. The Western Powers pointed out that in the course of the meetings they had narrowed down the discussion to the subject of Berlin and that it would be possible to determine whether there was any chance of an agreement if the proposal presented by Lloyd on June 12 were adopted as a basis for discussion. Gromyko, on the other hand, raised the question why the Soviet proposals could not serve as a basis for discussion, and he asserted that Lloyd's statements had not revealed anything new. The Western Powers, for their part, pointed out that Gromyko had suddenly switched his position by presenting a new Soviet paper on Germany after the two sides had been discussing a Berlin solution. Moreover, in presenting the Soviet plan, Gromyko had proposed an all-German committee which could not possibly succeed in its work. Yet it was implied that action against Western rights would take place if this committee did not accomplish its task after one year. For the rest, the discussion proceeded along familiar lines, except that toward the end of the session Gromyko suggested that the Foreign Ministers or their representatives should consider recommendations to be made to the U.N. General Assembly regarding disarmament.[2]

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[1]Letter, Macmillan to Eisenhower, June 17, 1959; letter, Eisenhower to Macmillan, June 17; both sent in tel. TOCAH 121 to Geneva, top secret.

[2]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/103), June 15, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 115, June 15, secret.

Immediately following this meeting with Gromyko, the Western Foreign Ministers met with their advisers. There was general agreement that the discussion with Gromyko had gone backward and that the basic conflict had become clear, namely, that the Western Powers would not relinquish their rights in Berlin and that the Soviet Union, on the other hand, was determined to remove the Western presence from Berlin.

The Foreign Ministers decided that they would present to Gromyko a revised version of the five-point Western paper of June 8. The chief concession under consideration would be to find language which would implicitly protect maintenance of Western rights without spelling them out explicitly. The British and French also wanted the Western Powers to declare in that paper their intention to reduce their combined garrison strength in West Berlin to the figure of 10,000. The United States resisted this proposal on the grounds that any reduction in troop strength would seriously affect the morale of the West Berliners.[1]

At this stage of the conference, when each side waited for a new initiative on the part of the other which would either break the deadlock or result in an adjournment of the Foreign Ministers meeting, Herter had a private talk with Gromyko on June 16. Herter stated that the Soviet intention of getting the Western Powers out of Berlin had become more clear than ever but that the West would not remove its protection from the two million Berliners. Gromyko expressed disappointment at the negative reaction of the Western Powers to his proposal for an all-German committee, which, he asserted, was borrowed from the Western Peace Plan, and blamed West German intransigeance for the rejection of his proposal. Gromyko further indicated that the Soviet Union viewed German reunification as so distant that tying an interim Berlin solution to German reunification amounted to perpetuating the occupation regime indefinitely. In the course of an exchange regarding a denuclearized zone, disarmament, and nuclear test talks, Herter declared that a security zone was inextricably tied to German reunification and that Soviet rejection of progress toward reunification therefore had removed this matter from the discussion.

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[1]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 116, June 16, 1959, secret.

After Herter had shown Gromyko the President's letter to Khrushchev, he announced that the Western Powers would hand Gromyko a new draft which they considered a fair interim solution for Berlin. If this draft was unacceptable, which was likely in view of the Soviet desire to drive the Western powers out of Berlin, then any agreement was impossible. Speaking for himself only, he felt that in that case perhaps everybody should go home, think over the problems, and meet at some later date.[1]

F. New Western and Soviet Proposals: Conference Recessed

1. Western Proposal of June 16

In a meeting held on June 16 the Western Foreign Ministers, with Brentano participating, approved the revised draft of the proposal which they had tabled at the private meeting with Gromyko on June 8. The new paper, which was at once transmitted to Gromyko, was designed, as Herter reported to the Department, "for greater public appeal" and to be used at the conference or after it had broken up.

The new Western proposal was again in the form of a statement by the Four Foreign Ministers regarding the matters agreed upon after examination of the Berlin problem. But the paper had been rearranged and rephrased and differed from the document of June 8 on the following points:

1) It was stated at the outset that the Four Foreign Ministers agreed that the best solution for the Berlin problem would be reunification. (section 1)

2) The Soviet Government had made known its decision no longer to maintain forces in Berlin. The Three Western Foreign Ministers declared their intention "to limit the combined total of their forces in Berlin to the present figure (approximately 11,000) and to continue to arm these forces only with conventional weapons as at present." (section 1a)

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation between Herter and Gromyko (US/MC/107), June 16, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 120, June 16, secret.

The main deviation from the June 8 paper at this point was the naming of a concrete figure for a ceiling of forces and the reference to conventional weapons; the latter must be considered a concession to Gromyko's proposal of June 9-10 banning atomic and rocket installations from West Berlin.

3) In the matter of access the new proposal did not mention the controversial subject of Western rights but stipulated that "there shall continue to be free and unrestricted access to West Berlin by land, by water and by air, for all persons, goods and communications, including those of the French, United Kingdom and United States forces stationed in West Berlin." (section 1b)

4) According to the new proposals, the quadripartite commission whose task it was to examine difficulties arising from the application of the principles governing access "may make arrengements if necessary to consult German experts." (section 1b)

5) With regard to restricting certain activities in both parts of Berlin, the new Western proposal defined the activities as those which might "disturb public order or seriously affect the rights and interests, or amount to interference in the internal affairs, of others." (section 2)

6) Finally, the new proposal declared, as had the previous one, that the proposed arrangements would remain in force until the reunification of Germany, but added the clause, "unless subsequently modified by Four Power agreement." (section 3)

The main difference between the proposals of June 8 and June 16 was undoubtedly the absence of any explicit reference to Western rights. This omission reflected, of course, the impasse in the long, drawn-out discussions on this subject with Gromyko.[1]

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[1]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 121, June 16, 1959, confidential; for a published text of the Western proposal of June 16, see Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 312-313.

Another important difference between the two proposals was that the one of June 16, while stating that the access procedures "may where it is not already the case be carried out by German personnel", eliminated the passage found in the corresponding section of the June 8 proposal, "it being understood that none of the existing responsibilities are changed" (cf. ante p. 28). This was the closest the Western Powers had ever come to incorporating an "implied agency" theory in their proposals.

In the private meeting held on June 17 the Western Foreign Ministers asked Gromyko to comment on the new Western paper which had been given to him the previous evening. Gromyko declared that he would make only a few preliminary remarks covering two points: There seemed to be little that was new in the Western proposals and it was clear that the two sides had different approaches to the Berlin problem. (2) The specific figure for the strength of the Western garrisons was no concession at all. A symbolic figure, in his view, would be 3000-4000. Lloyd's insistance that the paper showed how much the West had tried to find a common ground with the Soviet Union failed to convince Gromyko, and the Foreign Ministers agreed to meet again the following afternoon (June 18). But before the Foreign Ministers met again Khrushchev's reply to President Eisenhower's letter had been received and it gave little reason to expect any new Soviet concession or initiative at Geneva.[1]

2. Khrushchev's reply to President Eisenhower

Khrushchev's reply to President Eisenhower's letter was handed to the American Embassy in Moscow in the afternoon of June 17. The letter was a skillful defense, albeit conciliatory in tone, of the Soviet position in Geneva, combined with a plea for a summit meeting. This call for a summit was sounded at the beginning of the letter when Khrushchev stated that a decision on all the difficult international questions appeared to be beyond the powers of the Foreign Ministers and that the heads of governments and states having "greater plenary powers and rights" should participate in the solution of "ripe international questions."

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/109), June 17, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 126, June 17, secret.

Khrushchev stated that the work done by the Foreign Ministers at Geneva had "a certain positive significance" in spite of all the difficulties and divergences, by clarifying questions, defining existing disagreements, and trying to draw nearer the viewpoints on both sides. But he regretted that the Western Foreign Ministers refused to discuss the Soviet proposals which offered a good basis for agreements and instead had tried to foist upon the Soviet Union an agreement confirming the indefinite preservation of the occupation regime in West Berlin. The Soviet Premier asserted that the Soviet proposal had not opposed the preservation of Western occupation rights for a definite period and that its essence was a gradual liquidation of the "abnormal situation" in West Berlin and preparation for a peace treaty and German unity. He expressed surprise that the question of the period was now being presented as the main obstacle to an agreement. Khrushchev defended the Soviet position in favor of a time-limit for a German settlement with arguments similar to those used by Gromyko at Geneva, asserting in particular that prolonged negotiations over a German settlement would enable West Germany to proceed with its policy of militarization and preparation for war. Pointing to the fact that the Soviet proposals had spoken of a one-year period while Western Powers had set a different time-limit for the work of the all-German committee in their peace plan, Khrushchev declared that it was now necessary "to find something in the middle" and to reach an agreed decision. If there was agreement on the fundamentals, there would be no difficulty in agreeing on the necessary periods.

At the close of his letter Khrushchev expressed agreement with the President that all participants in the Geneva conference must make efforts to draw together on their respective points of view. But he insisted that if the Foreign Ministers did not succeed in reaching the necessary understanding "a summit meeting will become even more urgently necessary."[1]

3. Western Reactions to the Khrushchev Letter

Acting Secretary of State Douglas Dillon informed Herter on June 17 that the President was favorably impressed "with the conciliatory tone of the message" and believed that it provided

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[1]Letter, Khrushchev to Eisenhower, sent as tel. 145 from Moscow to Geneva (2570 to the Department), June 17, 1959, secret.

some material for a discussion with Gromyko prior to any move toward a conference recess.[1] Reaction at Geneva was quite different, however, and on June 18 Herter stated in a telegram that he found great difficulty in discovering a conciliatory tone in the message. Khrushchev had, in fact, "frozen the unacceptable position previously outlined by Gromyko" of putting a time-limit on any temporary arrangement for Berlin and of attacking the validity of the positions of the Western paper of June 16. Herter expected Gromyko to use these Western proposals as a basis of discussion in the meeting scheduled for that day but also to insist that all concessions were to be made by the West. Herter expressed hope that the President would not reply to Khrushchev until he had had a chance to discuss the over-all situation with him and with Dillon.[2]

The Western Foreign Ministers and their advisers met later that day (June 18), and all agreed that Gromyko's position would now be frozen since Khrushchev's reply did not contain a single thought not already incorporated in Gromyko's proposals. Lloyd, however, wondered what the Western position ought to be in case Gromyko should accept the Western paper but add a provision for a two-year duration of the interim arrangement for Berlin with subsequent reexamination of the position by the Foreign Ministers. Herter declared that the current paper constituted a minimum position which could not be whittled down.[3]

When Gromyko postponed the meeting of the Foreign Ministers scheduled for June 18 until the following day, Herter telegraphed the President his impression that this indicated that the President's correspondence with Khrushchev had had results. But if no results should be forthcoming the Western Foreign Ministers, he stated, would favor a 30-day recess. He himself felt that the session of June 19 might be the decisive one.[4]

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[1]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 124, June 17, 1959, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 129, June 18, 1959, secret.

[3]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 131, June 18, 1959, secret.

[4]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 132, June 18, 1959, secret.

The President's instructions for this next--and possibly last--meeting with Gromyko were conveyed to Herter by Dillon on June 18. The President first stipulated that no Berlin solution which carried a time-limit measured in years would be acceptable and that such a time-limit should be expressed only in terms of a changing situation such as German reunification or any other event that would make the Germans themselves willing to change the situation. Regarding other matters, the President as well as Dillon felt that a reduction of the current level of forces in Berlin by as much as 50 percent would be acceptable if other elements of an agreement were satisfactory. This idea, however, should not be injected into the negotiations at this point although it indicated current thinking in Washington on that subject and thus might be useful to the Delegation. On the whole, the President, according to Dillon, felt that unless Gromyko showed "unexpected give" a recess of one month would be the best course. Finally, the President assured Herter that he would not hurry with a reply to Khrushchev's overtures for a summit meeting.[67]

4. Soviet Proposal of June 19

The meeting of the four Foreign Ministers on June 19 opened with a statement by Gromyko which to a considerable extent repeated the ideas of Khrushchev's letter to President Eisenhower. Declaring that the exchanges at the conference could provide an acceptable basis for an agreement on the questions of Berlin and of an all-German committee, Gromyko outlined such an agreement and subsequently handed to the Western Foreign Ministers a paper containing his remarks.

Gromyko first listed the Soviet desiderata for an interim status for Berlin presenting what was merely a shortened version of the four points of the Soviet proposal of June 9-10 regarding reduction of Western garrisons to "symbolic" numbers, the banning of subversive activities, and the prohibition of atomic and rocket installations in West Berlin. These measures, Gromyko said, should be agreed to first. On the other hand, the time-limit was not a matter of major importance or of principle to the Soviet Union. Gromyko felt that the two sides should agree on something in between the Soviet proposal of a one-year time-limit and the

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[1]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 127, June 18, 1959, secret.

2 1/2-year time-limit for the functioning of an all-German committee suggested in the Western plan. He believed that it would be possible to agree upon a 1 1/2-year time-limit, during which period an all-German committee composed of representatives of the Federal Republic and the GDR on a parity basis would promote contacts between the two parts of Germany and consider German unification and a German peace treaty. If no solution during the agreed period could be reached, the participants of the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference could resume consideration of the West Berlin question. Such discussion, after the expiration of the agreed time-limit, "should undoubtedly be conducted with due regard of a situation obtained by that time." Gromyko's statement further indicated that for the duration of the agreement "the communications of West Berlin with the outside world will be preserved in their present form." Finally, the new proposal repeated the provisions of the June 9-10 proposal regarding the establishment of a quadripartite committee to supervise the fulfillment of the obligations by the parties to the agreement.

After Gromyko had handed the Western Foreign Ministers a paper containing the foregoing statements, he remarked that the Foreign Ministers, of course, had not narrowed down their differences all the way, particularly on the question of troops. On the other hand, it is perhaps noteworthy that the text of Gromyko's remarks as subsequently released by the Soviet Delegation included portions which were not presented by Gromyko at this meeting of June 19. The essence of these remarks was that the positions of the two sides were brought closer together in the course of the conference on matters such as reduction of armed forces, no stationing of atomic and rocket installations in West Berlin, termination of subversive activities, and the necessity of establishing an all-German committee to facilitate reunification and a peace treaty.

