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30 April 1955

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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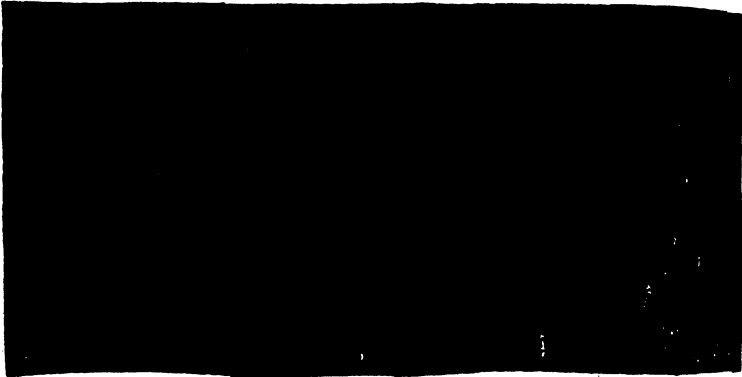
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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

30 April 1960



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PART III

PATTERNS AND PERSPECTIVES

THE PROBLEM OF WESTERN ACCESS TO BERLIN Page 1

The Soviet Union has exploited the absence of a clear-out agreement on access to Berlin to establish mechanisms which enable it to harass all forms of surface transportation to the city. East Germany has come to play a considerable role in the regulation of surface traffic, particularly West German. The Communists could readily block all surface routes by destroying bridges, overpasses, and canal locks. An airlift could supply Allied garrisons, even if Communist electronic measures against air navigational systems made all but visual flights impossible, but the West Berlin civilian population could not be sustained by such a limited airlift.

. Page 2



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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

30 April 1955

PART III

PATTERNS AND PERSPECTIVES

THE PROBLEM OF WESTERN ACCESS TO BERLIN

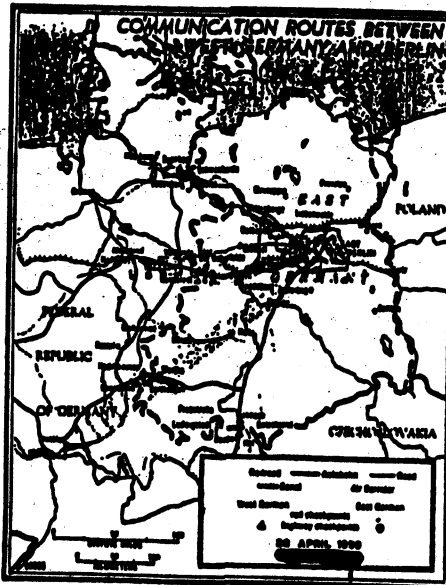
The Western powers' rights of access to Berlin derive from their participation in the defeat of Germany in World War II and the agreements reached with the USSR concerning the postwar occupation. These are embodied in a number of documents including a London agreement of September 1944 and an exchange of letters between President Truman and Stalin, and a verbal agreement between General Clay and Marshal Zhukov during the summer of 1948. The Paris Agreement of 1948 terminating the Berlin blockade is also relevant. There is, however, no single document signed by all four powers providing for unrestricted access to the city by surface and air. Allied rights are based on precedent and usage.

At the time of the Soviet-East German treaty of 1955 which granted "sovereignty" to East Germany, there was an exchange of letters between East German Foreign Minister Boln and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Zoria in which the USSR stated that it would "temporarily" retain control of Allied access to Berlin pending the conclusion of further agreements with the Allies. It is the Soviet contention that the USSR's planned peace treaty with East Germany will invalidate all Allied occupation agreements, including those governing control of access to West Berlin. This control

would then pass to the "sovereign" East German regime.

Road and Rail Access

The West's right to ground access to Berlin was established during a June 1945 meeting between General Clay, Marshal Zhukov, and a British representative. The memorandum of conver-



sation resulting from this meeting was never authenticated, however. The agreement has, in practice, been interpreted to mean that the Allies would submit to Soviet traffic regulations and document checks but not to inspection of vehicles or cargo. Zhukov stated at the

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

30 April 1959

meeting that he did not deny the right of Allied access, but that the Soviet Union would not "give a corridor." The agreement is vague enough to be open to honest differences of opinion by both sides and has given the USSR manifold opportunities to harass traffic.

