

**Britain and the Soviet Union:
The Search for an Interim Agreement on West Berlin
November 1958-May 1960**

**A thesis submitted for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy**

by

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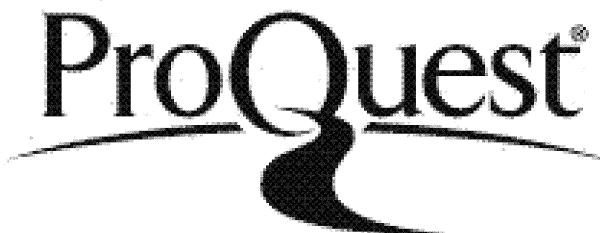


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Abstract

Britain and the Soviet Union: The Search for an Interim Agreement on West Berlin November 1958-May 1960

This thesis analyses British and Soviet policy towards negotiations on an Interim Agreement on Berlin, from November 1958 until May 1960. It emphasises the crucial role played by the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan and the Soviet Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, both of whom viewed the Berlin problem within the wider context of their mutual objectives of achieving detente and disarmament. The opening chapter analyses Soviet motivation for reactivating the Berlin question, and emphasises two factors behind Soviet policy: the maintenance of the status quo in Germany and Eastern Europe, and Soviet fears of the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr. The next two chapters reassess Britain's response to the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958, the impact of British policy on Berlin on the Western Alliance and the subsequent emergence of a British initiative on Berlin which culminated in Harold Macmillan's visit to Moscow in February 1959. Fresh insights into Soviet policy on Berlin and European Security are offered. The fourth chapter reappraises Macmillan's visits in March 1959 to Paris, Bonn and Washington to persuade his Allies of the benefits of his initiative. This chapter also deals with the British contribution both to the Allied debate on contingency planning for Berlin and to the discussions on Germany, European Security and Berlin, which took place in the Four Power Working Group from January until May 1959. The ensuing chapter analyses British and Soviet attitudes to the East-West negotiations on an Interim Agreement on West Berlin at the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference, May-August 1959, and considers whether the British Government was correct in its perception that the Soviet Government wished to establish a modus vivendi on Berlin. Chapter six traces the evolution of Soviet and Western policies towards the forthcoming summit conference from August 1959 until May 1960. The final chapter examines Soviet and Western reactions to the U-2 Incident of 1 May 1960 and seeks to demonstrate that Khrushchev left for Paris prepared to negotiate on an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and hopeful that he would achieve the East-West Detente for which he and Macmillan had striven.

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Introduction

Berlin, under quadripartite military occupation and four power status since 1945, was a focal point of Cold War Crises and a barometer of East-West relations.¹ In the first Berlin Crisis of 1948-9, Stalin blockaded Berlin for eleven months as a means of protesting against currency reform in the Allied zones and with a view to incorporating West Berlin within the Soviet orbit. The Western Powers demonstrated the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO's) commitment to Berlin by mounting an air lift and forcing Stalin to climb down. This crisis led to the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 which committed the United States to the defence of Western Europe, and implicitly to that of West Berlin. Ultimately, it resulted in the emergence of the Federal German Republic (FRG), within the NATO Alliance, and the German Democratic Republic (DDR) within the Warsaw Pact. Henceforth, Berlin became the frontline of NATO's Western defence in the Cold War.

The second Berlin Crisis began in November 1958, when the Soviet Government sent Notes to the Allied Powers announcing that it considered the Four Power Agreement on Berlin to be 'null and void', and setting a deadline of six months for solving the Berlin problem. The Soviet Note proposed that West Berlin should be converted into a demilitarised 'Free City', but stated that no alteration would be made in access to the city for six months. However, if no agreement was forthcoming in that period, the Soviet Government intended to sign a peace treaty with East Germany whereby Soviet occupation rights on access to West Berlin would be transferred to the DDR. Western agreement to this course would have amounted to de facto recognition of the DDR and ultimately acquiescence in the 'Two Germany' solution and the preservation of the status quo in Eastern Europe.

¹ For accounts of the origins of the Berlin problem, see T. Sharp, The Wartime Alliance and the Zonal Division of Germany (London, 1975); J. Smith, The Defence of Berlin (Baltimore, 1963); W. Burr, US Policy and the Berlin Crisis: an Overview, Essay in NSA The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962 (Washington, 1991). For works on British policy towards Germany, see D.C Watt, Britain looks to Germany (London, 1965); for the background to British policy towards Berlin, 1945-1958, see J. Gearson, Harold Macmillan and the Berlin Wall Crisis 1958-1962 (London, 1998); and E Barker, 'The Berlin Crisis: 1958-1962' International Affairs (London, 1963).

However, Soviet aims on Berlin must be considered within the wider context of the German problem.² At the Potsdam Conference, August 1946, the Four Powers agreed that the fate of Berlin and Germany would await the conclusion of an Allied Peace Conference. As a result of their suffering at German hands in the war, the Soviets' nightmare scenario was the prospect of a rearmed economically resurgent Germany on the borders of her East European Empire, her protective glacis. The Soviet Note of 1950 stated that the Soviet Government would not tolerate the creation of a West German Army as it would be contrary to the Potsdam Agreement. Subsequent Soviet policy in the early fifties aimed at preventing German rearmament within the European Defence Community (EDC) whereas Western proposals for Germany's future envisaged the emergence of a unified Germany based on free elections and freedom to join the Western Alliance. There were signs, particularly after the death of Stalin, that the Soviet Government was prepared to concede free elections if Germany remained neutral, but the West was not ready to accept that such offers were made in good faith.³

After the failure of the EDC in 1954, Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary in the Churchill Administration was largely responsible for the Paris Agreements which led to the emergence of the Federal Republic within the Western Alliance. Eden, like the West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, was mindful of the Rapallo scenario and his objective was to bind the FRG into the Western Alliance.⁴ At the Geneva Conference of 1955 there was no East-West consensus on Germany's future, so the Soviets reverted to the 'Two Germany' solution. The closest they would come to reunification was the idea of a confederation between the DDR and the FRG. However, there was a brief period in 1957-58 when the prospect of the nuclear armament of the Bundeswehr, albeit under the NATO umbrella led to Soviet promotion of the Rapacki Plan, which foresaw nuclear disengagement in Central Europe and the possibility of a neutral Germany. But as Germany had become the linchpin of US security in the defence of Western Europe, Western leaders were reluctant to consider any Soviet proposals for a neutral Germany or

² See J. W. Young, Cold War Europe 1945-1989 (London, 1993); J.K. Sowden, The German Question 1945-1973: Continuity in Change (London, 1975); and A. Schlaim, 'The Partition of Germany and the Origins of the Cold War', Review of International Affairs (1985).

³ See Chapter 1 for an account of Soviet policy towards Germany.

⁴ The Treaty of Rapallo of 1922 normalised German-Soviet relations. The Weimar Republic sought to counterbalance the Versailles front of Western Powers.

for a German confederation, the option favoured by Walter Ulbricht, leader of the Socialist Unity Party and Deputy Chairman of the East German Council of Ministers. Khrushchev therefore resorted to the device of an ultimatum on Berlin to force the West to negotiate initially on Berlin, and thereafter on Germany and European Security and disarmament. After the successful launch of 'Sputnik' in 1957, the Soviet leader presumed he would be able to negotiate from a position of strength, using nuclear blackmail as a weapon of Soviet foreign policy.

The purpose of this thesis is: to trace the emergence of, and analyse the conduct of East-West negotiations on an Interim Agreement for Berlin from November 1958-May 1960; to assess British and Soviet contributions to this process; and to explain why the U-2 Affair prevented Khrushchev from attaining his objectives of an Interim Agreement on Berlin and disarmament, which ultimately might have led to East-West Detente.⁵ For Macmillan, and indeed for Eisenhower, who after their Camp David meeting in September 1959 became converted to Macmillan's view that an East-West accommodation on Berlin was feasible, the breakdown of the Paris Summit was a devastating blow.

This thesis will seek to demonstrate that Soviet aims on Berlin were defensive and that it was the British Government amongst the Western Powers which recognised this fact from the outset. Pentagon planning 'assumed that a confrontation at the checkpoints would quickly escalate to 'general war' and a nuclear attack on the Soviet bloc'.⁶ The British Government therefore sought to convince its Allied partners of the viability of a flexible approach towards Western contingency planning for Berlin and of the necessity for a modus vivendi on Berlin. This was a difficult undertaking given the background of US intransigence, and the emerging Franco-German rapprochement in this period.

A chronological approach to the question will be adopted, and attention will focus on the crucial role played by the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan and the Soviet Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, both of whom for a variety of idealistic and pragmatic reasons viewed the Berlin Crisis within the wider context of their mutual objectives of

⁵ Most of the documents in the PRO refer to Berlin rather than West Berlin, even when they are specifically referring to Western sectors of the city, so this form will generally be adopted in this thesis. On 1 May 1960, the SU shot down a US espionage plane over Sverdlovsk.

⁶ Burr, *Essay*, op. cit. p.35.

attaining detente and disarmament. As both leaders dominated their respective foreign policy making processes, emphasis will be placed on their overall foreign and domestic policy aims in order to explain why they both hoped that negotiations at the Paris Summit of May 1960 would lead to an Interim Agreement on Berlin and ultimately East-West Detente. The constraints of a word limit, the comparative abundance of biographical material on Macmillan, and the need to revise the existing stereotyped image of Khrushchev are the justification for a more cursory coverage in the introduction, of Macmillan's personality and career, than that of his Soviet counterpart. In addition, an analysis will also be made of other factors influencing the two leaders' policies on Berlin, such as pressure from their respective Allies: from the DDR and China, in the case of Khrushchev; and from Britain's partners in the Western Alliance, in the case of Macmillan. The possibility that there was opposition to Khrushchev's pursuit of detente either from factions within the Praesidium or the Army will also be examined.

Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis

As in the West, the generation which grew up in the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev era, if they had heard of Khrushchev at all, only associated him with 'harebrained' schemes to grow corn in Asia, or with uncouth behaviour such as banging his shoe on the table in the UN. Khrushchev's anonymity within the Soviet Union was due to the fact that after Leonid Brezhnev's coup in 1964, he became, in Orwellian terminology, a 'non-person'. His era was dismissed in history books as one of 'voluntarism' or 'subjectivism', and Khrushchev himself was not even criticised or mentioned. It was as though he had disappeared from history.⁷ When he died in September 1971, the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers merely announced in Pravda that the former First Secretary of the CPSU and pensioner Nikita Sergeivich Khrushchev had died.⁸ And this was the statesman who had dared to attack Stalin in his 1956 speech to the Twentieth Party Congress, who released millions of Soviet people from the Gulag and who had initiated the Berlin and Cuban Missile Crises.

⁷ In 1991, the author discovered that only a few articles and books on Khrushchev were available in the Lenin Library.

⁸ For the most recent account of Khrushchev's aims and his place in Soviet History see Dimitri Volkogonov, The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire (London, 1998).