Following Gromyko's statements the Western Foreign Ministers requested a recess during which they met with their advisers and with Brentano and Grewe. There was general agreement that Gromyko's new suggestions varied only in detail from the Soviet proposal of June 9-10 and that the main element in both was the same, namely, the elimination of the Western rights during or at the end of the agreed period. In their evaluation of Gromyko's points the Western Foreign Ministers were undoubtedly influenced by the news of the speech which Khrushchev had just delivered in Moscow on the occasion of the departure of an East German delegation. In this speech Khrushchev criticized the policy of the

Western Powers at the conference, called their proposals for German reunification "groundless and unacceptable", and stated several times the Soviet intention of signing a peace treaty with East Germany if the West continued to hinder a German peace treaty.[1]

5. Rejection of Soviet Proposal and Decision to Recess

The statement on which the Western Foreign Ministers had agreed was read by Herter when the meeting resumed later in the day. The Western Powers declared that Gromyko's statement, "which was timed to coincide with Mr. Khrushchev's speech today", did not differ in any important aspect from the Soviet proposal of June 9-10 and, though extending the time-limit of the proposed agreement to a year and half, reserved to the Soviet Union "freedom of unilateral action" at the end of this period. Moreover, according to the Western statements, it was clearly the Soviet intention that the Western Powers upon signing such an agreement should acquiesce in the liquidation of their rights and abandonment of their responsibilities in Berlin. The Western Foreign Ministers conceded that the proposal provided for resumption of quadripartite consideration of the Berlin question at the end of the 1 1/2-year period but pointed out that, unless agreement had been reached in the meantime, the Western Powers would enter these negotiations "without any rights at all as far as Berlin or access to it was concerned." In these circumstances the Western Powers suggested an adjournment of the conference, which would enable the Soviet Government to study the Western proposals further and would give the Western Powers an opportunity to consider the position "in relation in particular to Mr. Khrushchev's statement of today."

Gromyko, for his part, denied that the Soviet proposal reserved to the Soviet Union freedom to take unilateral action and pointed out that a conference composed of the same participants as the current meeting would consider the Berlin question if the all-German committee should not reach agreement in the prescribed period. Gromyko likewise rejected the interpretation of the Western Powers that upon entering into negotiations at the expiration of the 1 1/2 year period they would have no rights in West Berlin. That statement, Gromyko, asserted, was a one-

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[1] Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 316-328.

sided interpretation of the Soviet proposals by the West; the Soviet Union had made no special statements with regard to Western rights. On the subject of a recess, Gromyko declared that the Soviet Government preferred to continue the current talks and to reach practical results; but if the other side wanted a recess, the Soviet Government would have to take this into account. It is perhaps not without significance that an expanded version of Gromyko's comments on the Western statements made at that meeting was released to the press by the Soviet delegation in the evening of June 19. This version put particular emphasis on "the arbitrary nature" of the Western Powers' conclusion that the Soviet proposal implied the loss of their rights in Berlin at the expiration of the 1 1/2-year time-limit.

Herter stated that Gromyko's assertion that the West had not understood correctly the proposals of the Soviet Union only made him more convinced than ever that a recess was desirable. The Secretary assured Gromyko that the United States would give serious consideration to the Soviet proposals and was ready to be persuaded that it was wrong.

After agreeing on adjourning the conference until July 13, the Four Foreign Ministers also agreed on a communiqué concerning the recess which was formally approved at a brief, final plenary session on June 20.[1]

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/114), June 19, 1959, 2 p.m., secret; U.S. Del.Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Brentano, and others (US/MC/110), June 19, 5 p.m., secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 139, June 20, confidential; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 295, 328-334.

Chapter III

DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE CONFERENCE RECESS

A. British-American Discussions Regarding a Berlin "Moratorium"

1. British Proposals

The circumstances in which the first phase of the Foreign Ministers meeting ended determined to a large degree the agenda for the next phase. The Western proposals of June 16 and the Soviet proposals of June 19 had been rejected by the other side, but both sides had agreed to reexamine them during the period of adjournment. Moreover, the Soviet Foreign Minister, especially in the statement issued in the evening of June 19, had disputed the Western interpretation of the latest Soviet proposals and of Khrushchev's speech of June 19, i.e., that the West would have no rights at the expiration of the 1 1/2-year period while the Soviet Union would have reserved to itself freedom of unilateral action. This ambiguity in the Soviet position was seized upon by the British in an initiative taken a few days after the conference had adjourned.

On June 23 Sir Harold Caccia, the British Ambassador, wrote to Secretary Herter that he had been instructed to convey to Herter the thoughts of Foreign Secretary Lloyd on the future of the Foreign Ministers Conference and that he was doing so in writing. The Ambassador enclosed with his letter a brief note from Lloyd to Herter confirming the purpose of Caccia's démarche, as well as a copy of a message on the same subject from Macmillan to the President.

The essence of Lloyd's view was as follows: Gromyko's statements at the end of the conference and especially the one issued in the evening of June 19 indicated a departure from the tough line of the Soviet proposals of June 19 and of Khrushchev's speech of the same day. Moreover, Gromyko had confirmed to Lloyd in a meeting of June 20 that it was the Soviet position that, if no agreement could be reached in the all-German committee, a conference would be held on the same basis as the Geneva conference and that no unilateral Soviet action would be taken during such a conference. Thus, according to Lloyd, Gromyko seemed to

be trying to "remove the flavor of an ultimatum" before the conference recessed. In the absence of any better alternative that would be acceptable to either side, Lloyd suggested that the Western Powers carefully examine the idea of such a moratorium as suggested by the Soviet side, perhaps for a period of 2 1/2 years, provided it was expressed in acceptable terms. In order to get such a moratorium it might be necessary, Lloyd suggested, "to agree to some modification in the existing situation, e.g., in relation to 'activities' in Berlin, the operation of the 'procedures' by Germans, ... and even perhaps in relation to the level of Western troops."

Lloyd felt that a great virtue of the moratorium was that much could happen during such a period; if some system of contacts between the two parts of Germany could be got going, the West might conceivably be in a better position at the end of such a period than it was currently. As for the length of the moratorium, Lloyd believed that the Western Powers should propose 2 1/2 years as this would carry them beyond the 1961 German elections but that they might settle for two years "in the last resort". In any event, the Foreign Secretary wanted it understood that the foregoing were just thoughts and not formal proposals and that the British wanted to have American comments first before speaking to the French and Germans.

Macmillan in his letter to the President, also appended to Caccia's communication to Herter, expressed general agreement with Lloyd's ideas as set forth in the message to Herter. Macmillan declared that he did not believe that the West could get a Berlin settlement which would last until the reunification of Germany and that a good deal could be said, therefore, in favor of an interim settlement which the Russians would find easier to accept and would be likely to honor. But the real significance of Macmillan's letter was to highlight the underlying reasons for the British Government's eagerness to settle for some kind of a Berlin solution. The Prime Minister stated that the Western Powers must "maintain a posture in which we can rally our people to resist a Russian attempt to impose their will by force." At the same time he emphasized that "it would not be easy to persuade the British people that it was their duty to go to war in defense of West Berlin", pointing out that it would be paradoxical to go to war to defend the liberties of a people "who have tried to destroy us twice in this century." Still, Macmillan wrote, it would be possible to appeal to British idealism and realism if it had been demonstrated that "we have

made every endeavor to put forward practical solutions and that the Russians were unwilling to accept any fair proposition." The Allies should therefore do what ordinary people would think to be reasonable. Macmillan doubted that such people would consider as reasonable a West German refusal to discuss the matter of contacts and reunification in any forum with the East Germans.[1]

2. American Ideas

On June 25 Herter handed Caccia a reply to Lloyd's message in which he promised a later statement of American views. But the Secretary told Caccia that he had discussed with the President at considerable length certain ideas similar to those expressed by Lloyd. There might be some possibilities in the moratorium concept, Herter said, but there must be assurance that Western rights would not be diminished at the end of the given time-period. The United States was trying to reduce the moratorium concept to a more precise form in order to see its full implications.[2]

The British-American discussions regarding a moratorium and the exchanges between the President and the Secretary along similar lines were reflected in a new paper which was prepared in the Department. As early as June 24, the Director of the Office of German Affairs, Martin Hillenbrand, submitted to Assistant Secretary Livingston Merchant a draft which attempted to incorporate the ideas expressed by the President and the Secretary. This draft, in the form of a communiqué similar to the form of the Western proposals of June 8 and June 16, subsequently underwent several revisions.[3] When Herter saw Caccia again on July 1, he told him that after their last meeting he had discussed with the President a paper which, according to Herter's description,

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[1]Letter, Caccia to Herter, June 23, 1959, secret, enclosing letter from Lloyd to Herter, secret, and message from Macmillan to Eisenhower, top secret.

[2]Letter, Herter to Lloyd, June 25, 1959, secret; memorandum by Hillenbrand (EUR) of conversation between Herter and Caccia, June 25, secret.

[3]Memorandum by Hillenbrand (GER) to Merchant (EUR), transmitting "Draft Communiqué and Supplementary Material", June 24, 1959, secret.

was a revised version of this draft communiqué. Herter said that the draft communiqué essentially contained only two new elements: a) substitution of a four Power Commission with German advisers for the all-German committee proposed by the East Germans, b) introduction of the United Nations on a reciprocal basis for both sections of Berlin to monitor certain propaganda activities. Herter doubted that the Soviet Union could accept the latter point, but in that case the burden of responsibility for rejecting it would fall upon that country. Herter mentioned that there were two blanks in the draft which might be left to be filled in by the Heads of Government at a summit meeting.[1]

Herter said that he wanted to show the paper to Caccia and discuss with him the substance of United States thinking on the subject but that he could not leave it with him. According to Herter, the President was opposed to distributing the paper to the Allies because it would inevitably lead to publicity about alleged new Western offers and this would be tactically undesirable. The Secretary emphasized in this connection that the Western Powers were handicapped at Geneva by talk about fall-back positions and that the Soviet side was unable to accept the fact that there were none. Caccia asked the Secretary whether he was suggesting that, tactically, the Western Powers should begin at Geneva probing the Soviet Union. The Secretary replied in the affirmative, adding that the Foreign Ministers by talking about the development of their position only after they had reassembled in Geneva would avoid giving the impression through leaks that they were making concessions right from the beginning.[2]

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[1]Herter did not specify in this conversation which two passages in the draft were to be left blank. Examination of the draft paper indicated two blank passages, one referring to the number of troops, the other to the length of the interim period after which the Foreign Ministers were to convene if no agreement had been reached. Memorandum by Merchant (EUR) to Herter, "Preparation for Resumption of the Geneva Conference", July 9, 1959, secret, Attachment B, "Draft Communiqué Containing Agreed Recommendations of Foreign Ministers", secret.

[2]Memorandum by Hillenbrand (EUR) of conversation between Herter and Caccia, July 1, 1959, secret.

B. Other Developments

1. Gromyko's Public Statement of June 28

The need for the Western Powers to use the next phase of the conference for probing the Soviet position and clarifying the ambiguous statements made by Gromyko at the close of the preceding phase of the conference was demonstrated by another statement of Gromyko's issued on June 28 during the conference recess. Again Gromyko took issue with the "misinterpretation of the last Soviet proposal" by the Western Powers, who, he declared, asserted that their rights would automatically lapse at the expiration of the interim period while the Soviet Union would immediately embark upon unilateral actions. Gromyko posed the rhetorical question whether the fact that the Soviet Union proposed to hold new negotiations after the expiration of the terms provided for in the agreement did not "speak for itself". Secretary Herter, referring to Gromyko's new statement in his news conference on July 9, declared that this was "a new point on which we certainly would want some clarification." He also stressed that this was the only thing that had happened since the conference recessed and that it was an "important statement".[1]

2. The President's Invitation to Khrushchev

A diplomatic initiative which began formally two days before the Geneva conference reconvened ultimately proved to be more significant for the further development of the Berlin problem and thus also for the fate of the conference than any British-American discussions regarding the next phase or any statements by Gromyko.

On July 11 President Eisenhower wrote to Khrushchev that it seemed to him profitable to have an informal exchange of views with the Soviet Premier and that he had therefore asked Deputy Under Secretary Murphy to convey some ideas on this subject to Soviet Deputy Premier Kozlov, who had been on a visit to the United States and was scheduled to return to Moscow the following day. The President had reason to expect that his offer would be accepted by Khrushchev, and he actually mentioned in the

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[1] Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 349-360, 373-379.

letter that suggestions to the same effect had been attributed to Khrushchev by the American State Governors who had recently visited the Soviet Union. In a letter of July 22 the Soviet Premier wholeheartedly accepted the President's proposal to meet with him informally in the United States in the summer and also welcomed the idea that the President might visit the Soviet Union in October. Khrushchev also agreed with the President that an informal discussion was preferably at this stage, emphasizing, however, that a meeting "at the highest level" was still necessary, irrespective of the results achieved by the Foreign Ministers at Geneva.[1]

The prospective meeting between the President and the Soviet Premier had great impact upon the developments in the last phase of the Geneva Conference which began on July 13, even though the participants learned only after the conference had been in session for some time that the exchange of visits was definite. There was a general feeling that no new initiatives could be expected of the Foreign Ministers once the problems were taken up by the heads of the two world coalitions.

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[1]Letter, Eisenhower to Khrushchev, July 11, 1959, top secret; letter, Khrushchev to Eisenhower, transmitted to Geneva in tel. TOCAH 166, July 22, 1959, top secret.

Chapter IV

THIRD AND FINAL PHASE, JULY 13-AUGUST 5, 1959

A. Soviet Insistence on Establishing a Link Between a Berlin Agreement and All-German Negotiations

1. Western Tactics

Prior to the opneing of the conference on July 13 the Western Foreign Ministers met with Brentano to discuss tactics. The latter presented the point of view of the Federal Republic, which had been set forth in detail in a German working paper shortly before the conference reconvened.

The German paper made it quite clear that in the opinion of the Federal Republic the Western proposals of June 16 "contain no further margin for possible concessions" regarding Berlin and that these proposals went "so far towards the limit of the acceptable" that they should be withdrawn if the Soviets should maintain their own proposals in the next stage of negotiations. In this meeting of the Western Foreign Ministers, however, Brentano emphasized the main positive suggestion in the German paper, namely that the Western Powers should emphasize the German question as a whole. They should, therefore, propose a four Power Commission with German experts attached to it to study the problems of contacts between the two Germanies, the reunification of Germany, and the principles of a peace treaty, during the period of the interim or temporary agreement on Berlin.