All Allied road traffic must travel via the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn. There are three other routes open to non-Allied nationals, but 80 percent of all road traffic goes via Helmstedt. Some 37 percent of Berlin's imports and 57 percent of its exports by tonnage go by road. Of military interest is the fact that the 108-mile stretch in East Germany includes 47 bridges (the Hibe bridge is over 1,200 yards long, including 160 yards over water) and 21 overpasses. There are Allied, West German, Soviet, and East German barriers or checkpoints at each end.

After passing the Western checkpoints, Allied vehicles come to a barrier manned by East Germans which normally is raised automatically. Then comes the Soviet checkpoint, where the movement order--issued unilaterally by Allied military authorities--is stamped, but the delay is generally longer than would seem necessary. The Allied vehicle driver or convoy commander is given a small white form when he leaves the Soviet checkpoint. This is surrendered at another East German barrier--some 75 yards farther inside East Germany--which normally is raised without question.

The form appears to be no more than permission from the Russians to the East Germans to permit the vehicle to proceed. This procedure for passing through an East German-manned barrier gives the East Germans a foot in the door toward full control of access. When Allied

vehicles leave East Germany going east or west, the East Germans merely raise the barriers and no white form is involved. The Russians do, however, check the travel documents at their checkpoint.

All Allied rail traffic and all rail freight goes via the Marienborn-Berlin rail line, which roughly parallels the Helmstedt autobahn. There are five other international rail lines in use. Some 35 percent of West Berlin's imports and 21 percent of its exports, by tonnage, as well as 98 percent of Allied freight to the Berlin garrisons, are handled by rail. Allied trains while in East Germany are hauled by East German locomotives with East German crews.

The Allies operate 24 regularly scheduled trains per week, with the arrangements being made between West and East German railway officials. There are a considerable number of similar low-level trade and commercial agreements between the two railroad systems. There is only one checkpoint on the rail line, four miles from the actual border at Marienborn. Allied trains have no contact with East German officials; processing is handled by the Russians.

Air Access

The question of air access is the only one governed by a properly authenticated document. This was approved by the Allied Control Council in 1945 and updated in 1949. There are a number of points, however, which are not entirely clear: one is whether the Allies have exclusive or priority rights to the three air corridors. Thus far the Russians have, in general, appeared to recognize that the Allies have exclusive rights, since they have seldom used the corridors themselves.

The most pressing question is that of minimum and maximum

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

30 April 1959

altitudes. A maximum altitude of 10,000 feet was mentioned in a draft of the 1948 agreement, but did not appear in the final document. There is a 10,000-foot altitude limit within 20 miles of Berlin.

The air space around Berlin, known as the Berlin Control Zone, is administered by one of the two remaining quadripartite bodies: the Berlin Air Safety Center (BASC). The group administering Spandau Prison is the other such body. The BASC, located in West Berlin, coordinates traffic in and out of the three airfields in West Berlin and the one airfield just outside East Berlin but within the Berlin Control Zone. This does not mean, however, that the Soviet Union normally submits its flight plans to the BASC, as the Allies do; the USSR schedules its flights so as not to conflict with Allied flights.

In addition to military traffic, three civil air lines from the three Allies regularly operate to and from West Berlin. None of the navigational aids, such as beacons or radars, servicing the three corridors are in East Germany.

Air travel to Berlin is the only means of travel which is not subject to Communist control. This freedom made

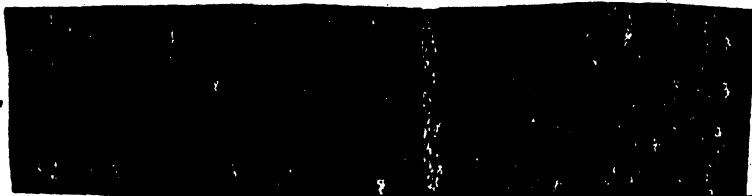
possible the Berlin airlift; it also enables the Allies to transport East German refugees from West Berlin to West Germany.

The Allied garrisons could be supplied almost indefinitely by airlift if a surprise blockade were enforced—even if the Communists jammed Allied air navigational aids, making all but visual flights impossible. An airlift could not, however, sustain the West Berlin civil population if surface access were denied.

Canal Traffic

Barge traffic via the extensive canal and river system is of considerable importance to West Berlin, although not to the Allies. Some 2,500 West German barges are licensed for interzonal movement, and last year they carried some 25 percent of all freight in and out of West Berlin. All canals and locks in East Germany are controlled by the East Germans. As in the case of rail access, arrangements for barge traffic are made at a technical level between West and East German authorities. The canals were closed during the Berlin blockade, and since then the East Germans have from time to time harassed traffic by closing the locks "for repairs."

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