However, in 1987 with the advent of ‘Glasnost’ Gorbachev announced that Khrushchev had been responsible for much that was good, and a cautious re-appraisal of the Soviet leader began to emerge. The most valuable and fascinating source for the period is Khrushchev’s Memoirs, smuggled to the West in 1970, and only published in the Soviet Union in 1990. These were later supplemented by the *Glasnost Tapes*.⁹ In his study of the Soviet leader, Sergei Khrushchev draws on his own personal knowledge of his father, and his expertise as a nuclear physicist.¹⁰ The works and views of Alexei Adzhubei, Khrushchev’s son in law are also invaluable. As Editor of *Izvestiya*, and as a member of the Central Committee he was closely involved in the decision making process, and he accompanied Khrushchev on all his visits abroad including the Paris Summit of May 1960.¹¹ Biographical studies by Yury Aksutin, former historian in the Communist Party School in Moscow and Fedor Burlatsky, one of Khrushchev’s foreign policy advisors, and a PhD thesis by P. Dolgilevich on the ‘Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962’, have provided further insights into Khrushchev’s objectives.¹²

Until the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communism, the Soviet archives remained shrouded in secrecy. Thus, prior to the end of the Cold War in 1989, Western interpretations of Soviet policy, mainly relying on Soviet and Eastern Bloc statements and the Soviet media, suffered from a two fold disadvantage: inevitably, they were influenced by the ideological rhetoric of the Cold War; and sometimes they were based on Kremlinology, which as Donald Zagoria conceded could weave ‘a web of interpretation on too fragmentary evidence’.¹³ The studies of Jack Schick, Marc Trachtenberg and William Burr chiefly focus on US policy, but they all emphasise the importance of Soviet apprehensions of the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr in explaining Soviet motivation

⁹ N. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott, (London, 1971); N. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* vol. 2, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbot, (Boston 1974); and N. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: the Glasnost Tapes* trans. and ed. by J. Schechter and V. Luchkov.

¹⁰ S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev on Khrushchev: An Inside Account of the Man and his Era* Ed. and trans by W. Taubman, (Boston 1990).

¹¹ A. Adzhubei, *Face to Face with America: the Story of the Voyage of N.S. Khrushchev to the United States* (Moscow, 1959).

¹² Y. Aksutin, Ed. *Khrushchev: A Biographical Study* (Moscow, 1989); P.B. Dolgilevich, *The Struggle of the Soviet Union and the DDR to Settle the Question of West Berlin 1958-1961* PhD Thesis, (Moscow, 1967).

¹³ See preface, D. Zagoria, *Sino/Soviet Conflict* (Princeton, 1969).

during the Berlin Crisis.¹⁴ Michael R. Beschloss, writing in 1991, when the Soviet archives were still closed, based much of his work on oral and written reminiscences.¹⁵ He examines the relationship of Kennedy and Khrushchev and its impact on the Cold War but his treatment of the Berlin Crisis in its earlier phase is only peripheral. Likewise, William J. Tompson's life of Khrushchev, whilst providing invaluable biographical material on the Soviet leader, does not dwell in any detail on foreign policy.¹⁶ James. G. Richter's study, using Soviet sources, analyses the domestic motivations which shaped Khrushchev's motivation during the Berlin Crisis. He considers that Khrushchev used the ultimatum as a lever to achieve a foreign policy success: a negotiated solution to the German problem based on tacit Western recognition of the economically failing DDR. This would provide him with a justification for his reductions in defence spending and convince doubters in the Soviet elite that the threat of a nuclear-armed Bundeswehr was declining.¹⁷

Since 1991, the situation in Moscow as regards access to the archives has undergone a dramatic change. Following the aborted coup in 1991 and the dissolution of the USSR, on the instructions of the new President, Boris Yeltsin, the archives in Moscow were reorganised and placed under the jurisdiction of Roskomarkhive, with the exception of the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID), renamed 'the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Federation'(AVPRF). The Centre for the Preservation and Study of Contemporary Historical Documents (TsKhSD) holds the CPSU Central Committee files but transcripts and notes from the former Politburo meetings, deemed to be highly sensitive were transferred to the Presidential Archive and there is no sign that the contents of this archive will be declassified. At the present time, researchers cannot trace high level decision making and must make the best of what is available. Material in the MID consists mainly of cables and reports generated by embassies or from within the MID's own departments. The difficulties associated with research in the Soviet archives have

¹⁴ J. M. Schick, The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962 (Philadelphia, 1971); M. Trachtenberg, History and Strategy (Princeton 1991); and W. Burr, Introductory Essay in the National Security Archive, Berlin Crisis 1958-1961 (Washington, 1992); see also R. M. Slusser, The Berlin Crisis of 1961 (Baltimore, 1973). The latter considers that there were serious divisions within the Praesidium on the Berlin Crisis in 1961.

¹⁵ M. R. Beschloss, Kennedy v. Khrushchev: The Crisis Years (London, 1991).

¹⁶ W. J. Tompson, Khrushchev: A Political Life (London, 1995).

¹⁷ J. D. Richter, Khrushchev's Double Bind (Baltimore, 1994).

been admirably summarised by Mark Kramer, a researcher sponsored by the Cold War International History Project.

Archival policy in Russia is still determined by the prevailing political winds, and professional archivists find themselves obliged to respond to the demands and whims of high level bureaucrats. The notion that archival materials and other official records belong to something called 'the public domain' is still alien in Russia.¹⁸

A particular problem encountered by researchers is their dependence on archival staff to find material on their subject, due to the lack of finding aids and a severe lack of funds has prevented any amelioration in this situation.¹⁹ Nevertheless, since 1991, the situation has dramatically changed and for the first time Western scholars have been afforded access, albeit limited, to the Russian and the Ex-DDR archives. The objective of the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) established in 1991, in Washington is to disseminate new information and perspectives on the history of the Cold War based on archival research in Moscow and East European and other capitals. As a result of the work of Vladislav Zubok, Hope Harrison and Jim Richter, new light has been thrown on Soviet policy during the Berlin Crisis.²⁰ However, their research focuses on the background to the Ultimatum of 27 November 1958, the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, and the impact of domestic factors on Khrushchev's foreign policy.²¹ This led William Burr of the National Security Archive who chaired the Essen Conference of 1994 on 'Germany and the Cold War', to comment that he would like to know more about developments in the 1959-1960 phase of the crisis.²² The aim of this thesis, albeit a tentative one, given the relative paucity of material being released from the Soviet

¹⁸ CWIHP Issue 3 Fall 1993, article by Mark Kramer, 'Archival Reset in Moscow: Progress and Pitfalls'.

¹⁹ M. Kramer, Archival Research in Moscow, in CWIHP Bulletin Fall 1993, Issue 3. The archival staff in the Foreign Ministry said that none of the material on the 1960 Summit Conference in Paris was open to access. In 1994, there was also a severe restriction on photocopied material.

²⁰ V.M. Zubok, 'Khrushchev's Motives and Soviet Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis 1958-1962'; and J. Richter, 'Khrushchev, Domestic Politics, and the Origins of the Berlin Crisis'. Both papers were presented at a CWIHP Conference in Essen, 28-30 June, 1994, on 'The Soviet Union, Germany and the Cold War, 1945-1962: New Evidence from Eastern Archives', (henceforth cited as CWIHP Conference Essen), also, H.M. Harrison, 'Soviet and East German Policy During the Berlin Crisis 1958-1961 New Archival Evidence from Moscow and East Berlin', Paper presented at the CWIHP Conference on New Evidence on Cold War History in Moscow, 12-15 Jan. 1993.

²¹ John Lewis Gaddis, recent study of this period, We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History (Oxford, 1997) incorporates the research of the CWIHP historians into his new interpretation of the Cold War.

²² W. Burr, National Security Archive, Introductory 'Comments', CWIHP Conference, Essen, 30 June 1994, p.9.

archives on the Berlin Crisis is to try and fill this void by offering insights into Soviet policy and by tracing in detail East-West negotiations on an Interim Agreement on Berlin 1958-1960. It will build on existing research carried out by the CWIHP and supplement it with evidence from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) Archive in Moscow and from the former Socialist Unity Party (SED) Archive in East Berlin.²³ This evidence, though limited and fragmentary in scope will throw new light on East-West negotiations on an Interim agreement for West Berlin.²⁴ Interviews with Adzhubei and Aksuitin, and Russian historians in Moscow have provided fascinating additional insights into the question.²⁵

Khrushchev's Background and Objectives

Khrushchev's main objectives were: first, reform within the Soviet Union, necessitating the diversion of manpower and resources from the defence to the domestic sector of the economy; and second, the summoning of a summit conference to negotiate on detente and disarmament with the West. Arguably, these wider objectives explain why Khrushchev was prepared to negotiate with the Western powers an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and disarmament measures, such as a Test Ban Treaty. They also explain why on several occasions, Khrushchev withdrew his ultimatums on Berlin, as long as the West promised negotiation. As early as January 1959, Anastas Mikoyan, Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers, and Khrushchev himself intimated that the November 1958 deadline could be withdrawn and this was confirmed during Macmillan's visit to Moscow in February 1959. Although the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference in 1959 ended in deadlock, Khrushchev again withdrew the deadline at Camp David in September 1959, in

²³ In 1994, the referencing system for documents from this archive was changed as follows: IfGA ZPA (Institut fur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung Zentrales Parteiarchiv) became SAPMO-BArch, (Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv. DY30 became the reference for the SED and J1V 2/202/128 remained the same for Ulbricht's Office.

²⁴ In 1994, the Deputy Director of TsKhSD, said that he hoped that material on the negotiations on an Interim Agreement for Berlin and the Paris Summit would be released by 1996, and he would send them to the author, (the author had a signed agreement to this effect) so that material found in Ulbricht's personal papers in the SED Archive in Berlin could be corroborated in the Party Archive in Moscow. However, in 1996 access to this material on the Interim agreement on Berlin and the Paris Summit remained restricted.

²⁵ Interviews (10-12 Sept. 1991) with Alexei Adzhubei in Khrushchev's apartment in Moscow; with Yury Aksuitin, at the former Communist Party School, Moscow; and Dimitri Aknalkatsi and Vladimir Batyuk at the US Canada Institute, Moscow.

the hope that he would achieve a summit in 1960. Furthermore, even after the disastrous U-2 Incident and the failure of the Paris Summit, Khrushchev did not, as the Western Powers expected, sign a peace treaty with the DDR. He was prepared to await fresh negotiations on Berlin with the next US President. The Ultimatum was used as a lever to achieve his goal of an overall German settlement with the Western powers. Khrushchev maintained that without determining the future of Berlin it was impossible to solve the issue of Germany, the status quo of borders and demilitarisation in Europe.²⁶

The ensuing study of the Soviet leader's personality, career and background provide the framework against which his aims and motivation during the Berlin Crisis may be examined. Khrushchev was born into a peasant family in Kalinovka, Kursk in 1894, and started work in the Donbass mines at the age of fifteen. He was soon involved in the Donbass Workers Movement, becoming a Bolshevik sympathiser, a member of the Communist Party by 1918, and later during the Civil War a political commissar in the Red Army. In 1929, the local party sent him to the Industrial Academy in Moscow, where he came to the notice of Stalin. Thereafter, he rose rapidly through the Party ranks to become number two in the Moscow Party in 1932, First Secretary in the Ukraine from 1938- 1949, and a member of the Politburo in 1938. Not surprisingly, he was deeply implicated in the Stalinist regime, as symbolised by Ernst Neizvestny's sculpture on his coffin showing half of his face in light and the other half in darkness. Khrushchev himself readily admitted the dual source of his personality. Before his death, he told the poet Evgeny Yevtushenko, 'one man inside me understood something, the other something completely different'.²⁷ Thus, his conception of the wider international scene was limited by his communist preconceptions, but his breadth of vision, arguably like that of Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, allowed him to strive for a new order in domestic and foreign policy.

After Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev became First Secretary of the Communist Party and a member of the collective leadership. He rose rapidly to the top demonstrating his immense cunning, ambition and flexibility on policy by ousting and superseding Lavrentii

²⁶ V. Zubok, 'Khrushchev's Motives and Soviet Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962', Paper prepared for CWIHP Conference, Essen.

²⁷ V. Zubok and C. Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin's Cold War. From Stalin to Khrushchev (London, 1996) p. 175.