Couve de Murville strongly opposed the German proposal because he believed it would establish a link between the Berlin problem and the question of Germany as a whole and would make it implicit that the status of Berlin would change without reunification. Couve also felt that the proposal would establish a permanent body enabling the Soviet Union to interfere in the affairs of the Federal Republic. Secretary Herter declared that he and Lloyd viewed the German proposal more favorably but that the Western Foreign Ministers should try to resolve the issue in another meeting.

It may be worth noting that Brentano also proposed on this occasion to admit Poland and Czechoslovakia to the conference so as to set the stage for a unilateral declaration of non-aggression by the Federal Republic or for the possible offer of a non-aggression pact to those two countries. The other Western Foreign Ministers, while agreeing that the idea of such a non-aggression pact was interesting and deserved to be studied, were unanimous in opposing the admission of these two countries to the conference for the reasons stated at the beginning of the conference which were still valid. They felt, moreover, that the Geneva Conference was not the best forum for such a proposal by the Federal Republic. Brentano thereupon withdrew his suggestion.

The Western Foreign Ministers reached agreement in this meeting also with respect to another question of tactics. They decided that a probe of Gromyko's position, with particular reference to his speech of June 28, could be undertaken without accepting the Soviet proposal of June 19 as a basis of discussion.[1]

In the next meeting of the Western Foreign Ministers on July 14 the discussion mainly revolved around Couve's contention that if the West discussed the questions of Berlin and of an all-German committee together it would risk discussing both issues under the threat to Berlin and having to make concessions on both counts. Couve suggested that the Soviet Union be told that the Western Powers would not discuss both questions together but that they would be willing to take up the matter of an all-German committee after the Berlin question was resolved. Couve was of the opinion the West would have to accept a time-limit on an interim settlement if it wanted to go to the summit after removal of the Berlin threat. But he saw no advantage in accepting a time-limit with respect to the broader German question which would then also be brought under the Berlin threat.

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[1] "Tactics of the West in the Second Phase of the Conference" (WP/51), July 12, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. SECTO 301, July 13, 1959, secret.

The Western Foreign Ministers, while not reaching a definitive decision on this question of tactics, indicated a large measure of agreement with Couve's analysis of the problem.[1]

2. Plenary Sessions, July 13-16

The last phase of the conference resembled the first one insofar as both sides presented their positions in a series of consecutive plenary sessions.

At the nineteenth plenary session on July 13 the Western Foreign Ministers reviewed aspects of the work of the previous phase of the conference; Gromyko repeated his proposal of June 19 and also referred to "provocative actions" in Berlin; the East German adviser attacked the Federal Republic and voiced support for the Soviet proposal; and the West German adviser refuted these accusations. Gromyko also proposed that the German advisers be included in private meetings. This was flatly rejected by the Western Foreign Ministers.[2]

The twentieth plenary session on July 15 was essentially a series of exchanges between Gromyko and the Western Foreign Ministers in which each side sought to clarify the position of the other. The discussion centered around the Soviet Union's interjection of the question of an all-German committee into the interim solution of the Berlin problem. The Western Foreign Ministers tried to obtain an explanation why the Soviet Union had reopened the over-all problem of Germany in this manner after the Foreign Ministers had turned away from this question and for 15 days had discussed the Berlin question alone. Gromyko, for his part, insisted that there was a logical connection between an interim Berlin agreement and an all-German committee. The meeting ended as inconclusively as it had begun. Secretary Herter proposed, as the best way to make progress, taking up one by one those points which pertained to a possible temporary

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 311, July 14, 1959, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECT 303, July 14, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 381-403, 554-555, 585-589,

settlement of the Berlin problem. Gromyko, however, asserted that the question of an all-German committee had been raised and could not be ignored.[1]

The twenty-first plenary session on July 16 opened with a detailed exposition of the Western proposal of June 16 by Secretary Herter. Lloyd then outlined the respective positions of East and West regarding an interim Berlin agreement with respect to levels of forces, armaments in Berlin, subversive activities, duration of the agreement, access, and the situation at the end of the interim agreement. Lloyd concluded from this assessment that there seemed to be some element of flexibility in the Soviet position. Gromyko expressed regret that the Western Foreign Ministers did not support the "free city" scheme or the Soviet proposal of June 19. Referring to Lloyd's presentation of the Soviet position, Gromyko declared that the latter had drawn his conclusions from what he, Gromyko, had not said rather than from what he had said. Bolz, the East German adviser, argued along familiar lines in favor of the Soviet proposal of an all German committee, while Grewe, the West German adviser, attacked the link between the all-German committee and a Berlin settlement, pointing out the difference between the proposal for a mixed German committee in the Western peace plan and the Soviet plan for an all-German committee.[2]

3. Meetings of July 17-20: Western Proposal for a Continuing Foreign Ministers Conference

In spite of Gromyko's earlier demand that the Germans be included in the next private meetings, only the Four Foreign Ministers and their advisers were present at the first private meeting in this phase of the conference. This private meeting was held on July 17.

At this meeting Gromyko indicated clearly that the Soviet Union would insist on Western agreement to some form of all-German negotiations as condition for an interim settlement.

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 321, July 15, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 404-418.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 336, July 16, 1959, official use only; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 419-438, 555-559, 589-592.

Gromyko fended off all attempts by the Western Foreign Ministers to elicit from him a clear statement as to the reason why the Soviet Union wanted to link those two matters, except for saying that there was a real and logical link which he had explained in the plenary sessions. Gromyko likewise rebuffed efforts by the West to ascertain a correct interpretation of the Soviet proposal of June 19 with regard to the duration of an interim agreement. He insisted that Soviet statements on this point were perfectly clear and that only the Soviet Union's own interpretation of the pertinent statements should be relied upon. When Lloyd again tried to sum up the Eastern and Western positions on a Berlin settlement, as he had done in the July 16 plenary session, Gromyko flatly declared that no understanding existed between the two sides on any position except perhaps with regard to not stationing rockets and nuclear weapons in West Berlin. In any event, Gromyko insisted, all aspects of the problem were linked with one another and it was impossible for the Soviet Union to take a position on one matter without an understanding having been reached on the whole package.

Secretary Herter, reporting about this meeting in a telegram to the President, conveyed his impression that the conference had taken a turn for the worse and that the Soviet position had hardened since the recess. Herter stated that Gromyko was only interested in talking about the all-German committee or some variant of it which would result in forcing the Federal Republic to deal with the GDR as an equal, thereby enhancing the latter's prestige and taking the first step toward the Soviet-type of German confederation. In Herter's view it was too early to say that the conference was nearing a break-up but he wanted to send the President a word of warning as to the way things were going.[1]

At the next quadripartite private meeting, held July 20, Lloyd told Gromyko that the Western Foreign Ministers were disappointed at his unwillingness to discuss an interim Berlin solution and at his insistence on discussing only all-German negotiations. While the Western Powers could not accept the Soviet proposal for an all-German committee as it would legalize

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/133), July 17, 1959, confidential; from Geneva, tels. SECTO 346, July 17, and CAHTO 149, July 17, both secret.

the permanent partition of Germany, they had, however, given serious consideration to meeting the Soviet demand that Germans should not be excluded from a discussion of the all-German problem. Since the Soviet side had rejected the proposal for a Four Power commission with German advisers, the Western Powers, Lloyd stated, had devised a compromise between the Western approach and that of the Soviet Union and they would introduce this proposal at the plenary session which was to follow the private meeting of the Foreign Ministers. The text of the proposal read by Lloyd was as follows:

> "The Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers, as at present constituted, shall continue in being for the purpose of considering the German problem as a whole. It should also consider questions relating to the extension and development of contacts between the two parts of Germany. For these purposes the Conference shall meet from time to time at such level and at such place as are agreed. The Conference may also make special arrangements for the consideration of particular questions arising out of its terms of reference as defined above."

Gromyko declared that he would comment in detail later but that his first reaction was that the proposal did not reconcile the fundamental differences between the Soviet and the Western positions. The discussion of the new Western proposal continued inconclusively in the private meeting and was then taken up again--this time with German participation--in the plenary session which followed immediately.

Secretary Herter, who presented the proposal to the twenty-second plenary session on July 20, pointed out that it would enable the representatives of the Four Powers to keep the German problem under continued discussion. Moreover, under its terms of reference, the conference could consider all the subjects catalogued in the Soviet proposal of June 19, such as the matter of contacts between the two Germanies, concrete measures for German reunification, and preparation of a peace treaty with Germany.

In the discussion Lloyd defended the Western proposal, emphasizing in particular its flexible nature. The Germans took their stand as expected, with Bolz stressing the need for GDR participation on the basis of full equality in accordance with

the proposal for an all-German committee and Grew expressing support for the new Western initiative. Gromyko stressed, as he had done in the earlier private meeting, that the Western Powers and the Soviet Union approached the problems from different angles. The Soviet Union, he declared, wanted the Four Powers to assist the two Germanies to reach agreement between themselves while the West envisaged a settlement of the German question by the Four Powers with assistance of German advisers. Gromyko further complained that the Western Powers did not consider the equality and sovereignty of the parties concerned, and he appealed to them to be more flexible in taking into account the views of the USSR.[1]

4. Herter's Exchange with the President, July 21

The meetings of July 20 induced Secretary Herter to express his pessimism regarding the conference in a telegram which he sent President Eisenhower on July 21. Herter told the President that the basic formula of the Western counterproposal to Gromyko's "unacceptable all-German committee" was "as far as we can go" and that the West simply could not conceive of according the GDR the kind of recognition inherent in the Soviet proposal. The conference, Herter stated, faced a complete impasse unless Gromyko abandoned his insistence that the West accept his all-German committee as a precondition to any further discussion of an interim Berlin arrangement, or unless he receded from this position sufficiently to accept the Western formulation or some variant of it "which would still preserve our essentials on this point."

Herter accordingly asked the President to authorize him to tell Gromyko that, as a result of the Soviet attitude, the end of the conference was clearly at hand, and to inquire of him how this "sterile" meeting could be adjourned without a resulting increase in tensions. Herter felt strongly that any continuation of the conference's "existing posture" would be interpreted by the Soviet Union as evidence of Western weakness and anxiety. On

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/136), July 20, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tels. SECTO 361, July 20, official use only, and SECTO 365, July 21, secret; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 439-456, 559-560, 592-596.

the other hand, if Gromyko was maintaining his "stonewall" attitude for tactical reasons, the contemplated approach might produce some movement on his part. Herter also suggested that this approach to Gromyko might usefully be reinforced by having Vice President Nixon, who was about to depart for a visit to the Soviet Union, impress upon Khrushchev the seriousness of the Western Powers' interest in winding up the conference. In conclusion, the Secretary declared that, if this approach produced no change in the Soviet position, the West would have no choice but to recess or terminate the conference "with consequent effects on prospects of a summit conference."[1]

In his reply telegram, which was also dispatched on July 21, the President pointed out to Herter that, if the West should take action to terminate the conference during this particular week, the bruden of negotiation would inescapably fall upon the Vice President, who was to meet with the Soviet leaders the following weekend (July 25-26). He saw no reason, however, why Herter should not tell Gromyko privately that it would be impossible to continue the negotiations without some more progress in the near future. The President suggested that a recess of two or three days might indicate "that we are considering terminating the farce."

In a postscript to this telegram the President informed Herter of the important new development mentioned earlier in this study. The Soviet Ambassador had acquainted the President with Khrushchev's reply to the President's letter (ante. p. 59). regarding an exchange of visits. At the moment, however, the President felt that no real progress was observable, since Khrushchev in the letter "simply played the same old record" by asserting that there was no point in arguing that without some progress at Geneva meetings at the highest level would have no beneficial results.[2]

5. Meetings of July 21-23: Continued Deadlock

The private meeting of July 21 and the plenary sessions of July 22 and 23 were chiefly devoted to further discussion of the link established by the Soviet Union between an interim

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[1]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 156, July 21, 1959, secret.

[2]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 165, July 21, 1959, secret.

agreement on Berlin and an all-German committee. The discussion merely tended to bring into sharp relief the deep clevage between the two sides with regard to this issue.

At the private meeting of July 21 discussion of the new Western proposal for a continuing conference proceeded along familiar lines. Gromyko insisted that the concept of four Power responsibility for German reunification was totally unacceptable and that therefore any four Power discussion of this subject was a waste of time. The Western Foreign Ministers kept pointing out that their proposal provided for continued discussion of the German problem as a whole, and Lloyd, in particular, stressed that the Western approach would permit flexibility in deciding upon procedures for discussing the matter of contacts between the two Germanies, reunification, and a peace settlement. To this, Gromyko replied that the Soviet Union did not envisage technical contacts between the two Germanies but rather political contacts between the two states.

Gromyko was persistently evasive toward the question repeatedly asked by the Western Foreign Ministers whether agreement on Berlin was contingent upon an agreement regarding all-German negotiations, and he refused to admit that the Western interpretation of the Soviet position was correct, viz., that these two matters were contingent upon one another. Gromyko, however, was willing to make the concession that discussion of the matter of all-German negotiations could be suspended while the Foreign Ministers exchanged views on other problems, provided they subsequently returned to the subject of all-German negotiations. When Herter asked whether the time-limit for all-German negotiations also applied to a Berlin settlement, Gromyko replied that the two problems were not necessarily related in this respect. The Soviet proposal, he said, had stipulated a time-limit for all-German negotiations so that they would not continue indefinitely without results. If the Germans failed to settle on a formula for reunification, the Four Powers would meet again to discuss a peace settlement. This, Gromyko explained, meant the conclusion of separate peace treaties with the two Germanies. Herter remarked at this point that the Soviet proposal meant consigning the German people to a permanent division of their country since East Germany would never agree to the principle of free elections.

At the end of this meeting the Secretary said he wanted to make it clear that, if the Foreign Ministers failed to agree in the next few days on how to carry on the discussion of the German

problem as a whole, the question should be dropped once and for all. If Gromyko should then insist that the question be raised again for discussion it would be desirable at that time to end the negotiations.[1]

The unproductive discussion continued in the twenty-third plenary session on July 22. Gromyko again urged the need for the "two German states" to discuss jointly inter-German contacts which, he said, were more than technical problems, as well as a peace treaty and German unity; and he attacked the Western proposal for a continuing Foreign Ministers conference with German advisers as constituting Four Power dication to the Germans. In this connection, Gromyko endorsed a previous suggestion made by the East German adviser that the two German delegations could begin their contacts at the current conference and agree on future procedures. Gromyko also declared that the Soviet Union had no objection to a "parallel exchange of views" regarding an interim agreement on West Berlin. Finally, in reply to frequent questions by the Western Foreign Ministers on previous occasions, Gromyko stated that the Soviet Union would not take unilateral action during the period of validity of an interim agreement on West Berlin and during negotiations at a Foreign Ministers conference for the purpose of reviewing the question of West Berlin.