Beria and Georgii Malenkov in 1953, Viacheslav Molotov in 1955, and Nikolai Bulganin in 1957. When he replaced the latter as Soviet Premier, he retained his post as Party Secretary. However, many of Khrushchev's views on the new course the Soviet Government should adopt after 1953 were common to the collective leadership. Stalin's heirs recognised that the hardships and sacrifices imposed on the Soviet people after his death could not continue indefinitely as ultimately they would weaken the Soviet State. So they embarked on a new course which encompassed the relaxation of both internal terror and draconian rule in Eastern Europe and a concentration on raising living standards for the long suffering Soviet people by transferring resources from defence to economic reconstruction. An essential concomitant to these policies was the relaxation of tension with the West.²⁸ As early as 8 August 1953, Malenkov declared his country's willingness to engage in negotiation for the further relaxation of international tension in accordance with the policy of peaceful coexistence. This new course resulted in the Korean Armistice in 1953, the 1955 Austrian State Treaty and a series of major East-West Conferences on Germany culminating in the Geneva Summit Conference of 1955. For a short time, until the Suez debacle of Autumn 1956, East-West relations were thus imbued with the 'spirit of Geneva'.

In 1956, at the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev deviated from the current orthodoxy by denouncing Stalinism and enunciating a revolutionary approach to international affairs, based on the emergence and ultimate triumph of socialism in the world system through peaceful competition. His prediction was based on what he perceived as the main feature of the present era, namely a shift in the correlation of forces in favour of Communism. This optimistic assessment was due to the extension of Marxism-Leninist to Eastern Europe; the growth of the military and economic power of the Soviet Union vis-a-vis the West; the decline of colonialism; and the subsequent emergence of anti-Western nationalism in the Third World. At this Congress, Khrushchev rejected the 'inevitability of global war', and even asserted that communism could be attained by parliamentary means. He preached the idea of peaceful coexistence between capitalism and socialism, and emphasised the ideological and economic struggle for hearts and minds, rather than the military struggle between East and West. This

²⁸ In 1956-1957 alone, 7-8 million prisoners were released and 5-6 million posthumously rehabilitated. J.Nogee and R.Donaldson, Soviet Foreign Policy since World War Two. (New York, 1984) p. 118.

reassessment of the international scene enabled Khrushchev to move from ‘an endless arms race towards arms control and disarmament’ and to broach the possibility of transferring several missile plants to peaceful production.²⁹

In 1957, Khrushchev’s policies of destalinisation and reform within the Soviet Union, and his revolutionary attitude to foreign policy activated opposition to his rule. However, with the support of Marshal Georgii Zhukov, he thwarted the anti-Party Coup by Vyacheslav Molotov, Malenkov and Lazar Kangonovich to ensure his dominance. He then sacked Marshal Georgii Zhukov from his post as Minister of Defence and replaced him with Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, who was totally dependent on him for his advancement. Thereafter, as titular head of State, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and First Secretary of the Party, he dominated both the State and Party apparatus. Whilst outwardly observing collective decision making through the Praesidium, like Macmillan’s, his was the dominant voice in foreign policy.³⁰

One can understand why in 1958, Sir Patrick Reilly, the British Ambassador to the Soviet Union saw this ‘superbly confident man’ who had no ‘serious challenger’ and who was ‘the dominant voice’ in government, as a ‘formidable adversary’. According to the Ambassador, Khrushchev appeared to be conducting foreign policy in public and Gromyko’s role as Foreign Minister seemed to be declining as Khrushchev favoured Mikoyan as his emissary abroad.³¹ Khrushchev’s dominance of foreign policy was confirmed by his son Sergei, by Alexis Adzhubei, and by Khrushchev’s biographer, and former Communist Party historian, Yury Aksuitin, and more recently by Soviet and Western historians.³² The speculative ideas current in the West during the sixties and the

²⁹ S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev on Khrushchev p.22.

³⁰ Ibid. pp.180-181; See also, Zubok and Pleshakov, op. cit. p.181; Adzhubei also told the author that in May 1960, en route to the Summit, although it was Khrushchev who made the decision to demand an apology from Eisenhower, he nevertheless radioed the Kremlin from the plane as they approached Paris to gain the sanction of the Praesidium. Interview, Moscow, 12 Sept. 1991.

³¹ Reilly to Lloyd, Annual Report on the Soviet Union, 31 Jan. 1959, FO 371/143399 NS 1011/1

³² Interviews in Moscow with A. Adzhubei and Y. Aksuitin, 12 Sept. 1991. The latter, a member of the Central Committee under Khrushchev said that Khrushchev dominated foreign policy. Aksuitin said he was present at the meeting when Khrushchev was ousted and that even then Khrushchev was only condemned for his domestic policies, not foreign policy. See also, Zubok and Pleshakov, op cit. p.181 and 187, and Tompson, op. cit. pp. 221-222.

seventies that the divisions within the Praesidium as regards foreign policy forced Khrushchev's hand on the Berlin question have largely been discounted.³³

As a dominant and extrovert statesman, Khrushchev favoured the personal conduct of important negotiations with a new generation of Western leaders whom he hoped would accept the Soviet Union's rightful place in the world. After Macmillan's visit to Moscow, and his own meeting with the President at Camp David, Khrushchev was keen to develop a more informal personal relationships with the Prime Minister and the President. So for Khrushchev the treacherous behaviour of the President, 'his friend' over the U-2 Incident was a terrible blow. Another striking, and until recently unknown feature of Khrushchev's conduct of foreign policy, was his use of secret diplomacy. Adzhubei told the author that his link with the White House was Pierre Salinger, and during the Berlin Crisis many secret messages were passed to President Kennedy at times of particular tension.³⁴

Khrushchev's personality is central to any analysis of the Berlin Crisis. The overriding public impression of Khrushchev in the West, both then and now was of a crude, reckless, uneducated and bombastic man. Undoubtedly, these attributes were an intrinsic part of his personality, as Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary discovered to his discomfort during his stay in Moscow.³⁵ However, in any assessment of the Soviet leader it is essential to counterbalance this initial and superficial stereotype. As Western statesmen and diplomats became better acquainted with Khrushchev, they recognised his natural abilities, his imagination, his wisdom, his humanity and above all his genuine and

³³ See C. Linden, Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership:1957-1964 (Baltimore, 1966) and Slusser, op. cit. and J. Tatu, Power in the Kremlin (New York, 1969). p.41 They attribute the schizophrenic nature of Khrushchev's policy on Berlin to a struggle between Khrushchev and the hard-liners.

³⁴ Zubok and Pleshakov, p. 181; Interview with Adzhubei, Moscow, 12 Sept. 1991. The latter told the author that there were 25 secret letters between Khrushchev and Kennedy in the PRO in London, and that Khrushchev and Kennedy had sent messages of reassurance to each other during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He said that Kennedy had told Khrushchev that he was under severe pressure from the military, and feared whether he could keep his job. For an account of secret diplomacy see M. R. Beschloss, Kennedy v. Khrushchev pp.152-160.

³⁵ On their arrival in Moscow, Khrushchev, entertained his British guests by introducing them to troika riding in the snow. Khrushchev subsequently exploited Lloyd's embarrassed reaction to his horseplay during the Anglo-Soviet talks. Diary of PM's Visit to SU, 9 Mar. 1959, FO 371/ 143439.

passionate belief in Communism.³⁶ Macmillan's portrayal of the Soviet leader as a petulant and sometimes impossible but not unlovable extrovert provides the best key to his character:

Khrushchev is impulsive; sensitive of his own dignity and insensitive to any one else' feelings; quick in argument, never missing or overlooking a point; with an extraordinary memory and encyclopaedic information at his command; vulgar, and yet capable of a certain dignity when he is simple and forgets to show off; Khrushchev is a mixture between Peter the Great and Lord Beaverbrook. Anyway he is the boss and no meeting will ever do business except a summit meeting.³⁷

Likewise, Denis Healey, writing in 1958 considered that Khrushchev was 'one of the half-dozen greatest political leaders of the century... his outstanding personal characteristics are pragmatism and self confidence....his faith is all the more formidable because it is not over dogmatic.... summit conferences may have a special value in dealing with the Russians today, providing the West can produce leaders of comparable ability'.³⁸ Soviet Nobel Prize winner, physicist, Andre Sakharov, who came into contact with Khrushchev in connection with the development of the Hydrogen Bomb, believed that 'his innate intelligence and an ambition to be worthy of his post ensured that his accomplishments would outweigh his mistakes and even his crimes in the scales of history'.³⁹

Khrushchev's desire for disarmament and rapprochement with the West may be attributed to two main factors: first, his commitment to domestic reform and disarmament with the objective of releasing precious resources for the benefit of the Soviet people; and second, his fear of a nuclear holocaust. The Soviet historian Vladimir Zubok sees Khrushchev as the last 'true believer' among the post-Stalinist leaders in the mandate of revolution, whose adherence to the ideals of the Revolution had little to do with fanaticism, Marxist theory or Leninist ideology, but a lot to do with his gut feelings about social justice derived from his peasant, working class background and his experiences of the

³⁶ See also Strobe Talbott's views on Khrushchev in Khrushchev Remembers passim; Denis Healey, The Time of my Life; Burlatsky, op. cit.; W. Tompson, op cit. He sees Khrushchev's era as a harbinger for perestroika.

³⁷ H. Macmillan. Riding the Storm p. 461.

³⁸ D. Healey, p. 183.

³⁹ A Sakharov, Memoirs, p.p.211-211; Zubok and Pleshakov state, his natural abilities were 'extraordinary', and compensated for his 'great lack of elementary culture'. p.180.

deprivations of the ordinary people during the war and the Stalinist era.⁴⁰ Like Malenkov, whom he supplanted, Khrushchev was a reformer who supported decentralisation, pragmatism and concessions to consumers. Both Roy Medvedev, the Soviet historian, and more recently, James Richter, the US historian argue that Khrushchev was a genuine reformer for whom detente and reform went hand in hand and necessitated the transfer of resources from armaments to domestic projects. Khrushchev's domestic preferences therefore framed his calculations of Soviet interests, and possibly explain the coincidence of Khrushchev's Ultimatum with the Twenty First Party Congress in January 1959.⁴¹

In early 1959, Khrushchev cut troop strength from 5,763,000 to 3,623,000, and in January 1960, a further 1,200,000 men were demobilised so that Soviet forces were only a half of those in Stalin's time.⁴² Sergei Khrushchev said that his father's aim was to free human and other resources for economic development, but these steps were opposed by the military who felt they were losing their position and privileges. 'Father was adamant. He knew their ways well and had no intention of dancing to a primitive military tune. Father's view of the future only allowed for minimal deterrent forces, and he was in a hurry to put his plan into practice.'⁴³

As for Churchill, it was Khrushchev's realisation of the terrible impact of atomic warfare on the human race which first motivated his desire for disarmament.⁴⁴ Khrushchev told the British Ambassador to Bulgaria that he was the only member of the Soviet leadership who had seen an atomic explosion and that this experience had totally changed his view

⁴⁰ Zubok and Pleshakov, p.178; Dmitry Aknalkatsi and Vladimir Batyuk said Khrushchev was recognised, (unlike most other Soviet leaders) as sincere in his desire for reform to better the lives of the ordinary people. Interview, 12 Sept 1991, Moscow.

⁴¹ See pp.52-57 for an account of 21st Party Congress. See Tompson, op.cit.pp.200-203; J. Richter, 'Khrushchev, Domestic Politics and the Origins of the Berlin Crisis' Paper presented at CWIHP Conference, Essen. pp.4 and 16.

⁴² See G. Barraclough, Survey of International Affairs 1956-1958 (SIA), p.57, and Richter, op. cit. p. 107.

⁴³ S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev on Khrushchev p.22.

⁴⁴ For an analysis of Churchill foreign policy, see J. Young, Winston Churchill's Last Campaign: Britain and the Cold War 1951-1955 (London, 1995); and for an account of the Soviet reaction to Churchill's initiative, see Uri Bar -Noi's article, 'The Soviet Union and Churchill's Appeals for High-Level Talks, 1953-1954: New Evidence from the Russian Archives', Diplomacy and Statecraft Vol. 9, no, 3 (November 1998).

of the arms race.⁴⁵ In 1954, a report prepared by four eminent nuclear scientists including Igor Kurchatov, Director of the Soviet nuclear effort since 1943, warned Khrushchev and the other members of the Troika that ‘mankind faces an enormous threat of extermination of all life on earth’.⁴⁶ They recommended a ‘complete ban on the military utilisation of atomic energy’. In 1958, with Khrushchev’s specific authorisation, Kurchatov also encouraged Andrei Sakharov to write about the effects of radiation from the so called clean bomb, and the dangers of nuclear testing in an article in a scientific journal.⁴⁷ Khrushchev recalled in his Memoirs, that as head of the Soviet Delegation at the Geneva Conference of 1955 he realised for the first time that Western statesmen shared his fear. This Conference ‘convinced us once again, that there was no pre-war situation in existence at that time and our enemies were afraid of us in the same way as we were of them’.⁴⁸

In his 1958 Annual Report, Sir Patrick Reilly stated that the Soviet Union’s desire to stop tests seemed genuine.⁴⁹ He considered that one of the Soviet Leader’s main aims in reopening the Berlin question was to achieve an East-West Summit on the Berlin and German questions and on East-West disarmament. Other indications of the Soviet desire to promote disarmament were Khrushchev’s announcement on 31 March 1958 of a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, and the considerable progress which was achieved at disarmament sessions at Geneva.⁵⁰ Furthermore, in 1960, there was a breakthrough in negotiations for a Test Ban Treaty when the Russians indicated that they would accept the American proposal providing for a phased Treaty as long as it was accompanied by a moratorium covering those tests which were not banned.⁵¹ Indeed, disarmament was a constant theme in most of the Russian leader’s speeches from 1958-1959 and again at the Twenty First Party Congress in 1959. In September 1959, during their Camp David discussions, both Eisenhower and Khrushchev agreed that it was

⁴⁵ Conversation between John Christopher Wyndowe Bushell, Ambassador to Pakistan, 1976-79 and the ex-Soviet Ambassador to Bulgaria (reported by Theodora Bushell).

⁴⁶ See Y. Smirnov and V. Zubok, ‘Nuclear Weapons after Stalin’s Death; Moscow enters the H-bomb Age’ *CWIHP* Issue 4 Fall 1994 pp.14-17; Also Zubok and Pleshakov, *op. cit.* pp. 188-194.

⁴⁷ N.S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*. pp.392-400

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*p.400.

⁴⁹ Reilly to Lloyd, 31, Jan. 1959, Annual Report on the Soviet Union, FO 371/143399 NS/1011/1

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ See B. White, *Britain Detente and Changing East-West Relations*. (London,1992).

demands from both their military establishments which led to the senseless escalation of the arms race. The Soviet leader told the President that part of the reason for his visit was to see if some sort of agreement on disarmament could come out of their meetings and talks.⁵²

Unfortunately, Khrushchev had a problem in convincing the West of his determination to achieve disarmament and detente, and frequently the Western powers misinterpreted his objectives during the Berlin Crisis. This stemmed from his exuberant and often aggressive style, his use of earthy peasant vocabulary, and his resort to nuclear blackmail. His strategy involved sustaining genuine pressure for peace and disarmament, whilst simultaneously issuing nuclear threats to the West. In this respect he once made a very telling remark which personified his approach to diplomacy: 'If I go to a cathedral and pray for peace nobody listens. But if I go with two bombs they will'.⁵³

From the outset, Khrushchev recognised that the nuclear stalemate had totally changed the Cold War. Retrospectively, he recalled his belief 'that we could never possibly use these weapons, but all the same we must be prepared. Our understanding is not a sufficient answer to the arrogance of the imperialists'.⁵⁴ Khrushchev's remark reflected his anger at the continued violation of his country's air space by the American U-2 Programme.⁵⁵ In 1956, Khrushchev told US Air Force Chief of Staff, General Nathan Twining, 'Stop sending intruders into our air space. We will shoot down all uninvited guests'.⁵⁶ In his own estimation, he had already successfully used nuclear threats against the UK at the time of Suez. So, during the Berlin Crisis, the Soviet leader hoped his missiles would force the West to treat the Soviet Union with respect, promote Soviet national security and the world revolution and even perhaps help assure universal peace (Soviet style) through disarmament.⁵⁷ The successful launch of 'Sputnik' on 4 October 1957 revolutionised the existing nuclear stalemate, and allowed Khrushchev to indulge in missile deception and nuclear bluff in his relations with the West. In 1957, NATO's

⁵² N. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers pp. 519-520.

⁵³ Beschloss, op.cit. 176.

⁵⁴ Zubok and Pleshakov, op. cit. p. 198.

⁵⁵ For Khrushchev's account of the U-2 Incident see Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament pp.443-461; for a general account of the U-2 Incident see Beschloss, Mayday *passim*; and P. Lashmar, Spy Flights of the Cold War (London, 1986).

⁵⁶ Zubok and Pleshakov, op. cit. p. 189.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p.193.

plans to install IRBM bases in Europe including West Germany provoked an immediate Soviet campaign for arms control and disengagement in the form of the Rapacki Pact and an East-West Summit Conference to resolve tension. However, it also produced veiled nuclear threats. In the Soviet Note to the UK Government of December 1957, Bulganin said that he could not understand British participation in the NATO scheme in view of Britain's 'extremely vulnerable position by force of its geographical situation' and its self-professed inability to defend itself against modern weapons.⁵⁸

According to Oleg Troyanovsky, one of Khrushchev's foreign policy advisors and Molotov's interpreter, Khrushchev's natural inclination to conduct diplomacy from a position of strength was reinforced by the abortive 1957 coup. The June CPSU Plenum confirmed that the Russian leader's foreign policy of detente had been under attack. Molotov insisted that Moscow 'must take special care to broaden every fissure, every dissent and contradiction in the imperialist camp, to weaken international positions of the United States of America, strongest among imperialist powers'. Mikoyan defended Khrushchev's position that 'the question, to be or not to be for a war in present times depends on the biggest powers of the two camps possessing the hydrogen bomb' and went on to attack the anti-Party Group who wanted to turn around existing foreign policy which was aimed at 'the reduction of international tension'.⁵⁹ Troyanovsky considers that Khrushchev had this previously vocal, but now suppressed opposition to his policy of detente in mind, when he planned his show down over Berlin.⁶⁰ As Zubok argues, there were powerful domestic limitations (couched in strategic and ideological language) on how far any Soviet leader could go, particularly on the sensitive German question. Lavrentii Beria, grossly misjudging his real power, ran into these limitations when he proposed a plan for German reunification. His downfall served as an important lesson for

⁵⁸ J.Nogee, R.Donaldson, Soviet Foreign Policy since World War 11 (Washington, 1984), p.124.

⁵⁹ Y. Smirnov and V. Zubok, 'Nuclear Weapons after Stalin's Death: Moscow enters the Nuclear Age' CWIHP Issue 4, Fall 1994, p.17.

⁶⁰ Zubok and Pleshakov, op. cit. p.199. The Protocols of the July Plenum are in the Kremlin Presidential Archive, but were used for the writing of a Paper for the CWIHP Conference on 'New Evidence on Cold War History', in Moscow, 12-15 Jan. 1953, See Sergei Kiselev and Yuri Malov. 'The Soviet Leader's Foreign Policy Mentality' (1953-1957); and V. Zubok, 'Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis (1958-1962)' CWIHP May 1993. pp.8-9.

Stalin's successors, particularly for Khrushchev, who later decided to break the lock on the Cold War with other means than German Reunification.⁶¹

Khrushchev's attitude to the dangers of nuclear war and his subsequent adoption of the doctrine of peaceful coexistence also had a dramatic impact on Sino-Soviet relations. Adzhubei, believed that Khrushchev needed to be cautious and fearful of China in foreign policy, and Fedor Burlatsky, one of Khrushchev's foreign policy advisors cast the Soviet leader's problems in a colourful metaphor: 'like the sword of Damocles the dark shadow of China loomed over the entire process of improving relations with the West.'⁶² Certainly, at crucial stages in East-West relations, on 3 August 1958, and after Camp David in September 1959, Khrushchev flew to Peking for talks with Mao. In his Annual Report for 1958, Sir Patrick Reilly informed HMG that for the first time 'the Soviet Union had to take account of a partner of almost equal status but with different interests and above all a different attitude to the dangers of war'. The Report also mentioned ideological differences, 'with China outflanking the Soviet Union on the left'.⁶³

New evidence emerging from the ex-DDR and the Soviet and Chinese archives has emphasised the personal animosity which developed between Khrushchev and Mao and in the main has confirmed the hypotheses put forward by Western historians in the 1960's on the origins of the Sino-Soviet dispute.⁶⁴ These historians surmised that the Chinese were totally opposed to the doctrine of mutual coexistence and that Khrushchev was terrified of the Chinese being in a position to press the nuclear button.⁶⁵ Adam Ulam, writing in the 1970's, believed that Khrushchev was aiming at a nuclear free Germany and China, and a study by Soviet Foreign Ministry experts during the same period, characterised the years 1958-1959 as being 'strengthened by the policy of peaceful coexistence and attempts to improve collective security not only in the West but also in

⁶¹ See V. Zubok, 'Soviet Policy in Germany and Austria and the Post-Stalin Succession Struggle 1953-1955', p.30, Paper presented for CWIHP Conference, Essen.

⁶² Interview with Adzhubei, Moscow, 12 Sept. 1991, See also Burlatsky, op. cit. p.157.

⁶³ Reilly to Lloyd, Annual Report for 1958, 31 January 1959, FO 371/143399, NS1013/31.

⁶⁴ See, Zubok and Pleshakov, op. cit. chap. 7 on 'Khrushchev and the Sino-Soviet Schism'; and CWIHP Issues 8-9, 1996-1997, pp. 243-250.

⁶⁵ W. Griffith, Albania and the Sino-Soviet Rift (Cambridge, US. 1964); G. Gittings, Survey of the Sino-Soviet Dispute (London, 1968); D Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1956-1961 (Princeton 1962)

the East'.⁶⁶ Zubok and Pleshakov see the Twentieth Communist Party Congress of 1956 as a turning point in Sino-Soviet relations. Khrushchev, much to Mao's disgust, denounced Stalin, introduced a thaw both in the Soviet Union and in the East European satellites, and a simultaneous relaxation of tension with the West. 'The attempt to reach an understanding with Washington precipitated the loss of the Soviets' major geopolitical ally: Communist China'.⁶⁷ The extent to which the Sino-Soviet rift contributed to Khrushchev's policy on Berlin is unclear, but certainly it is a factor which should be considered in any analysis of Khrushchev's policy.