This statement did not satisfy Secretary Herter, who, in another attack on the Soviet effort to link a Berlin settlement and an all-German committee, pointed out that termination of the temporary Berlin agreement would coincide with the termination of the work of that committee. Following the inevitable failure of the committee, there would again rise a GDR threat to West Berlin with the support of the Soviet leaders. Thus, Herter declared, the Federal Republic would be faced with the alternatives of either coming to terms with the concept of an all-German committee in an effort to save Berlin or having the Soviet Union take advantage of the committee's failure to place the Western Powers in Berlin in an impossible situation. The meaning of the Soviet proposal was that 2.5 million people would be placed under a threat, and for this reason the West would firmly reject it.

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/144), July 21, 1959, secret.

Couve de Murville supported Herter's arguments, stating that the alleged flexibility of the Soviet position consisted in getting a 100 percent satisfaction on the substance in exchange for concessions on details. The French Foreign Minister also pointed out that the statement made by Gromyko earlier in that session did not constitute a reply to the real question, namely, whether the Soviet Union would refrain from interfering with the existing rights of the Western Powers in Berlin as long as the four Powers had not reached a new agreement concerning those rights.[1]

Western criticism of the Soviet concept of an all-German committee continued in the twenty-fourth plenary session of July 23. Lloyd pointed out that the Soviet proposal, by removing four Power responsibility for reunification, would provide no incentive for the GDR to make concessions since it would obtain recognition in case of deadlock. Lloyd also drew attention to the fact that the proposal would actually lead to negotiations between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union to the exclusion of the Three Western Powers, considering that the GDR was under complete Soviet control. Herter made a similar point when he said that, if the Soviet Union seemed to dissociate itself from a German reunification, a matter of vital importance to that country, by leaving it entirely to the Germans, the reason was obviously that the so-called GDR was not expected to follow policies different from those of the Soviet Union. The Secretary also took the opportunity to remind Gromyko that the joint responsibility of the four Powers for a settlement of the German question had been definitely recognized by the Heads of Government in their Geneva directive of July 23, 1955. Finally, Herter declared that acceptance of the Soviet-type all-German committee would mean recognition of the GDR government as a free government, which would be absolutely unacceptable to the Western powers. Couve de Murville attacked with similar arguments, stressing that the Soviet proposal would make reunification impossible because the two sides spoke different political languages. The French Foreign Minister also emphasized the difference between the all-German committee and the mixed

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[1]From Geneva, tels. SECTO 378, July 22, 1959, official use only, and SECTO 392, July 25, secret; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 457-469.

committee of the Western Peace plan, which, he stated, left the final decision to the German people as a whole through the instrument of free elections.

Gromyko, while criticizing the views expressed by the Western Foreign Ministers, noted that the latter had expressed their willingness to discuss an interim agreement regarding West Berlin parallel with the proposal for an all-German committee. He declared that the Soviet delegation was prepared to do so at any time.

One other statement made at this session by the British Foreign Secretary is worth noting in view of a subsequent British initiative. Reverting to the much-belabored question as to what would happen at the end of the interim period if no agreement had been reached, Lloyd stated that his understanding of the Soviet position was that negotiations by the participants in the current conference would be resumed and that pending results of these negotiations the situation in Berlin would remain unaltered, with neither side taking any unilateral action. Therefore, Lloyd felt that there was "an interim agreement on Berlin sketched out in outline for us" and that it should be possible to get final acceptance of this interim agreement either at Geneva or at some other meeting.

Following a violent attack by Bolz on the Federal Republic and a rebuttal by Grewe, the session came to an end and it was decided that the next meeting would be a private one.[1]

B. Discussion of Provisions of Berlin Interim Agreement

1. Private Meetings of July 24 and 27

When the Western Foreign Ministers met with Gromyko again in private session at Geneva on July 24, neither side seemed eager to continue the discussion of whether to link an interim Berlin settlement and establishment of an all-German committee; this question had been the main topic of the immediately preceding private and public sessions. Instead, the various points of a

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[1]From Geneva, tels. SECTO 378, July 23, 1959, official use only, and SECTO 392, July 25, secret; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 470-485, 560, 596-598.

possible Berlin agreement were taken up. In the matter of troop levels, the West maintained that the current strength of 11,000-12,000 was symbolic, while Gromyko insisted that the Soviet Union would only consider a reduction to a level of 3,000-4,000 as symbolic. Gromyko also quarreled with the phrasing of the Western proposal of June 16 regarding the non-stationing of nuclear arms and missiles in West Berlin; he demanded that this provision be made a separate item reworded in such a way as to make the restriction apply only to West Berlin. Herter, however, insisted that such a restriction must apply to Berlin as a whole. A similar argument developed with respect to restraints on propaganda and subversive activities which, Herter insisted, must also be on the basis of absolute equality. Gromyko called this approach unacceptable but indicated in the course of the discussion that mutually acceptable language on these points might perhaps be found. Again the Soviet Foreign Minister denied the need for a four Power commission to settle difficulties over access, as suggested in the Western proposal of June 16. Even though Herter criticized Gromyko at this meeting for expecting the West to make all the concessions, he expressed the view in a cable to the President that "some little advance had been made on the Berlin problem" and that the question of the all-German committee was shelved for the time being.[1]

The same points were taken up in the next private meeting of the Foreign Ministers on July 27. In the matter of troop levels, Herter told Gromyko unequivocally that limiting troop strength to the current level was the final Western concession. Gromyko again termed this totally unacceptable as it did not constitute any change in the existing situation. Asked why the Soviet Union attached so much importance to this question, Gromyko declared that a Western agreement to reduce troop strength would be considered as substantial proof of Western willingness to reduce tensions and to dispel Soviet suspicions that insistence on the current troop levels indicated the existence of Western plans for using these troops for sinister purposes. Gromyko therefore opposed Lloyd's suggestion that this question should be left for decision by the heads of government.

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[1]Memorandum of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/157), July 24, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 169, July 24, top secret.

Regarding propaganda and subversive activities, the Western Foreign Ministers continued to insist on absolute reciprocity. This time, however, Gromyko indicated that he might agree to a formula providing for restraints on GDR interference in West Berlin's internal affairs. With respect to the Soviet position that the responsibilities of a supervisory four Power commission should be confined to troop levels, armaments, and activities, and should not cover access, the Western powers pointed out that it was inconsistent to ask the West to accept a Soviet commitment on access without inspection procedures and at the same time to insist on a four Power commission to deal with the Western commitments on troop levels, armaments, and activities.

The Foreign Ministers finally agreed that there would be no meeting the following day, July 28, but that both sides would prepare and exchange draft terms of a Berlin settlement.[1]

2. An Italian Initiative: The Pella Memorandum

Brief mention ought to be made at this point of an Italian initiative regarding the Geneva Conference. On July 27 Herter was given a memorandum from Italian Foreign Minister Pella containing the suggestion that, if the Foreign Ministers should be unable to reach accord on an interim Berlin agreement, negotiations on this subject should be entrusted to deputies assisted by representatives of the two parts of Germany. The memorandum also suggested that during an interim period West Berlin should be reunited provisionally to West Germany and access arrangements for Western forces in Berlin should be jointly guaranteed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and by the USSR. During this interim period allied rights in Berlin would remain unchanged.

The U.S. delegation felt that the Pella memorandum contained little in the way of new thoughts. Pella gave an elaborative commentary on his memorandum at a dinner for the Western Foreign Ministers on July 27. But Secretary Herter told Pella that, while

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[1]Memorandum of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/158), July 27, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. SECTO 411, July 28, secret.

the paper was a serious contribution by the Italian Government, the conference was in too late a stage to shift in a new direction.[1]

3. Western and Soviet Proposals of July 28

The Western Powers presented to the Soviet delegation on July 28 a paper which was essentially the same as their proposal of June 16, except for two substantive revisions that reflected some of the ideas discussed by the British and American Governments, and by the President and the Secretary, in the period of the conference recess:

> 1) A provision for a UN representative in Berlin with free access to all parts of the city who would report to the Secretary-General regarding any propaganda and subversive activities in Berlin.
>
> 2) A provision that, in the absence of reunification, the arrangements in the agreement could be reviewed "at any time after 5 years by the Foreign Ministers conference as now constituted if such review is requested by any of the Four Governments.[2]

Also on July 28, before submitting the new draft to the Soviet Delegation, the Western Foreign Ministers, including Brentano, considered additional minor changes in the language of the Western proposal which might be required by the course of the negotiations with Gromyko. The most significant of these changes involved a decision to drop the proposal for a quadripartite commission with responsibilities for access if Gromyko should insist upon a commission to supervise other parts of the agreement, i.e., the commitments undertaken by the Western Powers.[3]

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[1]From Geneva, tels. SECTO 402, July 27, 1959, and SECTO 407, July 28, both confidential.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 410, July 28, 1959, secret.

[3]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 414, July 29, 1959, secret.

The Soviet Union on July 28 offered a proposal which was also substantially the same as its earlier proposals of June 9-10 and June 19, except for one substantive change. In many instances, however, the formulations were sharper.

The preamble in the Soviet draft stated that the Foreign Ministers had agreed to implement certain measures during an interim period of a year and a half "with the aim to change the existing situation in West Berlin. The provision regarding reduction of the Western garrisons to token contingents now specified that the total strength of these garrisons should not exceed 3,000 to 4,000 men. The provision concerning the commitment of the three Western Governments to take measures against the use of West Berlin territory for "interference in the internal affairs of other states" and subversive activities and hostile propaganda against the USSR, GDR and other "Socialist States" was now supplemented by reference to a GDR declaration regarding non-interference in the internal affairs of West Berlin and respect for the interim status of West Berlin. This was the one substantive change, a concession to the Western demand for reciprocity. The provisions with respect to the non-stationing of nuclear weapons, a quadripartite committee to supervise the obligations of the proposed agreement, and the issuance of a declaration by the USSR that West Berlin's communication with the outside world would be preserved in its existing form for the duration of the agreement were in accordance with earlier Soviet proposals and with Gromyko's statements in the private meetings. The proposal for the all-German committee was now worded in such a way that the four Powers would express themselves in favor of such a committee (or of "negotiations between the two German states in some other form acceptable to them") to consider questions related to a peace treaty with Germany, "which would also ensure a radical solution of the question of West Berlin," as well as measures for German unification and the development of contacts. With regard to a reconsideration of the West Berlin question by the governments represented at the Geneva conference if no agreement had been reached in the all-German committee, the Soviet paper of July 28 merely followed the earlier Soviet proposals.[1]

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 409, July 28, 1959, secret.

In a telegram to the Department commenting upon the Soviet paper, Herter declared that the new proposal was "totally unacceptable" and more objectionable than the June 19 proposal. Western obligations, he declared, were spelled out in greater detail than in previous Soviet papers; Western commitments under the interim agreement were in the form of obligations, while Soviet undertakings were expressed in unilateral declarations. Moreover, the proposals reflected a Soviet design to enhance the status of the GDR by way of the GDR declaration on non-interference and by reference to negotiations "between German states."[1]

C. New British Pressure for a Meeting at the Summit

1. Macmillan-Eisenhower Exchange of July 22

The unsatisfactory progress of the Geneva Conference, as on previous occasions, stimulated renewed British pressure for a summit meeting and, in the process, revealed differences between the British and American assessment of the situation.

On July 22, Prime Minister Macmillan sent President Eisenhower a letter containing some observations about the Soviet leadership which, he thought, might be useful to Vice President Nixon on his forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union. In this letter Macmillan remarked that negotiations at Geneva "seem to be going ahead fairly steadily, if rather slowly", and that he was still optimistic about the outcome.[2]

When President Eisenhower replied to Macmillan on July 22, he made it clear that he was much less hopeful than the Prime Minister "of any worthwhile result at Geneva" and that, barring an abrupt change in the Soviet attitude, the accomplishment "will be zero, or even minus." The President emphasized that he had been willing to interpret progress as a prerequisite to a summit meeting in a most liberal manner. As long as the Western Powers could be assured of complete respect of their rights in Berlin and as long as there could be an agreed program which the Foreign Ministers could present to the Heads of Government for study and

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 419, July 30, 1959, secret.

[2]Letter, Macmillan to Eisenhower sent to Geneva as tel. TOCAH 168, July 22, 1959, secret.

discussion, "our own minimum criteria for holding such a meeting would be realized." But the President felt that a summit meeting without that much justification would be a fraud and a diplomatic blunder. The President declared that he was aware of the argument that the need for a summit meeting was the greater the less progress there was at the Foreign Ministers meeting but that such sentiments were not shared by the American people.[1]

2. Lloyd-Herter Conversations, July 23-26

The British argument that the prerequisites for a summit meeting had been practically met was also put before Secretary Herter at Geneva. Foreign Secretary Lloyd expressed his ideas on the subject in a note which he sent to Herter during the plenary session on July 23.

Lloyd advanced the view that in the event of a break-down of the conference Khrushchev would sign a separate treaty and at the same time declare his willingness to go to a summit meeting. In such a situation, Lloyd stated, it would be inconceivable for the Western Powers to come within measurable distance of war without making a final attempt to reach agreement with the Soviet Union "by the only remaining feasible method, i.e., a summit meeting." Repeating a statement which he had made at the plenary session of July 22, Lloyd asserted that an agreement on West Berlin in outline had been achieved at the conference and that it could be made final either at Geneva or at the summit meeting. On the other hand, the question of how to discuss the German problem as a whole could be left for decision by the heads of government. To stress the urgency of his plea for a meeting at the summit, Lloyd concluded by stating that in view of all their joint efforts to maintain a common position "I dread the possibility of our having to take up different positions in public."

Lloyd enclosed with his note to Herter a draft message from Macmillan to the President which had been prepared prior to receipt of the President's letter of July 22 to Macmillan. The

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[1]Letter, Eisenhower to Macmillan, sent to Geneva as tel. TOCAH 171, July 22, 1959, secret.

message was characterized by Herter as an "almost hysterical plea" that the President call at once a summit meeting which should take place in Quebec on September 1.