Robert Slusser has attributed the often schizophrenic nature of Soviet foreign policy decision making to the fact that there was a power struggle within the Kremlin: conservative and reactionary forces, supported by the Chinese and Ulbricht opposing Khrushchev's aim of detente. This position cannot now be maintained given the fact that both Adzhubei and Aksuitin and recent Soviet historians such as Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, as well as William Tompson have all emphasised Khrushchev's primacy in decision making. Aksuitin said 'it was impossible that there was an alliance as such between the hard-liners in the Party leadership, Ulbricht and the Chinese, though of course they could separately influence each other'.⁶⁸

Tension between Peking and Moscow possibly strengthened the East Germans' hand in dealing with Khrushchev, as the DDR could use Chinese insistence on a more assertive approach to support their case for action over West Berlin.⁶⁹ Hope Harrison considers that 'Khrushchev always saw and used West Berlin as a lever to compel the West to recognise the post war status quo and the existence of East Germany, and that Ulbricht saw West Berlin as more of a prize, although he was willing to exploit it as a lever until he got it as a prize'.⁷⁰ However, even if at various stages during the Berlin Crisis Ulbricht was exerting pressure on Khrushchev on the West Berlin question, particularly during the Wall Crisis of 1961, it appears that during the period 1959-May 1960, the DDR was supportive of Soviet attempts to reach a modus vivendi with the West on the

⁶⁶ Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence p.621; O. Borisov and B. Koloskov, Study of Sino-Soviet Relations (Moscow, 1971) p.135.

⁶⁷ Zubok and Pleshakov, op. cit. p.175.

⁶⁸ Interview with the author, Moscow, 12 Sept. 1991.

⁶⁹ See Harrison, op. cit. pp.54-55

⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 7 and 54-55.

Berlin question. One thing is certain: that in trying to improve relations with both the US and China in 1959, Khrushchev was pursuing diametrically opposed objectives. Arguably, Khrushchev had to take the Chinese factor into account in his reaction to the U-2 Incident and the Paris Summit. However, clarification on this hypothesis awaits the release of Soviet and Chinese evidence on the U-2 Crisis.

Macmillan and the Berlin Crisis

Harold Macmillan, who acceded to the premiership in 1957 was a gifted, brilliant man who towered above his Cabinet colleagues. He was an indefatigable worker and a consummate politician, ambitious, ruthless and courageous, characteristics that were invaluable in re-establishing the fortunes of the Conservative party during his first administration from 1957-1961, in the aftermath of the Suez disaster. He always acknowledged that his deepest interest was in foreign affairs, and like his Soviet counterpart, Nikita Khrushchev, he dominated the formulation of British foreign policy.⁷¹ It is for this reason that an appreciation of his overall objectives and the position of Britain in the late fifties is essential to any analysis of British policy during the Berlin Crisis.

Macmillan's war time military service in North Africa, where he developed close relations both with de Gaulle and Eisenhower brought to the forefront his considerable negotiating and diplomatic skills. When dealing with foreign affairs, Macmillan often bypassed the Cabinet or informed them of policy after the event, and it is significant that there were relatively few meetings of the Defence Committee during this period. His presidential attitude to foreign policy was possible because of the compliance of Selwyn Lloyd whom Macmillan surprisingly retained as Foreign Secretary in 1957, because in Macmillan's words, 'in order to defend and rebuild the situation we had to say we were right over Suez'.⁷² The Prime Minister recognised that Selwyn Lloyd had 'no ideas of his own', but respected him for his loyalty and his readiness to tackle the 'dirty jobs' with

⁷¹ For biographical studies of Macmillan, see: A. Horne, Macmillan 1957-1966 Vol. 2 (London, 1989) p.8; R. Lamb, The Macmillan Years 1957-1963 (London, 1995);, Downing Street Diary: The Macmillan Years 1957-1963 (London 1981); A. Sampson, Macmillan, A Study in Ambiguity (London, 1967); J. Turner, Macmillan (London 1994); N. Fisher, Harold Macmillan: A Biography (London, 1982).

⁷² A. Horne, op. cit. p.7.

courage, and for his part, Selwyn Lloyd felt 'tremendous respect' for the Prime Minister.⁷³ Macmillan's preferred form of decision making was for informal weekend brainstorming sessions on major problems at Chequers, attended by a few key trusted Ministers, the top officials in the Foreign Office and his personal advisors. It was during such a session in January 1959, rather than in Cabinet that Macmillan took the decision to visit the Soviet Union, the first by a British statesman since Winston Churchill in 1945. When it came to summity, which Selwyn Lloyd termed the 'occupational weakness of any incumbent of Number 10', to which Macmillan was not 'more addicted than the others', the Prime Minister was firmly at the helm.⁷⁴

When Macmillan assumed power, Britain faced considerable constraints in her ability to influence world events, and to pursue an independent policy. The Suez debacle of 1956 only served to emphasise that she was in economic decline. This was due to a declining share of world trade as a result of the war and to the fact that Britain's commitments far outstripped her resources. However, this economic decline was not so readily observable at the time, and did not affect the fact that Britain was still a global power with world wide commitments to her Empire and Commonwealth. Indeed the British Chiefs of Staff (COS) pressed for the maintenance of Britain's policeman role.

Skilful manoeuvring, at which Macmillan proved to be adept was essential if Britain was to exert leverage and protect her interests in the new bipolar world.⁷⁵ In this situation, the Government had to maintain a strong defence and simultaneously search for accommodation and a more flexible strategy to maintain and protect her world wide interests. Britain could exercise her influence through her membership of three Alliances, NATO, SEATO, and the Baghdad Pact, but her survival as a major power in the post-war world depended on her 'special relationship' with the US. This relationship was of mutual benefit, but was particularly vital to Britain's maintenance of an adequate system of defence.

⁷³ Ibid. p.8; see also D. R. Thorpe, Selwyn Lloyd, (London, 1989), p. 8.

⁷⁴ Selwyn Lloyd's Diary, Churchill College Cambridge, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁵ For accounts of British foreign policy see D. Sanders, Losing an Empire, Finding a Role, British Foreign Policy since 1945 (London, 1990); and F.S. Northedge, Descent from Power: British Foreign Policy 1945-1973 (London 1974); J. Frankel British Foreign Policy 1945-1973 (Oxford, 1975).

In 1957-8, Macmillan's first priority was to restore the Anglo-US relationship, and his second was to explore a closer relationship with Europe, as the answer to Britain's structural problems. To achieve his first objective, Macmillan relied on both his own and Churchill's excellent personal relations with the President, and on US fears of Russia moving into the vacuum in the Middle East in the post-Suez period. At the Bermuda Conference of March 1957, the Prime Minister successfully negotiated a new defence relationship with the US based on US provision of 'special and preferential treatment' in the field of design and the production of nuclear warheads. Britain was to be supplied with sixty Thor missiles deployed under the two key system.

The degree of intimacy and Cooperation achieved by the British and US Governments within twelve months was remarkable and the very act of nuclear sharing led to a 'special rapport'.⁷⁶ Most importantly, Britain as a hydrogen power with her own nuclear deterrent earned a place at the top table in international negotiations. As a result of the change to a new strategy based on nuclear deterrence, Macmillan's new Minister of Defence, Duncan Sandys introduced the Defence White Paper of 1958, which was so essential for Britain's economic recovery. This ended national service, reduced forces in Germany by 40% and unified command of the Services under the new Minister of Defence. This new defence strategy allowed Macmillan to pursue the policy he described as maintaining a firm and powerful NATO from the military point of view but demonstrating a willingness to discuss and negotiate on a practical basis to obtain practical results.⁷⁷ This encapsulates Macmillan's approach to East-West relations. Like his Soviet counterpart, Khrushchev he sought to achieve detente and disarmament, and pursued his goals through summity. In this respect, he was much influenced by his predecessors, Churchill and Eden.

As the Prime Minister admitted at the time, and in retrospect, he paid close attention to public opinion in formulating his detente policy. In the late fifties, there was general support in Britain, both within and outside the House of Commons for rapprochement between East and West and some degree of disengagement in Central Europe. The Prime Minister was also conscious of the growing strength of the Campaign for Nuclear

⁷⁶ J. Baylis, Anglo-American Defence Relations 1939-1984 (London, 1984) p.93; See, also Bartlett and Turner, *op. cit.*

⁷⁷ See Chap. 4, Simon Ball, 'Macmillan and British Defence', in (Eds.) R Aldous and S Lee, Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role (London, 1996).

Disarmament (CND) and readily attributed the 1959 Conservative electoral landslide to his foreign policy success in East-West relations. But his quest for East-West rapprochement was not based as some interpretations have suggested, merely on cynical opportunism fuelled by the need for an electoral victory.⁷⁸ Nor was it an exercise in Churchillian nostalgia founded on a miscalculation of Britain's place in the world of the 1950s. Indeed, Macmillan's policy of mediation through personal diplomacy, manipulation and interdependence was the foreign policy pursued by successive administrations from Churchill to Eden, and should be assessed in this context. As Selwyn Lloyd, his Foreign Secretary put it, his policy of detente was a recognition that Britain had to exercise not so much power as influence in the new post-war order.⁷⁹ As Foreign Minister at the Geneva Conference in 1955, Macmillan defined the Geneva spirit as a 'a readiness to discuss and negotiate. It meant a return to that flexibility without which the conduct of human affairs becomes almost intolerable'. He saw the need in international affairs for forging personal relations with world leaders, for regular summits and for prolonged negotiation'.⁸⁰

British policy makers' general perception in the 1950s was that bipolar confrontation was inimical to Britain's world wide interests, particularly given the nuclear policy of the Eisenhower Administration.⁸¹ So although the British Government supported containment as a short term strategy it simultaneously emphasised the need to normalise East-West relations. This approach was manifested in the policy adopted by Britain to the emergence of Communist China, to the Laos situation and towards Soviet moves towards detente during Churchill's last administration. In all these areas, Britain differed fundamentally from the US. The latter perceived Britain's policy as a threat to the position defined in NSC 68, that the Russians would risk war when their military capacity reached a point where they could expect to win.⁸² In contrast, Churchill convincingly

⁷⁸ Ibid. Chap 2, p.17; see also Ph D. Thesis, Cambridge, by Richard James Aldous, Harold Macmillan and the Search for a Summit with the USSR 1958-1960. This examines Macmillan's quest for a summit and his role as a mediator between East and West. It emphasises Macmillan's aim of keeping Britain as an influential player on the world stage, and sees the Paris Summit as a total defeat for Macmillan's summity. However, there is no in depth analysis of negotiations with the Soviet Union on Berlin.

⁷⁹ Selwyn Lloyd's Diary, Churchill College Cambridge, pp.2-3.

⁸⁰ B. White, Britain, Detente and Changing East-West Relations (London 1992), p.67.

⁸¹ The US position was that the use of nuclear weapons could readily lead to general nuclear war, whereas her Allies believed in the limited and controlled use of nuclear weapons.

⁸² John L. Gaddis Strategies of Containment (London, 1982), pp.96-97.

argued ‘it is not easy to see how things could be worsened by a parley at the summit if such a thing were possible’.⁸³ This sentiment encapsulates Macmillan’s approach to East-West dialogue. In 1953, following Stalin’s death, and encouraged by initial signs of a ‘thaw’ in Russia, Churchill made yet another major speech which conceded the need to recognise legitimate Soviet security interests in the context of European Security. But again his efforts were frustrated by opposition from Eden and his own Cabinet, from US intransigence, and from his own deteriorating health. Nevertheless, his initiative influenced Macmillan who served under both Eden and Churchill.

Once Macmillan had firmly established his Government and rebuilt the Anglo-American Alliance, (consolidated by the Bermuda Agreement of 1957), the Prime Minister turned his attention to detente. Throughout 1958, the Western powers had been preoccupied with their response to the advent of Sputnik, and Russia’s breakthrough in space technology in November 1957. As a result they were more amenable to Soviet calls for a summit conference and disarmament. The British Government took the lead in pressing for a summit and rapprochement with the Russians, and the Prime Minister was bitterly disappointed when the Middle East and Far East Crises of 1958, combined with US reluctance, led to the failure of his efforts.

Most Western statesmen acknowledged that the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958, which marked the beginning of the second Berlin Crisis was the most serious crisis of the Cold War since the Berlin Airlift. For Macmillan, the fact that the crisis had the potential of erupting into a nuclear war, and his appreciation that his pursuit of detente had the support of the Foreign Office, the majority of the House of Commons and public opinion made the need for a modus vivendi on Berlin, all the more urgent. Although as an astute politician, Macmillan could see electoral advantage in his support for detente, nevertheless his objectives were sincere and idealistic, and based on the fact that tension between the superpowers could endanger world peace. The First World War had deeply affected Macmillan, and his objective in seeking detente, was the prevention of further useless loss of life. Those who belittle his genuine motives do him an injustice.

In the absence of access to the Prime Minister’s Diaries, one of the most important sources for any study of Macmillan and the Berlin Crisis are his own extensive memoirs,

⁸³ Young, op. cit. p.1.

albeit that Macmillan sometimes 'put a gloss' over some aspects of his premiership.⁸⁴ His Memoirs have been supplemented by the official, wide ranging and detailed biography of Macmillan by Alistair Horne, who did have access to Macmillan's Diaries. The background and importance of Britain's attempts to achieve a breakthrough in East-West relations in the early fifties has been extensively covered in John Young's book on Churchill.⁸⁵ Thereafter, Brian White's study of Britain and detente accords a significant place to Macmillan in continuing the process begun by Churchill in the early Fifties.⁸⁶ Richard Lamb's recent biography has benefited from the release of material on Macmillan from the PRO since 1994, and has provided a very positive assessment of Macmillan's aims, and his conduct of East-West relations. This has counterbalanced recent critical assessments of his role in foreign policy.⁸⁷ Lamb views Macmillan's visit to Moscow as a breakthrough in the Cold War paving the way for eventual detente.⁸⁸

John Gearson's new book on Harold Macmillan and the Berlin Wall Crisis, 1958-1962, considers in detail the background to British policy and the Berlin problem since 1945, so this will not be covered in this thesis.⁸⁹ Thereafter, his study deals primarily with the impact of British policy on Berlin on the Western Alliance and on Anglo-German relations. It is critical of Macmillan's policy on the grounds that his Berlin policy was reactive to the situation; pursuing the chimera of an independent role for Britain at a period of decline. Macmillan's concentration on East-West relations is seen as detrimental to Britain's relations with her potential European partners of France and Germany, and to Britain's chances of joining the nascent EEC. Macmillan's attempts to advance East-West relations by offering some form of security arrangement by means of a zone of limitation of forces and weapons in Central Europe are dismissed because they posed a threat to West German security and because negotiations with the Soviet Union on Berlin were bound to fail.

⁸⁴ H. Macmillan, Riding the Storm 1956-1959 (London, 1971); Pointing the Way 1959-1961 (London, 1972); see Lamb, op. cit. (Introduction) One example is Macmillan's description of US reaction to his unilateral decision to visit Moscow in Feb. 1959, see p.103.

⁸⁵ Young, op cit.

⁸⁶ White, op. cit.

⁸⁷ Lamb, op.cit.

⁸⁸ For other assessments of Macmillan see M Pinto-Duschinsky, From Macmillan to Home 1959-1964 Eds. Hennessy and Seldon, (London 1987).

⁸⁹ John .P.S. Gearson, Harold Macmillan and the Berlin Wall Crisis, 1958-1962 (London, 1998).

This thesis will challenge this last premise. It will focus on the emergence and conduct of negotiations on an Interim Agreement on Berlin and analyse Macmillan's Berlin policy as it related to East-West relations. It will demonstrate that from the onset, the British Government, far from being merely reactive, took the initiative and gradually convinced its Alliance partners of the importance of pursuing an Interim Agreement on Berlin at the Paris Summit of May 1960. Moreover, Macmillan's policy on a modus vivendi on Berlin had the support of the Foreign Office, public opinion and the opposition in Parliament throughout the period under consideration. It was not pursued solely for Macmillan's electoral advantage.

The Western proposals for an Interim Agreement for Berlin in May 1960 were based on the final discussion papers of 28 July at the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference of 1959. The Western Alliance moved from initial opposition to such a policy, to the hope, prior to the Paris Summit of May 1960, that it might achieve a modus vivendi on Berlin with the Russians and some measure of disarmament in the form of the Test Ban Treaty. Much credit should go to Macmillan for his achievement thus far. The fact that the Paris Summit and any prospect of an Interim Agreement were aborted by the U-2 disaster, and the US Government's subsequent ill-judged reaction to the incident should not detract from Macmillan's and the British Government's crucial role in pursuing a modus vivendi on Berlin and the pursuit of detente. The failure of negotiations on an Interim Agreement on West Berlin may well have been a tragic lost opportunity in East-West relations.

The main sources for British policy on the Berlin Crisis are British Government records released by the Public Record Office between 1989 and 1992 under the Thirty Year Rule. However, because of the sensitivity of the material, until recently, the most important material on Berlin remained closed to access and has only gradually been released as a result of the Open Government Initiative of 1994. In this thesis, a number of crucial Cabinet documents, throwing extensive light on Macmillan's initiative on Berlin, have been used for the first time. The National Security Archive on US policy and the Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962, housed at Kings College, London and Selwyn Lloyd Archive at

Churchill College Cambridge have been invaluable sources. US Government papers on the Berlin Crisis, recently published have also proved to be extremely illuminating.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ FRUS 1958-1960: Berlin Crisis 1958-1959, Vols. V111, 1958-1960 and IX 1960-1962 (Washington, 1993).

Chapter One

The Soviet Note on the Status of Berlin 27 November 1958

On 10 November 1958, the Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev announced in a speech to a Soviet-Polish Friendship Meeting in Moscow that the Soviet Union wished to terminate the Four Power Agreement on Berlin thereby ending the 'occupation regime' in the City.¹ If by 31 May 1959, the Western Powers had not agreed to negotiate the end of Berlin's occupation status and to change its status to that of a Free City, the Soviet Government intended to unilaterally sign a peace treaty with the East German Government giving it full control over access to West Berlin. This was confirmed in the subsequent Soviet Note on Berlin which was delivered to Western capitals on 27 November 1958. It argued that Allied rights in Berlin derived from the Potsdam Agreement which the Western Powers had 'grossly violated by allowing West Germany to participate in NATO, and by arming the Bundeswehr with American rockets and atomic weapons'.² The Soviet Government therefore considered null and void the 'Protocol on Occupation Zones of Germany and Greater Berlin of September 12 1944,' and the 'Associate Agreement on Control Machinery in Germany', concluded on 1 May 1945; the agreements that were intended to be in effect during the first years after the capitulation of Germany.³ These two agreements were the basis of Western claims to West Berlin and occupation zones in Germany.

In its Note of 27 November 1958, the Soviet Government stated that it intended to hand control of access rights to the German Democratic Republic (DDR) in accordance with the exercise of its jurisdiction dating from the agreement between USSR and the DDR, 20

¹ SIA, p.584. A Polish Delegation had arrived in Moscow to discuss foreign policy and particularly the revised proposals of Adam Rapacki, on a zone of disengagement in Central Europe, which aimed at preventing the transfer of American nuclear weapons to the Federal Republic. The new proposals were designed to meet Western objections to the original Rapacki Plan which the Western Powers had rejected in May 1958.

² Eds. W. Heidelmeyer and G. Hindrichs, Documents on Berlin 1943-1963 (Munich, 1963) Doc.135. pp.204-210.

³ Ibid. Doc.2, pp.2-9; for detailed accounts of the background to the Berlin question 1945-1958 see T. Sharp, The Wartime Alliance and the Zonal Division of Germany (London, 1975); and Gearson op. cit. Chap.1.

September 1955, which also recognized West German sovereignty.⁴ In ‘normalising’ the situation, the Soviet Union proposed giving West Berlin the status of a demilitarised Free City, ‘so that no power, not even the two German states would have the right to interfere in its affairs. West Berlin should in turn commit itself not to allow on its territory any hostile or subversive activity directed against the DDR or any subversive activity directed against the DDR or other states’.⁵ The Four Powers would guarantee the free status of the city and the UN could participate in the observance of the new status of West Berlin.

Two further points in this long document deserve attention. First, the Soviet Government made it clear there would not be a repeat of the 1948-1949 Blockade, on deliveries on a commercial basis of the necessary quantities of raw materials and foodstuffs to West Berlin.⁶ Second, and in contrast, an implied threat was made, namely that the DDR could take over control of access routes to Berlin. The Note stated: ‘the question would arise of some kind of arrangement with the DDR, concerning guarantees of unhindered access between the Free City and the outside world both to the East and the West, with the object of free movement of traffic’.⁷

In 1958, the crisis envisaged by Western leaders was not the possibility of the ‘Wall’, but of Khrushchev signing a peace treaty with the DDR, thereby forcing the Allies to deal with the DDR, a state which they had not recognized. In this eventuality, Allied leaders believed the East Germans would obstruct Western traffic and threaten the freedom of the city, which was the front line of the West during the Cold War. Western agreement to the Soviet proposals would have amounted to de facto recognition of the DDR, and acquiescence in the ‘two Germany’ solution and the status quo in Europe which, by 1958, was the preferred Soviet option. The Soviet initiative was perceived by the Western powers as initiating the most important Cold War crisis since the Berlin airlift of 1948-9,

⁴ Heidelmeyer and Hindrichs, *op cit.* pp. 126-127. The position of the Western Powers was safeguarded by Soviet Notes to the Western Powers of 18 October 1955 which stated that traffic control would be carried out by the command of the Soviet military forces in Germany ‘temporarily until the achievement of a suitable agreement’. See E. Barker, ‘The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962’, in *International Affairs* no. 39, 1963.

⁵ *Ibid.* p.193.

⁶ *Ibid.* p.194.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 193.

since in the event of a crisis, the Eisenhower administration did not envisage an airlift, but a series of measures which could potentially escalate to nuclear war.

As yet, no historical consensus has emerged on Soviet motivation, even though a number of factors have been suggested such as: the Soviet desire to obtain recognition for East Germany and the existing borders in Europe; Soviet fear of the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr; the impact of Soviet domestic politics and struggles within the Soviet leadership on foreign policy; the influence of China and the emerging Sino-Soviet dispute; and Khrushchev's volatile and unpredictable personality, especially when he had 'Sputnik' and ICBMs to give teeth to his bluster and threats. Undoubtedly, Khrushchev exploited Berlin's exposed position as 'the testicles of the West' and used the Ultimatum as a lever to achieve a summit conference on Germany and disarmament.⁸

This chapter will analyse Khrushchev's motivation for reactivating the Berlin question and will focus on the two areas which have emerged as crucial to Soviet policy: Khrushchev's desire to stabilise the status quo in the DDR and Europe, and Eastern Bloc fears of the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr. An analysis of the centrality of the German problem to Soviet policy is essential background. The second section of the chapter will examine the main developments in Soviet Policy on Berlin from January-February 1959 and demonstrate that Soviet objectives for the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow in February-March 1959 were designed to achieve East-West Detente, and disarmament.

The Background - Post-War Soviet Policy on the German Question

In the post-war period, the main aim of Stalin's foreign policy was to defend Soviet security interests, which may be defined as the defence of the 1941 borders, the continued enfeeblement of Germany and Japan, and the establishment of so called 'friendly governments' along the country's Western perimeter.⁹ Germany was to be rendered

⁸ J.L Gaddis, We Now Know : Rethinking Cold War History (New York 1997) p.241; and Zubok, CWIHP Working Paper no.6, 'Khrushchev's Motives and Soviet Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962, pp.2-12, presented at the Essen Conference on 28-30 June, 1994

⁹ For an account of Stalin's foreign policy aims see V. Mastny, Russia's Road to the Cold War (New York 1979); and V. Mastny, The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: the Stalin Years (New York, 1996).

harmless by a policy of dismemberment, Allied occupation, disarmament, reparations and re-education, all imposed by the Potsdam Conference of 1946.