When Secretary Herter spoke to Lloyd the following day (July 24), he first persuaded him that Macmillan's planned message to the President would be inappropriate in view of the President's most recent letter. Herter also felt that it would be better to wait with such a message until the question of rights was settled at Geneva. Herter took this opportunity to put Lloyd into the picture regarding Khrushchev's visit to the United States because he felt that this matter, which so far had been treated confidentially, had a real bearing on the problems of the Geneva conference. Lloyd naturally displayed great interest in the new development, speculated on its effects on a summit meeting, and finally promised to discuss the whole matter with Macmillan during the following weekend (July 25-26).[1]

Upon his return from this meeting with the Prime Minister, Lloyd met with Herter, Merchant, and Whitney in the evening of July 26 and told them that Macmillan had drafted a new message for the President. Lloyd summarized the message before showing it to Herter, stating in this connection that the Prime Minister had made it clear that an exchange of visits with Khrushchev would be a terrible mistake unless it was firmly related to a prior summit meeting; otherwise, suspicision would be aroused among the allies and Macmillan's position would be made extremely difficult.

Herter did not fail to point out to Lloyd that he resented the implication that the United States could not be trusted by its allies in a bilateral discussion with Khrushchev. Lloyd disclaimed any lack of faith but insisted that such visits would constitute a new bilateral relationship from which the allies would be excluded.[2]

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[1]Letter to Herter, July 23, 1959; memorandum by Herter of conversation with Lloyd, July 23; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 169, July 24; all top secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 177, July 27, 1959, top secret.

3. Macmillan's Letter to President Eisenhower of July 27

The Macmillan letter to the President which Lloyd had discussed with Herter was dispatched on July 27. It stated at the outset that, if the formula of the Western proposal of June 16 was accepted as the basis for an agreement, "that should be good enough for us." It was the Prime Minister's understanding that Gromyko was now accepting this, and the Prime Minister therefore felt that the Geneva discussions had served "to narrow the differences and to provide the outline of at least an agreement for a moratorium over Berlin."

With regard to the particulars, Macmillan suggested a period of 2 1/2 years for the moratorium; whether agreement on such a period could be reached at Geneva or at a meeting of the Heads of Government, should be left open. Macmillan furthermore believed that the Foreign Ministers were already within measurable distance of an agreement on the matters of nuclear armaments in Berlin and of military and civilian access during the moratorium but that the very important question of a level of forces could only be resolved at a meeting of the Heads of Government. The question of how to discuss the question of Germany as a whole during the moratorium should likewise be left for discussion by the Heads of Government.

Macmillan accordingly suggested that the Foreign Ministers should wind up their work at Geneva and prepare a summit conference on the basis of the progress made so far. The question of a date for the summit meeting, of course, led into the related topic of Khrushchev's visit to the United States. If this visit should take place prior to a summit meeting, it would be difficult to avoid discussions of substance, and this, Macmillan feared, "might cause considerable suspicion on the part of the French and Germans, nor would my public position be very easy to explain." Macmillan therefore suggested that the President should in his next letter to Khrushchev couple the idea of the visit with a proposal for a formal summit meeting in Washington or Quebec. At the same time the President should suggest that a Western summit meeting, with Adenauer participating, should convene in Paris a week or ten days before the East-West summit meeting.[1]

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[1]Letter, Macmillan to Eisenhower, July 27, 1959, sent to Geneva as tel. TOCAH 202, July 29, top secret.

The President's reply on the subject of a summit meeting was largely determined, as in the past, by the extent of the progress achieved at the Geneva Conference. Now, however, the question of a summit meeting had to be related also to a new policy of establishing channels of direct communication between the President and the Soviet Premier. It is therefore necessary to examine these developments next.

D. Effects of Geneva Developments on Khrushchev Visit and on Prospects for a Summit Meeting

1. The President's Reply to Khrushchev, and the Vice President's Moscow Conversations

The gap between the Soviet and Western positions expressed in the papers of July 28 illustrated again the lack of substantive progress made at Geneva in the first two weeks of the last phase of the conference. This situation confronted the United States with two problems. First, there was the problem of persistent British pressure for a conclave at the summit, as expressed through the channel of Macmillan's correspondence with the President, despite the fact that the conditions set by the United States for a summit meeting had not been met. Secondly, there was the problem of what effects the unsatisfactory developments at Geneva might have on the planned exchange of visits between the President and Khrushchev. Would the exchange be placed in jeopardy, or, on the contrary, could these visits serve to break the deadlock at Geneva or at least make it possible to wind up the conference and shift the Berlin problem to a new plane, presumably to a summit meeting?

President Eisenhower and his advisers had felt for some time that his follow-up message to Khrushchev's letter of July 22 should emphasize how important the achievement of substantial progress at Geneva would be in creating a favorable atmosphere for Khrushchev's visit to the United States. A draft letter to Khrushchev made this point very strongly and even stated specifically that Herter's proposal for a modus vivendi in Berlin (i.e., the Western proposal of July 20 for a continuing conference) could be the basis for a settlement at Geneva which in turn would justify a holding a summit meeting.[1] At one point

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[1]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 182, July 23, 1959, top secret.

the President even indicated to Dillon his belief that Khrushchev's visit itself was conditioned on noticeable progress at the Geneva Foreign Ministers meeting, but he allowed himself to be persuaded that the invitation which he had extended to Khrushchev did not set forth such a condition.[1]

When Secretary Herter saw the draft letter, he advised deleting detailed references to problems under negotiation at Geneva so as not to involve the President in actual negotiations by correspondence with Khrushchev. He also proposed "to decouple an exchange of visits with Khrushchev altogether from a summit conference". Accordingly, he proposed a shorter draft letter in accordance with these ideas.[2] The actual letter sent to Khrushchev was in accordance with these suggestions by the Secretary. Under Secretary Murphy, however, took the opportunity of a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador to inquire whether Premier Khrushchev, who had been away from Moscow, was acquainted with Herter's proposal, and, if so, whether his current views might be reflected in new instructions to Gromyko. Murphy's continued emphasis on American interest in having the Khrushchev visit occur under the most favorable auspices prompted Ambassador Menshikov to ask whether there was an innuendo that progress at Geneva was the condition put on the invitation to Khrushchev. Murphy evaded the question by stating that adequate progress at Geneva would justify a summit meeting and at the same time provide a favorable atmosphere for Khrushchev's personal visit.[3]

It would be no exaggeration to say that Khrushchev himself supplied the answer to the questions which Murphy had raised with Menshikov. The occasion was a conversation between the Soviet Premier and Vice President Nixon on July 26 in the course of the latter's visit to the Soviet Union and Poland. Others present on this occasion included Deputy Assistant Secretary Foy Kohler and Ambassador Llewelyn Thompson on the American side and Anastas Mikoyan and Trol Kozlov, Deputy Chairmen of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. Khrushchev conceded in this conversation that the Western proposals for a provisional arrangement in Berlin contained some sound elements but otherwise praised

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[1]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 183, July 23, 1959, top secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 165, July 24, 1959, top secret.

[3]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 188, July 24, 1959, top secret.

the Soviet proposals and suggested that both of these proposals could serve as the basis for a discussion. To the Vice President's question, whether the Soviet position left any room for negotiations, Khrushchev replied that the Soviet Union could not accept the perpetuation of the occupation regime in West Berlin, regardless of how this would affect a summit meeting. Except for this point, he said, the Soviet position was flexible and fluid, and the Western Powers could present to the Soviet Union any proposals to ensure the social order in West Berlin and access to the city. At the end of the conversation the Vice President referred to a point made in the President's correspondence with Khrushchev, namely, that if the Khrushchev visit was to be successful the atmosphere of crisis ought to be removed. Khrushchev thereupon indicated that he knew that the same argument had been made by Murphy in his talk with Menshikov and added that instructions had been sent to Gromyko.[1]

Whether or not Khrushchev's statements to the Vice President in Moscow indicated any approaching change in the Soviet position at Geneva, President Eisenhower, as he pointed out in a telegram sent to Herter on July 27, was under no illusion that the Soviet Union had accepted the Western proposals of June 16 as Macmillan had indicated in his most recent letter to the President.[2] Nevertheless, the President obviously felt now that it was safe to go ahead with the Khrushchev visit, and he therefore dispatched on July 29 his somewhat delayed reply to Khrushchev's letter of July 22.

After suggesting a date sometime in September for the visit, the President again made the point which had already been emphasized by Murphy to Menshikov and by the Vice President to Khrushchev himself, namely, that public opinion in the United States would be favorably affected if the visit could take place "in an improved environment resulting from progress at Geneva." The President made it very clear that progress at Geneva so far had been disappointing to him "and not sufficient to justify a

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[1]Memorandum by Kohler (EUR) and Ambassador Thompson of conversation among the Vice President, Khrushchev, and others, July 26, 1959, confidential.

[2]To Geneva, tel. TOCAH 195, July 27, 1959, top secret.

summit conference of the four Powers engaged in the conference." Stating that he did not despair of achieving progress which would justify a summit meeting, the President suggested that the Foreign Ministers should make as rapid progress as possible in the next few days. In the event that they did not reach agreement, however, they should plan to meet again "with a view to accomplishing such interim and preparatory work as would justify us in holding a summit meeting of the four Heads of Government this autumn."[1]

2. The President's Exchange with Macmillan, July 29-30: Proposal of a Western Summit Meeting

The President, having definitely settled the matter of a Khrushchev visit and at the same time having reaffirmed his views regarding a summit meeting, was now also prepared to deal with the plea made in Macmillan's letter of July 27 that he call such a meeting. The President's reply, dispatched on July 29, made the following points:

Since little could be achieved by continuing the Geneva talks much longer, they should be brought to an end by the middle of the following week. This was the more necessary as Secretary Herter had to prepare for the OAS meeting scheduled to convene in Santiago de Chile on August 12. If Gromyko really accepted the Western proposals of June 16 regarding Western rights in Berlin with provisions for a reasonable moratorium period, the minimum requirements for a summit conference would have been met and it would even be possible to leave the decision on the length of the moratorium for final decision by the Heads of Government. Accroding to the President's interpretation, however, there had been no acceptance by Gromyko of the Western formula on rights but only a clarification of positions and a sharpening of issues. Therefore, barring a last-minute shift by Gromyko, "our minimum hope for progress may not be met." To go immediately to a summit meeting under these conditions "would run the risk of spectacular failure or unthinkable capitulation."

The President explained that, with all this in mind, he had entered into communication with Khrushchev regarding a visit to the United States which, the President hoped, would give the

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[1]Letter, Eisenhower to Khrushchev, July 29, 1959, top secret.

Soviet leader a better picture of America's strength and its way of life "and would certainly take the edge off the Berlin situation." If Khrushchev's visit were followed by a visit to Moscow by the President, the stage might be set for further progress at the Foreign Ministers' level which could then lead to a summit meeting. In this connection, the President reminded Macmillan that the date and place for a summit meeting were to be arranged by the Foreign Ministers; therefore, if the President should suddenly issue an invitation to a summit meeting as Macmillan had urged, it would give an additional air of crisis to such a summit meeting, which was the very thing that ought to be avoided.

In view of the fact that Khrushchev's visit was scheduled for September, the President believed that the summit meeting would have to take place in November or December. In order to dispel French and German uneasiness over the exchange of visits, however, the President was proposing a Western summit meeting in London or Paris prior to Khrushchev's arrival in America. In any event, all these meetings would take the edge off the crisis and enhance the prospects for a successful summit conference. Finally, the President declared that, even if Gromyko at this point should give the Western Powers at Geneva everything they wanted, the summit meeting should not be held before November so that he might use the opportunity of his talks with Khrushchev to make sure that the latter's attitude at a summit meeting would be based on "maximum understanding of our Western attitudes, power, and resources."[1]

In a letter of July 30 Macmillan expressed general agreement with the President's message with respect to winding up the Foreign Ministers conference, postponement of a summit meeting to November, and holding a Western summit meeting prior to the Khrushchev visit. However, while the President had only mentioned the possibility of a last minute shift by Gromyko to Geneva, Macmillan felt that Gromyko was really showing signs of wanting to do business, and he therefore expressed the hope that the West would not discourage him. Macmillan apparently meant that the West should not be too difficult over the question of Western rights, for he pointed out that the Western Powers

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[1]Letter, Eisenhower to Macmillan, sent to Geneva as tel. TOCAH 202, July 29, 1959, top secret.

were not aiming at more than an interim settlement, a moratorium on Berlin, and therefore "we can not expect that our rights shall be guaranteed beyond the end of the renewed negotiations." It is worth noting that Lloyd told Herter at Geneva on July 31 that he entirely disagreed with this particular statement on rights made by the Prime Minister in his letter to the President.[1]

The idea of a Western summit meeting died quickly when Couve de Murville told Herter on July 29 that de Gaulle would neither invite the Western Powers to hold such a meeting in Paris nor attend such a meeting. Although the President instructed Herter through Dillon to continue to impress upon Couve de Murville that a Western summit meeting would be helpful in showing Western unity, he indicated that he would consider meeting Adenauer and Macmillan in London and making a separate visit to Paris to see de Gaulle.[2] Such separate meetings of the President with the heads of Western Governments eventually took the place of a Western summit meeting prior to Khrushchev's visit with the President.

E. Discussion of a Berlin Interim Agreement on Basis of July 28 Proposals

1. Meetings of July 29-31

Macmillan's hope that Gromyko really wanted to do business in Geneva was not borne out by the final days of negotiations at the conference. To be sure, the improved climate in Soviet-American relations as a result of the forthcoming exchange of visits seemed to be reflected for a while in attempts to bring the opposing positions closer together; and this gave rise to a certain optimism regarding the outcome of the conference. Ultimately, however, no real accord could be reached on those issues on which East and West were most strongly divided.

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[1]Letter, Macmillan to Eisenhower, sent to Geneva as tel. TOCAH 208, July 30, 1959, top secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 187, July 31, 1959, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 181, July 29, 1959; to Geneva tel. TOCAH 209, July 30; both top secret.

At a private meeting of July 29 Secretary Herter informed Gromyko that he would have to leave Geneva on August 6 in order to attend the OAS meeting in Santiago. Gromyko thereupon stated that the work should be speeded up so that the conference could be over by August 5.