Recent research has indicated that the Soviet dictator probably envisaged the continuation of 'Big Three' cooperation in the post war world, but the onset of the Cold War 1946-9 resulted in the demise of any East-West agreement over the future of Germany.¹⁰ Stalin tried to reverse the seemingly inevitable emergence of a potentially powerful West German state by imposing the Berlin Blockade and in doing so, he inaugurated the first Berlin Crisis of 1948-9. However, faced with determined Western resistance in the form of the Berlin Airlift, and unwilling to risk war over Berlin, Stalin backed down. In 1949, in response to the emergence of a West German State which immediately embarked on economic and military integration with the West, the Soviet Union established the DDR. However, the Western powers refused to grant diplomatic recognition to the East German State arguing that the FRG was the only legitimate German state and that German Reunification based on free elections throughout Germany was the only solution to the German question.

By 1951, a new threat to Soviet security fears loomed. The Western powers terminated the occupation status of West Germany, prepared to integrate the country into the EDC tied to NATO, and to create a new Bundeswehr to supplement the decline in numbers of Alliance ground troops. Stalin reacted by launching a new peace initiative. His Note to the Western Powers on 10 March 1952 has been the subject of much speculation, because it proposed the creation of a neutral reunified German State through free democratic elections. However, the consensus of recent research has concluded that this was not a missed opportunity in East West relations.¹¹ Stalin only made the offer because he expected the Western Powers to reject it, and because he anticipated that it would have the effect of stalling the negotiations for the EDC. He was correct on both counts.

¹⁰ Vladimir O. Petchatnov, 'The Big Three after World War II', CWIHP Working Paper no. 13, July 1995, p. 17.

¹¹ See M.J Sodaro, 'France, Russia and the European Defence Community', World Affairs 133 (June 1970); and G.Wettig, 'Stalin and German Reunification: Archival evidence on Soviet Foreign Policy' in Spring 1952, Historical Journal 2 (1994); and Vojtech Mastny, 'Stalin's German Illusion', paper presented at the CWIHP Essen Conference.

Eventually, the French opposed the ratification of the EDC Treaty because they were fearful of the potential power of the FRG. Under the terms of the Paris Agreements of 1955, the Federal Republic became a sovereign state, though the Allies retained control over reunification and the eventual peace treaty with Germany, and Berlin remained occupied, under Four Power control.

The German question was also affected by events in Moscow and Berlin. After Stalin's death, in March 1953, the new collective leadership dominated by Georgii Malenkov, Lavrenty Beria, Khrushchev and Vyacheslav Molotov espoused a policy of reducing international tension which resulted in the Korean Armistice, the Austrian State Treaty of 1955 and the Geneva Summit of 1955. However, Soviet policy towards Germany was influenced not only by tergiversations within the collective leadership but also by events within East Germany, which was in a parlous state. The number of refugees to reach the West reached 100,000 in March 1953.¹²

Beria, Head of State Security, tried to advance his position within the collective leadership by supporting new talks with the West for a reunified, neutral Germany.¹³ Molotov heard him state that it made no difference whether Germany was socialist or not, his most important concern was that she was peaceful. He was prepared to give up Ulbricht and the DDR in return for peaceful coexistence and possibly Western aid, as both the intelligentsia and the Party apparatus were increasingly dissatisfied with the Cold War, and recognised the new threat of the atom bomb. Molotov's memoirs confirm that, as chief of security, Beria had ascertained from police reports that the DDR could never be successfully absorbed into the Soviet orbit.¹⁴ However, at the 27 May meeting of the Praesidium, Khrushchev led the offensive against Beria and Malenkov for betraying socialism in East Germany. He threw his weight behind Molotov and those who supported the maintenance of the DDR and Ulbricht's regime. Beria was shot, and thereafter, the outcome of the Beria affair set the terms for Soviet German policy for

¹² V. M. Zubok, 'Soviet Policy in Germany and Austria and the post Stalin Succession Struggle 1953-1955', pp. 8-18, CWIHP Conference, Essen.

¹³ Ibid. p.12.

¹⁴ Ed. Albert Resis, Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics Conversations with Felix Chuev pp.333-346. Molotov discusses the 'Trinity'.

decades to come. Beria's advice to the East German leadership to mollify the workers was subsequently rejected and this led to the 17 June workers uprising which Ulbricht ruthlessly crushed. Thereafter, the zig zags and the outcome of the Beria affair 'set the terms of Soviet German policy for decades ahead. The DDR regime ceased to be an expendable factor and dubious (for Beria) asset, and became the sine qua non of Soviet diplomacy in Europe'.¹⁵

In 1953, the KI or 'Small Committee of Information', attached to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, reported as follows:

For some in the Soviet hierarchy, the Berlin revolt was a grim reminder that German revanchism, prompted by and under the nuclear protection of the United States could pose a deadly threat to Soviet interests. This in their eyes gave an ominous tint to the detailed and voluminous intelligence data on the rise of revanchist agitation and the activities of certain refugee organisations in the FRG.¹⁶

Discontent in Poland and the revolt in Hungary in 1956, further emphasised the basic instability of the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe. As a result the primary goal of Soviet policy became the 'unconditional acceptance of the new status quo in Europe' (the Oder-Neisse Line in particular), while 'running the country was the means to guarantee this goal'.¹⁷ Given these imperatives, Khrushchev became the defender of the status quo in East Europe and the supporter of massive Soviet economic assistance to the DDR.¹⁸ This became an issue in the struggle between Khrushchev and the anti-party group of Molotov, Malenkov and Lazar Kaganovich in 1957. Apparently, the anti-Party opposition had emerged during a discussion of three billion roubles in credit for the production of goods the Soviet Union commissioned in East Germany. Khrushchev argued that this was essential otherwise they would lose the DDR altogether.

¹⁵ V.M. Zubok, CWIHP paper 'Soviet Policy in Germany and Austria,' p.16.

¹⁶ V. Zubok, 'Soviet Intelligence and the Cold War: The 'Small' Committee of Information, 1952-53', Working Paper no.4 p.19 CWIHP (Washington, 1992).

¹⁷ Paper by A. Filitov, 'Soviet Policy and the Early Years of the Two German States', p.4, presented at CWIHP Conference, Essen, 1994.

¹⁸ See V. Zubok, 'Soviet Foreign Policy in Germany and Austria' and the Post-Stalin Succession Struggle, 1953-1955, p.17; and also J. Richter, 'Re-examining Soviet Policy towards Germany during the Beria Interregnum', Working Paper. No.3. Both Papers from CWIHP (Washington, June 1992).

The Role Played by Ulbricht and the DDR in the Soviet Decision to Issue the Soviet Note on Berlin of 27 November 1958

During this period, the recognition of the DDR was essential to Soviet strategy, both as the advance guard of Communism in Europe and as a bastion for the Soviet Union preventing the danger of a reunified Germany.¹⁹ Khrushchev viewed Berlin as a 'barometer' registering the relationship between East and West, and he wanted to relieve the mounting tension in West Berlin and work out a peace treaty. This would consolidate the status of Germany as fixed by the Potsdam Agreement and legitimise the provisional de facto situation and make it permanent:

We were simply asking the other side to acknowledge that two irreconcilable social-political structures existed in Germany, socialism in East Germany and capitalism in West Germany. We were only asking for formal recognition of two German Republics, each of which would sign the Treaty. According to our proposal West Berlin would have special status as a Free City.²⁰

Khrushchev supported Ulbricht who 'acted as a bona fide Communist in a tough struggle for fulfilment of the old Bolshevik dream: that there would be a German proletarian state in the heart of Europe', a dream which had been bought at the price of millions of Soviet lives during the war with the Nazis.²¹ During the Stalin era, Ulbricht had worked his way up through the ranks of the Comintern to his positions as Secretary General of the Party of German Unity (SED)- the ruling party in East Germany from 1949, and Deputy Premier of East Germany. Thereafter Ulbricht had suppressed any opposition to his rule from within the party. He saw himself as 'the Lenin of Germany', who would convert East Germany into the first advanced socialist state.²² The DDR never recognised the legality of the Allied occupation of West Berlin and claimed that Berlin was the 'capital city' of

¹⁹ D. Melnikov, International Relations since the Second World War (1956-1953) (Moscow, 1970).p.203.

²⁰ N.S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, Translated and edited by Strobe Talbott, (Boston, 1971) p.53.

²¹ See V. Zubok, and C. Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin's Cold War (London, 1996) p.197.

²² D. Childs, The GDR, Moscow's German Ally (London, 1983) p.13.

the DDR. Ulbricht repeatedly asked the Soviet leadership to help him take over West Berlin but to no avail. Whether the tail wagged the dog is open to question.²³

At the Fifth Party Congress in July 1958, Ulbricht announced new economic reforms and set unrealistic economic goals, proclaiming that the DDR economy would overtake the FRG by 1961. We can speculate that in 1958, Ulbricht accelerated the speed of social transformation in the DDR, either because this would have made reunification more difficult or because of his need to placate the Soviet Leadership after the 1953 Uprising, or more probably as a result of his own ideological convictions. Between 1958 and 1959, the percentage of collectivised land rose from 29-40%. By 1961, it was all collectivised and private industrial firms had become joint state/private undertakings.²⁴ These factors, in addition to the stark contrast in living standards between the DDR and the FRG, where the economic miracle was underway, were instrumental in accelerating the refugee flow to the West, and emphasised the need to stabilise the DDR. Yury Andropov, Head of the Central Committee Department on Relations with Socialist countries wrote an urgent letter to the Central Committee, about a significant increase in the numbers of East German intelligentsia (50% since 1957), fleeing to the West. He considered their motives were more political than economic and therefore, 'it would be expedient to discuss this with Comrade Ulbricht, using his stay in the USSR, to explain to him our apprehensions on this issue'.²⁵

On 2 and 5 October 1958 during meetings with Mikhail Pervukhin, Soviet Ambassador to the DDR, Ulbricht emphasised the importance of the refugee problem. Although the East German Passport Law had reduced the refugee flow in general, the proportion leaving through West Berlin increased from 60% in 1957 to 90% by 1958.²⁶ In his Memoirs, Khrushchev confessed that the DDR had to cope with an enemy who was economically very powerful and therefore very appealing to the DDR's own citizens, 'the resulting

²³ See Zubok and Pleshakov, *op. cit.* p.196, and Harrison, (*passim*), for an account of Ulbricht's influence over Soviet policy.

²⁴ Childs, *op. cit.* p.59; also Harrison, *op. cit.* pp.16-17 on the refugee problem; and p.7 on the divergences between Khrushchev and Ulbricht's policies on Germany.