With respect to substantive matters, the discussion dealt mostly with the Western paper of July 28. Gromyko denied that the Western paper contained anything new, to which Herter replied that the new Western proposal incorporated for the first time a time-limit for the interim agreement and that this was a major Western concession. As Gromyko repeatedly reverted to the question of troop levels, the Secretary stressed that the Western offer to agree to a ceiling was a final one. On the other hand, Herter indicated that it would be much easier to reach agreement on Berlin if the link between all-German negotiations and the Berlin question were dropped. In the ensuing discussion Gromyko implied that if agreement could be reached on a reduction of forces the all-German questions could be discussed separately. The importance of the troop question was also stressed by Zorin, who stated that without Western commitments to reduce troop levels a Berlin agreement would be useless. As for subversive activities, Herter had the impression that Gromyko did not regard them as a matter of major importance. Regarding an interim agreement, Gromyko stated that he could not agree to a period of five years or to an automatic continuation of the interim agreement if negotiations at the end of the interim period should fail.

Commenting on this meeting with Gromyko in a telegram to the Department, Herter declared that there was agreement among the Western Foreign Ministers that Gromyko was setting more store on troop reduction than on anything else because this was for him a symbol of Western willingness to recognize the "abnormal situation" in Berlin and to talk with the Soviet Union about it.[1]

A private meeting of the four Foreign Ministers on July 30 was mainly devoted to discussion of the Western paper of July 28. Gromyko repeated that he saw no substantive change in the Western

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation between Herter and Gromyko (US/MC/164), July 29, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. SECTO 447, Aug. 1, secret; from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 182, July 29, top secret.

position since the June 16 proposal. With regard to specifics, he objected to the five-year interim period which, he said, was twice as long as the period proposed originally by the West. Furthermore, he would not accept any reference to the Soviet Union's intention not to maintain troops in Berlin unless the Western Powers were prepared to withdraw all their troops from Berlin. Finally, Gromyko preferred to have the provision regarding access refer to the current situation rather than to April 1959.

In the course of the discussion Couve de Murville argued that the Soviet proposal that there should be a supervisory commission with responsibilities for troop levels, armaments, and activities, but not for access, was one-sided. Gromyko, however, asserted that the Western and Soviet obligations under the new agreement would be of a different character. The former would be new, stemming directly from the agreement, while the Soviet obligation on access would not represent any change.

Secretary Herter declared that the time had come for producing a formula for some of the provisions of an interim agreement. He suggested that the Foreign Ministers, in view of their divergences in the matter of troop levels, could leave a gap in their draft regarding this subject, which could be filled in later. Gromyko maintained, however, that if gaps were left it would be difficult to draft the other provisions; if, on the other hand, agreement was reached on the most important point, namely, troop levels, the drafting of the other provisions would not be too difficult. At Lloyd's suggestion it was finally agreed that a working party of the officials of the Four Powers should meet the following day, July 31, and that, if they could agree on the wording of specific provisions of an interim agreement, they should submit them to the Foreign Ministers for consideration.[1]

Neither the meeting of the officials nor that of the Foreign Ministers, both held on July 31, produced any results. Despite urging by the other Foreign Ministers, Gromyko again refused to be more specific on the question of Western rights after expiration of the interim agreement, except to say repeatedly that

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/161), July 30, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. SECTO 447, Aug. 1, secret.

the Soviet Union would not take unilateral action and that negotiations would be held. On the subject of subversive activities in Berlin, Gromyko criticized as artificial the proposal that the United Nations should have a supervisory role and argued instead for his own proposal for a quadripartite commission to supervise levels, armaments, and activities. Gromyko stated in this connection that a quadripartite commission was essential since it was impossible to rely on statements by Brandt or by Western officials that activities which the Soviet Government had complained about had actually ceased. Gromyko declared at the close of the discussion that the Soviet side would think over its position regarding activities and that it might come forward with a new proposal after consultation with the East Germans.[1]

2. The President's Views Regarding Troop Reductions

It had become clear in the course of the latest conversations with Gromyko that without further Western concessions, especially in the matter of troop levels, no interim agreement could be achieved. Secretary Herter therefore decided to put the matter before the President. In a telegram which he sent the President on July 30, he declared that three unresolved points would make any agreement very difficult: 1) allied rights in Berlin at the end of the moratorium; 2) the link between all-German talks and the time-limit put on any temporary agreement on Berlin; 3) Soviet insistence on some reduction of troop levels in Berlin, which seemed important to the Soviet officials as proof that they had made progress in changing the status of Berlin and also because it would be a shock to Berlin morale.

Herter stated with regard to the last point that all his advisers, all the military men, and Willy Brandt--the latter for psychological reasons--opposed reduction, and that he himself

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Gromyko, Couve de Murville, and others (US/MC/167), July 31, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. SECTO 447, Aug. 1, secret.

felt "terrible reluctant" to make any concessions.[1] Couve de Murville and Lloyd, Herter said, believed that the West might get an agreement on the basis of a troop level of 8,000-10,000 but that this ought to be the final concession. Herter also believed that no concessions were possible with respect to all-German negotiations since it would be impossible to get Bonn's concurrence and since, moreover, the three Western Powers felt that they could not go beyond the proposal for a Four Power Committee with German advisers which had already been offered. The Secretary felt, however, that the Soviet side might accept this rather than not get anything, particularly if it should obtain concessions in the matter of troop reductions. Requesting the President's views on these matters, Herter also made reference to the fact that Secretary Dulles in the past had indicated that the number of troops in Berlin was a negotiable point.[2]

The President replied on July 31 that he would be prepared to accept a unilateral statement by the Western Powers that they would limit their forces in Berlin to a figure such as that mentioned by Couve de Murville, provided there was agreement on

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[1]A strong case against reduction was made by General Hamlett, United States Commandant in Berlin, and Mayor Brandt in a meeting with Herter and other American officials during the Secretary's trip to Berlin on July 25 (post, p. 101). General Hamlett declared that the overriding reason for not reducing the allied garrisons in Berlin was the effect of such a reduction on Western ability to cope with large-scale civil disturbances. With Soviet support, the General said, the East German regime was capable of instigating mob violence in West Berlin of such magnitude that the combined strength of the West Berlin policy and of the allied garrisons at existing levels would be taxed to the extreme in their efforts to provide security and to neutralize mob actions. Brandt concurred with these statements by General Hamlett and pointed out in addition that any reduction of allied garrisons would cause a deterioration in the morale of the West Berlin police force, which felt that support of a strong allied garrison was essential to the security of West Berlin. (From Berlin, tel. 61, July 28, 1959, secret.)

[2]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 183, July 30, 1959, top secret.

the two other points. In the President's opinion the level of troops in Berlin "is clearly a political and psychological matter and has no military importance." Such a modest reduction should not cause lasting discouragement in Berlin, and if it should become necessary the Western Powers should explain it to the Germans and be willing to accept temporary discouragement "as the price for a sound agreement on the issues of basic importance to us." These views were supplemented in a telegram from Dillon, who declared after having discussed the matter with the President that the public impact of reduction of troops would depend on the matter of presentation. "If German leadership can be persuaded to present the matter in its proper light, any harmful effect should be temporary and minimal."[1]

3. German Concern

The same day on which the President and Dillon in their telegrams to the Secretary had stressed the psychological problem of making any concessions on Berlin acceptable to the Germans, Herter himself was confronted with expressions of German uneasiness over the Geneva negotiations.

On July 31 Brentano called on Herter and voiced his concern over developments at Geneva, particularly with reference to an alleged trend towards additional concessions by the Western Powers. Arguing that a break-up of the conference would be preferable to further concessions, Brentano said he could see no possibility of reaching an agreement prior to Herter's departure from Geneva in view of continued Soviet intransigence.

Secretary Herter replied that the West was firm on basic issues and would stand fast regarding the preservation of its rights and rejection of an all-German committee. The Western Powers were agreed that they would discuss the matter of troop levels only if it were the last outstanding item and if there were compensatory advantages in the rest of the agreements concluded. Herter considered it unlikely, however, that this would happen unless there was a significant change in the Soviet position.

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[1] To Geneva, tels. TOCAH 219 and TOCAH 222, July 31, 1959, both top secret.

Herter pointed out to Brentano that Gromyko was trying to create the impression that the break-down of the conference was due to pressure by the Federal Republic on the Western Powers. It would be particularly bad, the Secretary said, if this impression were strengthened by accounts such as had appeared in the West German press during the last 24 hours, to the effect that the Federal Republic was applying pressure to strengthen the determination of the Western Powers not to make unacceptable concessions.

Brentano declared that he had not come to apply pressure but merely to express concern over the developments during the last few days. He remarked also that Gromyko, when calculating the strength of the Western position, was well aware of the pressure exerted by the British Prime Minister on Selwyn Lloyd. Very pointedly, Brentano urged Herter to assert himself more clearly as spokesman for the West, even at the risk of offending certain sensibilities.

Later in the day, at Brentano's suggestion, Herter saw West Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt, who had been called to Geneva by the German Foreign Minister. At this meeting Brandt declared that, from the standpoint of the West Berliners, it would be better to have the conference break down and face a crisis then rather than agree to Allied concessions which would convince the West Berliners that they were at the "beginning of the end." The Mayor expressed fear that under pressure the West might accept a position somewhere between the latest Soviet and Western proposals. Herter repeated to Brandt the arguments which he had used in the earlier conversation with Brentano alone and again warned the Germans not to play into the hands of the Soviet Union, which was trying to attribute Western firmness solely to the Federal Republic's obduracy.[1]

Chancellor Adenauer also added his warnings to those expressed by Brentano and Brandt. The Chancellor was mainly concerned that Allied misunderstanding of his views on German

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[1]From Geneva, tels. SECTO 442 and SECTO 443, July 31, 1959, both secret. According to a subsequent report from the Mission in Berlin, Brandt also talked to Lloyd and Couve de Murville during this visit to Bonn; from Berlin, Airgram G-32, Aug. 7, confidential.

reunification might contribute to acceptance of an undesirable, last-minute compromise at Geneva in the matter of an all-German committee. Adenauer's fears were apparently caused by a report about a conversation between Secretary Herter and West German Cabinet Minister Ernst Lemmer during Herter's visit to West Berlin on July 25.[1]

In a letter which Brentano handed to Herter on July 31 the Chancellor stated that he was forced to assume on the basis of Lemmer's account of his conversation with Herter that the Secretary was not correctly informed regarding the Chancellor's position on reunification. He therefore wanted to clarify this position.

Adenauer declared that recent Soviet statements had made it clear that the Soviet Union would approve reunification of the Federal Republic and the Soviet Zone only under conditions which would insure the dominance of communism in West Germany. "Such reunification I refuse", the Chancellor declared, as it would not help the 17 million Germans of the Soviet Zone and would enslave the 50 million Germans of the Federal Republic who had been free, "merely to comply with a formalistic concept of reunification." Pointing to the examples of the Baltic states and of Czechoslovakia, the Chancellor indicated his reserve toward all proposals which "in order to achieve reunification would endanger freedom." Only if the Soviet Union felt that it would abandon the Communist system in the Soviet Zone would reunification and freedom become possible.

Replying on August 3, Herter expressed appreciation for the Chancellor's frankness and declared that it was impossible to disagree with his realistic view of Soviet policy on Germany's reunification. He regretted therefore that his own remarks to Minister Lemmer had given the Chancellor the impression "that I was not fully aware of the basic agreement in our thinking in this matter." Herter pointed to the consistent position taken by the Foreign Ministers at Geneva in rejecting the Soviet proposal for an all-German committee. Through the instrumentality of such a committee, the Secretary stated, the Soviet

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[1]See post, p.101 . No record of a conversation between the Secretary and Lemmer has been found in the files of the Department.

Union hoped to move toward the dual objective of enhancing the status of the GDR and maximizing the influence of communism in the Federal Republic without contributing in the slightest to reunification in freedom, which was the only kind of reunification acceptable to the West.[1]

F. Wind-Up of the Conference

1. The Final Herter-Gromyko Meeting, August 1

West German fears--and, conversely, the hopes entertained by some Western statesmen that an agreement on troop levels and on all-German negotiations might yet be arrived at--turned out to be entirely groundless in the face of Soviet inflexibility on the question of Western rights. For, although the Western leaders, including the President of the United States, had not ruled out the possibility of concessions regarding troop levels, they were determined to offer this concession only if the Soviet side met Western wishes on the other points.

On August 1 Herter and Gromyko held a meeting at which they discussed the question of Allied rights in Berlin within the framework of an interim agreement which would terminate at the end of a given period. Although Herter repeatedly stressed the importance which the West attached to the elucidation of this question of rights, Gromyko refused to make any kind of unequivocal statement that the legal situation in Berlin would remain the same upon expiration of an interim agreement. Gromyko said that he could not agree to the inclusion in any text of a statement that the interim agreement would in no way involve the question of rights, for the reason that this would be interpreted as Soviet acceptance of an indefinite prolongation of the occupation regime; and this, he said, would be contrary to the Soviet position. Herter then told Gromyko that he ought to understand that no interim agreement would be possible as long as the Western Foreign Ministers had doubts as to Soviet intentions regarding Allied rights. The Secretary finally declared that he could not help feeling that Gromyko's evasive attitude with regard to this question signified that the Soviet Union considered

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[1]Letter, Adenauer to Herter, July 31, 1959, and letter, Herter to Adenauer, Aug. 3, sent from Geneva in tel. CAHTO 204, Aug. 4, secret.

an interim agreement an important step toward the final liquidation of Allied rights. The longer the discussion lasted, Herter said, the more he became convinced that this was indeed the Soviet attitude.[1]

At the time when Herter had consulted the President with regard to troop levels, he had indicated to him that this question might never have to be decided on because of the issue of Western rights.[2] Now, after Herter's talk with Gromyko on August 1, it had become clear that the Soviet Union would not accommodate the Western Powers on this issue and that there was, therefore, no longer any chance for an interim agreement on Berlin. One can only speculate as to the reasons why the Soviet Union was so totally uncompromising at this final stage of the conference. But it would not be too far-fetched to assume that Khrushchev felt it no longer necessary to make a substantial concession at Geneva once he knew that the exchange of visits was settled and that he would soon be able to talk directly with the leader of the Western alliance.[3]

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[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 477, Aug. 5, 1959, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 183, July 30, 1959, top secret.

[3]Khrushchev's letter of July 31, in which he replied to the President's message of July 29 (see, ante, p. 82), actually stated that the possibilities of the Foreign Ministers were limited and that questions could prove too much for them to resolve. Khrushchev, of course, used this argument in the letter to demonstrate once more that a meeting of the heads of government "will be particularly necessary if no progress is made at the Geneva negotiations." For the rest, the Soviet Premier's letter was friendly and expressed full acceptance of the President's suggestions regarding the details of Khrushchev's visit to the United States. (Letter, Khrushchev to Eisenhower, July 31, 1959, top secret.)

The Western Foreign Ministers were eager to have the news of the Khrushchev visit released as soon as possible and before the conference broke up. Otherwise, they feared, the visit would be interpreted as resulting from the collapse of the conference and perhaps also from the President's feeling that

(footnote continued on following page)

2. The Communiqué

It now remained to wind up the Geneva conference. On August 3 Lloyd and Gromyko met and agreed that a joint communiqué would be released on August 5. Gromyko did not insist on this occasion that a date be set for the resumption of the talks.[1] The communiqué was taken up in a meeting of the Foreign Ministers on August 4.

The main argument developed around Gromyko's criticism of the draft communiqué which Lloyd had given him the previous day. Gromyko suggested that areas of agreement and disagreement be specified, including references to a summit meeting, and that the problems which the conference had taken up in public and private sessions be focused on. The Western Foreign Ministers, however, held that Gromyko's recommendations would involve lengthy and difficult negotiations, as it would be difficult for the two sides, for instance, to agree on language concerning their differences over Allied rights. The Western Foreign Ministers also opposed referring in a communiqué drawn up by the Foreign Ministers to a meeting at the summit, believing that this should be left for decision by the heads of government. In short, the West wanted a brief communiqué which could be agreed upon easily and quickly.

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he might be able to negotiate where the joint efforts of the three Western Powers had failed. Herter felt that this consideration was important, and he urged the President to authorize an announcement of the Khrushchev visit before the end of the conference "so that the two will not necessarily be related in the public mind." (From Geneva, tels. CAHTO 179, July 28, 1959, and CAHTO 182, July 29, both top secret.)

On August 1 the President informed Macmillan that, as a result of his latest exchanges with Khrushchev, the news of the visit was about to be released. At the same time the President informed de Gaulle and Adenauer by personal letters of the Khrushchev visit and of his plans to meet with them and with Macmillan. (Letters, Eisenhower to Macmillan, de Gaulle, and Adenauer, Aug. 1, 1959, sent to Geneva in tels TOCAH 224, TOCAH 225, and TOCAH 226, all Aug. 1, all top secret.) Public announcement of the Khrushchev visit was made on August 3.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 447, Aug. 5, secret.

As Gromyko offered to produce a new draft communiqué incorporating the points which, in his opinion, ought to be mentioned, the Foreign Ministers decided that the two drafts should be discussed by deputies and then be re-submitted to the Foreign Ministers. Later that day the Foreign Ministers went over the work of the deputies and adopted a final communiqué. Gromyko was insistent in demanding inclusion of a reference to the discussion of an interim agreement but was turned down by the other Foreign Ministers. Commenting on the drafting of the communiqué, Herter declared in a telegram sent to the President on August 5 that the Western Foreign Ministers' greatest difficulty was in trying "to keep Gromyko from injecting too optimistic phraseology with respect to the progress achieved here."[1]

The agreed final communiqué stated that the conference had considered "questions relating to Germany, including a peace treaty and the question of Berlin"; that the positions of both sides were set out on these questions and that these positions "on certain points became close"; that the discussions would be useful for further negotiations which were necessary to reach an agreement; and that the date and place for the resumption of the work of the conference would be settled through diplomatic channels.[2]

3. Adjournment

The 25th plenary session, the final session of the conference, was taken up entirely with the closing statements by the Foreign Ministers. Secretary Herter himself declared in a background news conference following the session that the speeches were largely "for home consumption", and it does not appear necessary, therefore, to devote much space to them. It should be noted, however, that in summarizing the course of the negotiations Secretary Herter also revealed the essence of the final

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Lloyd, Couve de Murville, Gromyko, and others (US/MC/168), Aug. 4, 1959; Annex A, Western Draft Communiqué, Aug. 3; Annex B, Soviet Delegation Draft Communiqué, Aug. 4; Annex C, Variant of First Five Paragraphs of Soviet Draft Communiqué, Aug. 4; Annex D, Agreed Communiqué, Aug. 4; all secret. From Geneva, tel. CAHTO 207, Aug. 5, secret.

[2]Foreign Ministers Meetings, pp. 511-512.

Western proposals on Berlin. Since the exact text of these proposals has never been published, the Secretary's speech in the plenary session of August 5 represents the basic statement of the final Western proposals for the public record.

In reviewing the work of the conference, the Western Foreign Ministers stressed particularly that the differences with the Soviet Union which accounted for the failure to arrive at an interim Berlin agreement were over basic questions involving the freedom of the West Berliners and the preservation of Western rights. On the other hand, the Western Foreign Ministers pointed out that the conference had been useful in isolating the points on which agreement might be possible in the future, and they expressed hope that the Foreign Ministers, at some future date, would resume discussion of the differences defined at the Geneva conference. As for Gromyko, he attempted to show that the conference had already reached a large measure of agreement on an interim Berlin settlement and that those issues on which the Foreign Ministers disagreed might more readily be resolved by the heads of government. Not surprisingly, the West German adviser expressed disappointment over the lack of progress toward a settlement of the problems of Germany and Berlin, while the East German adviser emphasized the role played by the GDR at the conference.[1]

Thus, as Secretary Herter stated upon his return to Washington on August 6, nine weeks of negotiations at Geneva had ended in a recess as a result of a lack of agreement on the basic issues of a divided Germany and of Berlin. In his background news conference on August 5, Secretary Herter, anticipating questions by newsmen, established, however, a link between the failure of the Geneva conference and the Khrushchev visit when he stated that the exchange of visits which would take place during the rest of the year "in a sense softens the edge of what might have been considered a failure here", because everybody would expect "that to a limited extent the scene will be shifted elsewhere."[2]

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[1]From Geneva, tels. SECTO 478, Aug. 5, 1959, official use only, and SECTO 479, Aug. 5, confidential; Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 486-511, 560-563, 598-603.

[2]Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 531-532; from Geneva, tel. SECTO 480, Aug. 5, 1959, official use only.

The Khrushchev visit accordingly was to be the next important phase in the diplomatic story of the Berlin crisis. The account of this visit in Part III of this study will have to begin with an account of President Eisenhower's conversations with the heads of the Western governments, conversations which, it had been agreed, would precede the President's talks with the Soviet Premier.

Chapter V

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO BERLIN DURING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

A. Berlin Morale

Nowhere else, it goes without saying, were developments at the Geneva Conference followed as closely and as passionately as in the embattled city of West Berlin. Whenever there were indications of Western willingness to negotiate any changes in the status of West Berlin, the people and particularly the leaders of that city were seized by uneasiness and apprehensions. This was particularly true during the conference recess, when the leaders of West Berlin became increasingly concerned over the Allied proposals placed before the conference toward the end of the second phase. On July 4 the U.S. Mission in Berlin reported that, even though Brandt in a speech of June 25 had stated that the Western proposals went to the limit of what was tolerable, the general feeling in Berlin was that they went beyond that limit. Most of the concern, the Mission reported, was over Western willingness to curb activities allegedly in violation of public order and over the possibility of a reduction of the Western garrisons, but there was likewise uneasiness regarding factors underlying the Western attitude at Geneva, such as disunity in the Western camp and "Berlin fatigue" in the United States.[1]

At the opening of the last phase of the conference, a document setting forth the views of the Berlin Senate regarding the Western proposals of June 16 was first given to the Allied Missions in Berlin on July 13 and subsequently forwarded in a revised version to the American Delegation at Geneva by Brentano. A memorandum of July 16 by Hillenbrand commenting on this statement of the Berlin Senate pointed out that the document referred to the Western proposals as representing the outer limits of the acceptable but that privately members of the Senate believed that the Western Powers had already gone too far in making concessions to the Soviet side. As for specific points, Hillenbrand

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[1]From Berlin, tel. 23, July 4, 1959, confdiential.

felt that the Senate was putting the worst possible interpretation on the formulations in the proposals regarding propaganda and restraint on activities, by placing the emphasis entirely on restrictive language and not on the protective content of the proviso that the measures taken must be "consistent with fundamental rights and liberties." Hillenbrand likewise believed that some of the Senate's objectives in the field of access were clearly unrealistic in terms of geography and Western strength, particularly the desire for iron-clad guarantees for civilian traffic. Hillenbrand commented that a certain measure of trust in the good intentions of the Western Powers was necessary on the part of the Berliners with respect to most of these matters and that it should be reasonable to expect this in view of the Allied actions during the blockade of 1948-1949.[1]

On July 22 Mayor Amrehn conveyed to the Western Commandants the concern of the Berlin Senate in a statement described by the U.S. Mission as the "most pessimistic evaluation made so far". The statement expressed the desire of the Senate that the Western Powers maintain the strong position of November-December 1958 from which, according to the Senate's impression, they had deviated at Geneva, and it criticized the proposals of June 16 as offering concessions without counterconcessions. According to Amrehn, his colleagues were particularly alarmed over the fact that in the new phase of the conference a compromise might be required going beyond the June 16 proposals. On July 23 the U.S. Mission reported that the outlook of Berlin's leaders had reached "the gloomiest level" since the beginning of the crisis in November 1958 and that the morale of the city was on the downgrade even though the mass of the Berliners kept their worries to themselves and displayed their traditional qualities of humor and pride in their toughness. The forthcoming visit of the Secretary therefore was "very well timed."[2] This visit had been suggested to the Secretary

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[1]From Berlin, tel. 64, July 13, 1959, confidential; memorandum by the Delegation of the Federal Republic to the United States Delegation, with Annex, "Comments by the Berlin Senate on the Western Proposals on the Berlin Question of June 16, 1959", July 17, secret; memorandum by Hillenbrand (GER) to Merchant (EUR), July 16, confidential. Hillenbrand and Merchant were both members of the U.S. Delegation at Geneva.

[2]From Berlin, tels. 43 and 45 to Geneva (111 and 113 to the Department), July 22, 1959, both confidential.

by Brandt, and its occasion was the dedication of a street in Berlin in honor of the late Secretary Dulles. In the light of the foregoing reports, Secretary Herter's visit became of considerable importance for the preservation of Berlin morale.

Herter arrived in Berlin on July 25 and met with an enthusiastic reception on the part of the Berliners. In an address at the City Hall, the Secretary declared that the fundamental liberties of Berlin "must and will be preserved" and assured the Berliners that the United States "will not forget its responsibilities toward Berlin." The U.S. Mission in its report on the visit called it a popular success of almost unprecedented proportions. Herter himself stated in a telegram to the President that the visit was well worthwhile and gave his over-all impression that the Berliners, including responsible officials, had an "almost childlike faith" in the future of their city and in continuing American friendship and strength. It is perhaps noteworthy that both General Hamlett and Mayor Brandt during their conversation with the Secretary, to which reference has been made in another context (see p. 89, footnote 1), asserted that the morale of the rank and file of Berliners was as strong as ever and that General Hamlett--without comments from Mayor Brandt--went so far as to suggest that the apprehensions reported earlier by the Mission had developed in the political circles of West Berlin and did not reflect the general attitude of the rank and file. Summing up the total effect of the visit, the Mission reported that Berlin officials, newsmen, labor figures, and the general public were unanimous in their judgement that the Secretary's visit was most successful and had bolstered Berlin morale. One Berlin observer was quoted by the Mission as saying that it served as "a shot in the arm at this particular time."[1]

B. Election of the Federal President in Berlin

1. Allied and West German Attitudes

The question as to whether the West German Federal Assembly should meet in West Berlin to elect a Federal President, although

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[1]From Berlin, desp. 85, July 30, 1959, unclassified; Department of State press release 546, July 27, from Geneva, tel. CAHTO 176, July 27, secret; from Berlin, tel. 61 to Geneva, July 28, secret; from Berlin, tel. 129 (to Geneva, tel. 59), July 27, confidential.

essentially a German domestic political problem, became nevertheless a problem between the Federal Republic and the Western Powers and also between the latter and the Soviet Union.

On October 14, 1958, several weeks before the Soviet Union started the new phase of the Berlin crisis, the President of the West German Bundestag, Eugen Gerstenmaier, had officially proposed to the Council of Elders of the Bundestag that the Federal Assembly scheduled to convene in 1959 for the election of the Federal President should meet in West Berlin in accordance with the precedent set by the preceding Federal Assembly in 1954. Early in May of 1959 Ambassador Bruce informed the Department that Chancellor Adenauer did not want the election to be held in Berlin and that he might ask the Allied Ambassadors to intervene with Gerstenmaier to prevent the Assembly's meeting there. At this point the question of the site of the election had become entangled in German domestic political problems which are not relevant to this study.

On May 21, during the first phase of the Geneva Conference, Brentano told Herter in the presence of Bruce that, if the three Foreign Ministers objected to Berlin as the site of the Federal Assembly's meeting, Gerstenmaier would announce that the elections would be held elsewhere in view of the existing circumstances. While Herter said that he would think over the matter, Bruce pointed out that the Foreign Ministers, to avoid having the shift of site attributed to them, should not express their views on this subject in writing. Such a development, he said, would be most unfortunate and would be exploited by the Communists. The following day, at the close of the plenary session of May 22, Brentano raised the matter with the three Western Foreign Ministers and received the reply that, provided no reference whatsoever was made to their having been consulted, they believed it to be wiser in the circumstances to hold the presidential elections in Bonn rather than in Berlin. Brentano appeared to share this view and assured the Foreign Ministers that the change would be justified publicly on grounds of political convenience exclusively. Commenting on this meeting of Foreign Ministers with Brentano in a memorandum of May 26, Kohler expressed doubts that the Government of the Federal Republic could cancel the Berlin meeting of the Federal Assembly without disclosing that the Allies had intervened, and he

predicted on the basis of past experience that the Bonn Government would shift the onus onto the Allies in any case.[1]

This prediction apparently turned out to be correct. On June 12, Herter informed the Mission in Berlin that he was "increasingly disturbed" by reports attributing to him advice regarding the place for the election of the Federal President. Herter also mentioned in this connection that Lloyd had told him of having received reports according to which the Chancellor had informed several visitors that the Western Foreign Ministers, with Lloyd in the lead, had advised against holding the elections in Berlin. The Mission was instructed to deny that the Western Foreign Ministers had given any advice in the matter.[2]

Also on June 12, following a luncheon given by the Secretary for Willy Brandt, the question of the site for the election of the Federal President was once more brought up by Brentano. He distributed in this connection copies of a letter addressed to him by Gerstenmaier, the substance of which was that unless the Western Powers raised objections Gerstenmaier would formally convene the Federal Assembly in Berlin for the election of the Federal President. Brandt thereupon declared that failure to select Berlin as the meeting place of the Assembly would lower Berlin's spirits and encourage the Soviet Union and the GDR to believe that the Western Powers would retreat under threats. The three Foreign Ministers expressed unhappiness over the opinions attributed to them as a result of their discussion of this subject with Brentano a few weeks earlier.[3] They refused

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[1]U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation among Herter, Brentano, and Bruce (US/MC/42), May 21, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. SECTO 103, May 22, secret; memorandum by Kohler (EUR) to Murphy (G), "Election of Federal President in Berlin," May 26, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 226 (to Berlin, tel. 68), June 12, 1959, confidential.

[3]Prior to this luncheon meeting of the Foreign Ministers with Brandt, the latter told Hillenbrand that he had seen the West German memorandum of the meeting of May 22 during which Brentano had raised the question of the site of the presidential elections. Brandt stated that this memorandum made it clear for him that the three Western Foreign Ministers, while expressing

(footnote continued on following page)

to express an opinion and insisted that a purely domestic German matter was involved which was none of their affair. Nevertheless, Herter made clear his own view--though not for attribution--that the choice of Berlin as the site of the elections would be entirely acceptable to him.[1]

2. Soviet Protests Over the Elections in Berlin

In the end, the Germans adhered to their original plan and announced that the Federal Assembly would meet in Berlin on July 1 to elect a Federal President. On June 26 the Soviet Foreign Ministry addressed separate notes to the United States, Britain, and France, and on June 27 another note to the Federal Republic, protesting the holding of the presidential elections in Berlin. In the note to the United States, the Soviet Union declared that conducting these elections in West Berlin was a new attempt "to use the abnormal situation in the city in order to inflame even more the situation in Germany" and to create new obstacles to achieving agreements on urgent international questions, "including the question of West Berlin." The Soviet Union expressed the hope that the United States would take measures to ensure that West Berlin would not be used for political demonstrations "incompatible with the task of relaxing tensions in the center of Europe."[2]

In its reply of June 30 the United States reminded the Soviet Union that the election of the German Federal President in 1954 had also taken place in Berlin and that there had been regular meetings of the Bundestag in that city every year since. The United States therefore considered the convening of the Federal Assembly in Berlin on July 1 as a continuation of an

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a preference for holding the elections elsewhere, had not made the specific recommendation alleged by the German Foreign Office, nor had they taken the initiative in raising the issue as Brentano had apparently informed certain correspondents. U.S. Del. Minutes of conversation between Hillenbrand and Brandt (US/MC/97), June 12, 1959, secret.

[1]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 234, June 12, 1959, secret.

[2]Soviet Note 52/9, June 26, 1959, sent from Moscow in tel. 2673, June 26, official use only.

established tradition "which did not contravene any existing agreements either among the Four Powers or between the United States and the Federal Republic." The United States therefore believed that there was "no warrant for the expression of concern on the part of the Government of the USSR over a peaceful assemblage in furtherance of democratic processes" and that no action on the part of the United States was required.[1]

The West German Federal Assembly met in Berlin on July 1, when the Geneva Conference was in recess, and elected Heinrich Luebke to the office of Federal President. When the Conference met again on July 13, Gromyko did not fail to use the presidential elections as an example of how West Berlin was used "for the purposes of subversive activities and of increasing tension in the international situation." Gromyko accused the Federal Republic of arranging a demonstration by holding the elections in West Berlin and also criticized the Western Powers for taking Bonn's actions under their protection even though they knew that they were a "provocation." Secretary Herter stated in reply that the Western Powers could have prevented the elections if they felt them to be a provocation but that "there was nothing of a provocative nature" in the incident of the presidential elections in Berlin.[2]

C. Berlin Contingency Planning

1. Allied Discussions

During the period of the Geneva Conference specific contingency planning within the framework of the Tripartite Contingency Planning Paper of April 4 continued.[3] No major advances in planning were made, however. In a paper submitted by Murphy on July 14 for the use of the Acting Secretary in a report to be made to the National Security Council on July 16 on the subject of Berlin contingency planning, it was pointed out that reasonable progress had been made but that great difficulties had also been encountered. Among the difficulties,

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[1]To Moscow, tel. 2245, June 30, 1959, secret.

[2]Foreign Ministers Meeting, pp. 392-393, 400-401.

[3]See Part I, p. 114.

Murphy mentioned particularly the diminished sense of urgency resulting from the passing of the May 27 "deadline", from the Geneva discussions, and from the expectation of a summit meeting; also, the Anglo-American differences regarding a modus vivendi, de facto recognition of the GDR, and a summit meeting; and, finally, the complexity of planning involving the three Western Powers, the Federal Republic, Berlin, and NATO. Consequently, no substantial advances had been made in the planning with respect to air access, military measures, and non-military measures. In the field of non-military measures, there were considerable interallied differences regarding action by the United Nations and regarding economic countermeasures. While there was tripartite agreement on steps to bring the matter before the United Nations prior to any change in the access situation, there was none with reference to a situation where the Soviet Union had changed the status quo before the United Nations could be seized with the problem. The French had not offered any views in the matter and were not likely to do so as a result of basic French antipathy to the United Nations. As for countermeasures, including harassment of Soviet bloc transportation, the United States was the only Western Power which favored them. The French regarded them appropriate only in an advanced stage of the crisis although they doubted their efficacy, while the British took a decidedly negative view which was not likely to change. The British would oppose curtailment of economic relations with the Soviet bloc as well as any counterharassment. They believed that the disadvantage of a policy of counterharassment with respect to public opinion would outweigh the advantage of embarassing the Soviet bloc and that it would be better to demonstrate Western intentions by overt military and civil preparations of a non-provocative character.

According to Murphy's paper, there had been some progress, however, with regard to certain questions relating to surface access. The three Embassies in Bonn had submitted for governmental approval recommendations for procedures to be followed in order to identify Allied road and rail movements and to clear them through the checkpoints in the event that the Soviets withdrew from there. The United States had approved the paper but the British and French had not. The British were still reluctant to change existing procesures in a situation where

the East Germans could not be considered to be exercizing control functions as agents of the Soviet Union.[1]

The Anglo-American differences in this matter were taken up briefly by Herter and Lloyd at Geneva on July 15. Lloyd was inclined to approve the new procedures "reluctantly" but was persuaded by his advisers to delay final approval.[2] On July 28 the Department informed the Secretary at Geneva that the French had accepted the identification procedures as agreed upon by the three Embassies in Bonn but that the final views of the British Government had not yet been received. On July 30 Herter again raised the matter with Lloyd at Geneva, and this time the Foreign Secretary declared that the British Government would approve the proposed identification procedures. It was characteristic, however, that Lloyd made this approval contingent upon the deletion of a sentence from a draft public statement included in these plans which declared that the procedures which the three Powers would put into effect in the event of a take-over of access routes by the GDR represented the only procedures acceptable to the three Powers. Lloyd explained that the British did not want to rule out in advance the possibility of alternative arrangements that might present themselves at such a time.[3]

2. Tripartitely Agreed Procedures for Surface Access

The tripartitely agreed instructions for identification procedures for surface access to Berlin in case of a Soviet withdrawal from the checkpoints were issued on September 22. These procedures drew a clear distinction between a situation in which the East Germans acted in the capacity of agents for the Soviet Union and a situation in which no such "agency relationship" existed.

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[1]Memorandum by Murphy (G) to the Acting Secretary, "Report to the National Security Council on Berlin Contingency Planning," July 14, 1959, top secret. See, also, from Bonn, tel. 154 and desp. 1866, June 16, both secret; U.S.-U.K.-French Tripartite Planning Group, Berlin Contingency Planning (BERCON R-2), July 14, 1959, "Record of Meeting of July 10", secret; to Bonn. tel. 119, July 11, secret.

[2]From Geneva, tel. SECTO 324, July 15, 1959, top secret.

[3]To Geneva, tel. TOSEC 406, July 28, 1959, secret; from Geneva, tel. SECTO 427, July 30, 1959, secret.

In the first case (agency relationship) the Allied official traveller (convoy commander or individual driver) arriving at the checkpoint on entering the Autobahn in the Soviet Zone would present to the East German officials the same documents shown formerly to Soviet personnel, i.e., movement orders and identity documents, and permit them to check the documents and, as Soviet officials had done in the past, stamp the movement orders to indicate place, date, and time of passage. If the East Germans did not attempt to exercise other controls, the Allied traveller should proceed as usual. If the East German officials sought to impose additional controls such as inspection of vehicles, customs and currency controls, and Autobahn tolls, or to offer special documentation for convoys, the Allied traveller should insist upon passage as a matter of right and, if it was refused, turn back and report to the United States (British or French) checkpoint.

Similar procedures should apply to the Allied traveller arriving at the checkpoint at the exit from the Autobahn in the Soviet Zone. But in the event of a refusal of passage as a result of non-compliance with East German demands for additional controls, the Allied traveller should remain where he was and try to communicate with the respective Allied military headquarters by radio. The driver of a vehicle in which there were passengers other than male Allied Government officials could, however, after a minimum waiting period of eight hours, submit under protest to the East German demands, continue travel, and leave the Soviet Zone.

Parallel procedures applied to travel by military train. In case of East German insistence at the checkpoint on imposing additional controls, the commander of a train travelling eastwards to Berlin would demand that it be turned back and report to Allied authorities, while in the case of a train travelling westward and leaving the Soviet Zone the train commander would have it remain where it was, report to Allied headquarters by radio, and wait for instructions.

In the second case (no "agency relationship" between the USSR and the GDR), the Allied official traveller, before entering the Autobahn in the Soviet Zone, would secure a movement order in triplicate for single journeys and in quintuplicate for return journeys. This movement order would closely resemble the present order and be in English or French, Russian, and German. All copies would be stamped at the Allied checkpoint to show the place, date, and time of passage.

On arriving at the checkpoint at the entrance to the Autobahn in the Soviet Zone, the Allied traveller would tear off a copy of the movement order, hand it to the East Germans, and proceed as usual. (This was the so-called peel-off procedure.)

If the East Germans should try to exercise any other form of control, such as examining the original movement order and stamping it, checking identity documents, or anything else that would not be acceptable even under the assumption of an "agency relationship", the Allied traveller should insist upon passage and, if it was refused, turn back and report to the Allied checkpoint.

On arriving at the checkpoint at the exit from the Autobahn in the Soviet Zone, the Allied traveller should detach the second copy of the movement order, hand it to the East Germans, and proceed. If passage were refused, he should remain where he was, not comply with East German demands, and attempt to get instructions from Allied military headquarters by radio. If there were non-male passengers in Allied vehicles, the same instructions applied as if passage were refused under the assumption of an "agency relationship".

The instructions covering travel by military train in the absence of an "agency relationship" were similar to those for travel by the Autobahn. In the event of a refusal of passage, the train commander was instructed to act in the same manner as in case of a refusal of passage under the assumption of an "agency relationship".

If a vehicle or train was forced to turn back, trapped in the Soviet Zone, or forced to submit to East German demands, whether or not the East German control organs were acting in the capacity of agents of the Soviet Union, Allied representation should immediately be made to the Soviet Government. Moreover, consideration should be given to making probes to determine whether the Soviets were prepared to use force or permit the use of force to prevent passage of Allied vehicles or trains.[1]

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[1]Berlin contingency planning paper BERCON-TRI D-2a, September 22, 1959, secret.

3. Possibility of Closing off East Berlin

One particular aspect of contingency planning which was briefly discussed in the period dealt with in this chapter may be worth noting in view of the events of August 1961.

The Department's Legal Adviser, Loftus Becker, stated at the Secretary's staff meeting on June 3, which was actually a meeting of the U.S. Delegation in Geneva, that there was a gap in Berlin contingency planning with respect to the possible closure of movement from East Berlin to West Berlin, and vice versa, as a result of a GDR declaration that the Berlin sector border was now a "state frontier". Becker declared that the question arose whether such a situation should be dealt with by force, by resort to the United Nations, by resort to the International Court of Justice, or otherwise. Referring to this discussion, Merchant asked Hillenbrand to give some thought to the matter, at the same time expressing his own view that the first alternative was impractical while the other two were undesirable.

In a memorandum of June 4, Hillenbrand pointed out that in practical terms the problem was really not a new one and that during the blockade of 1948-1949 the sector boundary was partially and, for brief periods, almost entirely sealed off. Hillenbrand believed that two general types of problems were involved here with regard to contingency planning, namely, a) how to maintain West Berlin's system of utilities, transport, and communications, and b) what action should be taken to dramatize the closure of the sector boundary. Hillenbrand felt with regard to the first problem that extensive planning had already taken place in connection with contingency planning for a partial or total blockade and that West Berlin could largely adapt itself to a closure of the sector boundary. As for the latter problem, any action to be taken by the Western Powers would largely depend on whether general access to Berlin would be affected or whether closure of the sector boundary happened in isolation. Hillenbrand suggested that it might be useful to examine whether resort to the United Nations or to the International Court of Justice would be likely to result in a favorable decision. He expressed the belief, however, that, practically speaking, it was likely that "West Berlin would simply have to adapt to the situation", taking such limited reprisals as it could. But Hillenbrand considered it probable that if the East

Germans should issue a declaration making the sector boundary a "state frontier" it would not result in complete closure but merely in a tightening of controls at the checkpoints.[1]

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[1]Memorandum by Merchant (EUR) to Hillenbrand (EUR), June 3, 1959, secret; memorandum by Hillenbrand to Merchant, June 4, secret.

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SUBJECT: Attached research study

I am sending you herewith in final form Part II of our study of the Berlin crisis of November 1958-December 1962. As you know, Part I was completed long ago. Parts III-VI, running to September 1961, are still in draft.

Quite some time ago you read and commented upon all the drafts and we made changes in accordance with your comments. Unfortunately, before we could put Parts II-VI in final form and begin the research and writing for subsequent parts, we had to suspend work on the project--because of urgent priorities within the Historical Office and of Dr. Kogan's appointment as the Chief of the Research Guidance and Review Division.

Regrettably, we are still in no position to undertake research to complete the study, but we have taken measures to put the already completed drafts into shape for distribution. Part II has just been put in such shape; Parts III-VI will be given the final treatment before many weeks.

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