²⁵ Harrison, *op cit.p.17.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

drain of workers was creating a simply disastrous situation in the DDR which was already suffering from a shortage of manual labour, not to mention specialised labour. If things had continued like this much longer, I don't know what would have happened'.²⁷

An additional factor destabilising the situation was the constant flow of Western propaganda into East Berlin and the increase in subversive activities. The Ultimatum stated that: 'It is necessary to prevent West Berlin from being used any longer as a springboard for intensive espionage, sabotage and other subversive activities against socialist countries'.²⁸ In his thesis on the Berlin Crisis, Dolgilevich also emphasises the importance of this factor as a source of international tension.²⁹

Western recognition of the sovereignty of the DDR was therefore of paramount importance.' Pervukhin stated that the aim of the Embassy in 1958 was to help prepare 'Soviet Foreign Policy steps directed towards the resolution of the Berlin problem, the consolidation of the situation in the DDR, and the advancement of its international prestige'.³⁰ These relatively unprovocative aims, revealed in the new documents, possibly make it easier to understand Soviet readiness to compromise on Western proposals, and explain why the acceptance of the DDR as an observer at the Geneva Conference was regarded by the Soviet and DDR Governments as significant progress towards international recognition of the DDR.³¹

Soviet and Eastern Bloc Fears of the Nuclear Rearmament of the Bundeswehr and Western Perceptions of this Factor

The second main factor influencing the Soviet Government's decision to issue their Note on Berlin of 27 November 1957, was their government's profound fear of the nuclear rearmament of the Federal Republic. This was frequently dismissed in the West as either propaganda or as a failure by the Russians to understand NATO's command and control

²⁷ N. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers op cit. p.454.

²⁸ Heilmeyer and Hindrichs, op. cit. Doc.135, p.208.

²⁹ P.B. Dolgilevich, The Struggle of the Soviet Union and the DDR for a Settlement of the West Berlin Question 1958-1961 Ph D. Thesis (Moscow, 1967) p.4.

³⁰ Harrison, p.15.

³¹ See Dolgilevich, op. cit. p.3.

system.³² However, recent research both in the West and in the former Eastern Bloc has indicated that the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr was taking place in 1958-9, and that this development was regarded with considerable trepidation not just by the Soviet Government but also by Western Governments.³³

One of the constant claims made by Soviet propaganda was that many Germans still supported Fascist ideas. A public opinion poll conducted in the FRG in 1961 indicated that only 56% supported democracy with 26% giving no answer.³⁴ In 1958, CDU leaders debated the question of nuclear deployments in Germany either by the US or the Bundeswehr. The FRG Government introduced the 'March Resolution' which advocated the solution of the nuclear issue by arms control talks, whilst reserving Bonn's right to acquire nuclear weapons if the talks failed. The SPD continued to fight against nuclear rearmament by means of the Kampf gegen den Atom Tod, the German equivalent of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and Helmut Schmidt, leader of the Social Democratic Party went so far as to state, 'the decision to equip the Fatherland with atomic weapons directed against each other will be seen by History as a decision as important and ominous as previously the Enabling Law against Hitler'.³⁵ In trying to counter the fact that segments of European public opinion opposed Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles, Henri Spaak, Secretary General of NATO argued that 'continental Europe's ability to play an effective part in atomic retaliation is now a fact. Would it not be fair then to give Europe some share of the responsibility for the conduct of this kind of warfare'.³⁶ Soviet fear of Germany's nuclear rearmament was genuine and Aksuitin believed it was a very important factor behind Soviet foreign policy.³⁷

Marc Trachtenberg has recently argued that the Russians definitely had cause for alarm as they faced the prospect of a nuclearised Bundeswehr in the not too distant future.³⁸

David Bruce, the US Ambassador to the Federal Republic took it for granted that in the

³² F.J. Strauss, 'Soviet Aims and German Unity', Foreign Affairs, Vol. 37, April 1959, pp. 366-377.

³³ M. Trachtenberg, 'The Berlin Crisis', in History and Strategy (Princeton, 1991) pp.170-233.

³⁴ G. MacDermott, Success of a Mission (London, 1963) p.117.

³⁵ D.I. Bark and D.R. Gress, From Shadow to Substance (Oxford, 1989), p.404.

³⁶ H. Spaak, 'New Tests for Nato', Foreign Affairs vol. 37, April 1959, pp.357-365.

³⁷ Interview with author, 12 Sept. 1991, Moscow.

³⁸ Trachtenberg, op. cit. p.184.

long run the Germans would want to have a nuclear force of their own, though at that time the desire to move in this direction was limited to a handful of men led by Franz-Josef Strauss, Defence Minister of the FRG in the late fifties. Although the US Joint Chiefs of Staff were inclined to be sympathetic to German aims, Dulles and the State Department had doubts about Strauss, who was expected to follow a more independent path if he became Chancellor. At the end of 1957, US Defense Secretary, Neil McElroy noted that in deploying IRBMs, the Americans might give the Allies control not just of the delivery systems but of the warheads themselves.³⁹ In June 1959, admittedly after the Soviet Note of November 1958, the President stated that they were willing to all intents and purposes to give control of weapons to the Germans.⁴⁰

A closer look at discussions in the State Department confirms this likelihood. Following the Soviet-Polish moves from 1957-1958 directed against the nuclear rearmament of Germany, such as the Rapacki proposals, the State Department reviewed the US position in November 1958. Requirements for Germany included a number of weapons with dual or atomic capability notably Honest John, Lacrosse, Redstone, Matador and Nike and according to the latest information from the Defense Department, the Germans had ordered 60 Ajax and 40 Hercules per battalion and Hercules was atomic capable.⁴¹ These were in the process of delivery, and the Matadors were scheduled for delivery some time between August 1959 and July 1960. The atomic warheads would remain under US control and the Germans had agreed to this. In all, the Germans had acquired 225 F 84 fighter bombers, a proportion of which were equipped with conversion kits which gave them atomic capability. Timmons stated that the US maintained atomic warheads in Germany, though not for the use of German forces but the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) hoped to move forward in this aspect of the matter at an early date.⁴²

³⁹ Ibid p.188.

⁴⁰ Ibid; for an account of Dulles attitude to nuclear weapons see J.L. Gaddis, 'The Unexpected John Foster: Nuclear weapons, Communism, and the Russians', pp. 47-77 in R.H. Immerman, John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War (Oxford, 1990).

⁴¹ DOS meeting, NSA. no.398, 25 Nov. 1958.

⁴² Ibid.

On 17 December 1958, John Irwin, Assistant Secretary of Defense discussed with Strauss, the German military build up and West German efforts to meet Nato plans for possible transfer of IRBM, Nike missiles, Hawk missiles and F 104 aircraft as well as nuclear weapon stockpiles.⁴³ After the meeting, David Bruce, US Ambassador to the Federal Republic planned to hold talks with Adenauer on the provision of nuclear weapon stockpiles.⁴⁴ Although no crucial decisions had been taken on this vital issue, Strauss was clearly interested in German access to NATO's nuclear stockpile and German nuclear capability. The Americans were willing to enter into discussions on these subjects, and envisaged that Germany would assume control of nuclear weapons in the long term. In the New Year, Christian Herter, Deputy Secretary of State was worried that information from official meetings such as those mentioned above had been leaked.⁴⁵ In view of these developments, Soviet fears about a potential development which threatened their security are understandable.⁴⁶

In Britain too there was serious concern about the nuclear rearmament of Germany. Sir Christopher Steel, British Ambassador to the Federal Republic, warned that Herr Strauss was determined to get as much as possible, 'this means forces which will bring Germany the maximum influence at the price'. Although the Air Force would not be operational until 1963, they intended that it would be truly modern when it appeared and this meant nuclear capacity for the strike and ground to air missiles on which they would largely depend for defence.⁴⁷ This issue was addressed by the Defence Committee on 3 November, 1958, when they considered a memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, voicing fears about General Norstad's rearmament plans:

General Norstad is planning that German forces like those of other member states should be provided with tactical nuclear weapons and the first German air

⁴³ NSA no. 577, 31 Dec. 1958.

⁴⁴ NSA no. 553, 23 Dec. 1958.

⁴⁵ NSA, no 594, 7 January 1959; see B. Hauser, Nato, Britain, France and the FRG (London, 1997) pp.124-130, for a discussion of Strauss' policy.

⁴⁶ See J Richter's paper on 'Khrushchev's Domestic Politics, and the Origins of the Berlin Crisis, 1958', CWIHP Conference, Essen, pp.25-27.

⁴⁷ Steel to Lloyd, Annual Report on the FRG for 1958, 19 Jan. 1959, FO 371/145681 WG/10113/1.

squadron has now completed its training in the delivery of atomic weapons and has its nuclear stockpile in position.⁴⁸

The aim of this important memorandum was to consider how far General Norstad's plans had increased the problem of Germany emerging as an independent nuclear Power and whether it was desirable or possible to prevent this. It argued that the policy of rearming Germany would have an impact on the balance of power in Europe, which was not fully thought out when adopted. The NATO policy of a strong shield entailed the extensive equipping of Germany with nuclear weapons at a time when the UK with an anticipated army of 165,000 in 1962 was unable to maintain her present status in NATO. Bearing in mind that the UK was cutting down her forces in Europe to maintain her 'status as a global partner with the US', the memo argued that this development was essential to an integrated Federal Government in Europe.⁴⁹ 'A German hegemony in Western Europe would have disadvantages, but was preferable to a Germany either committed to rearmament or pursuing an oscillating independence between the camps'. The Defence Committee considered that special restrictions on Germany might become increasingly difficult to maintain, and General Norstad's plan to give Germany tactical weapons but not warheads would tend to increase this difficulty. Although German manufacture of her own nuclear weapons was not imminent, the Defence Committee envisaged that there was an 'increased likelihood of the Germans one day coming to possess nuclear warheads under their own control especially if France became a nuclear power'.⁵⁰

The Memorandum then looked at the risks which might emerge from the Bundeswehr being armed with nuclear weapons. On the one hand, Russia might be exposed to a greater temptation to embark on a preventative war, and on the other, there could be a danger of war by miscalculation, for instance, if there was rioting in East Germany (a fear frequently voiced by Khrushchev). This might mean that the Federal Republic, armed with nuclear weapons, could not be restrained from going to the rescue. Disarmament

⁴⁸ D58 Memo 31 88, 3 Nov. 1958, CAB 131/20.

⁴⁹ Ibid. For an account of Duncan Sandys' reorganisation of British Defence see, Central Organisation for Defence, July 1958, Cmnd. 476.

⁵⁰ D 58, Memo 88, 3 Nov. 1958, CAB 131/20.

might also be harder to achieve because the Federal Republic would be tempted to seek a political quid pro quo for giving up her nuclear weapons, and 'a most serious risk is that the SU and her satellites do not regard the present US control over the warheads as an adequate safeguard'. Although Soviet fears were seen as justified, and the dangers of Germany reasserting hegemony over Europe admitted, the Defence Committee's recommendation was to let German nuclear plans run their course.⁵¹ Such was the background to Soviet fears of the potential nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr.

The Background to and the Timing of the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958

The Soviet Note of 27 November was not just a bolt from the blue. During the Spring and Summer of 1958 the German question was becoming the dominant issue in the DDR. In March 1958 Friedrich Ebert, the Deputy Mayor of East Berlin challenged references to the Four Power status of Berlin on the grounds that it devolved from the Potsdam Agreement, which had been broken by the Western Powers who therefore forfeited the right to maintain garrisons in Berlin.⁵² Furthermore, in April, the Chairman of the Berlin Communist Party claimed that the Soviet Union had refused to include West Berlin in a Consular Agreement reached with the SU, because Allied West Berlin was legally part of the DDR.⁵³

At the Fifth Parteitag, Ulbricht announced his proposals on Germany: West German withdrawal from NATO; East German withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact; the recognition of West Germany's post-war frontiers; the guarantee of all fundamental democratic freedoms; the defeat of revanchism; and an endorsement of the idea of a confederation.⁵⁴ Khrushchev, who attended the meeting, stated that the two German states should negotiate directly, in the way proposed by the DDR Government on the building of a German Confederation:

no one can deny, that West Germany's entry into NATO, the introduction of conscription and now the decision to equip the Bundeswehr with atomic and rocket weapons further aggravates the relations between the two German states.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² SIA, Chap. X11.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Childs, op. cit. p.43.

The Bonn Government erected stone by stone, the wall between the two parts of Germany.⁵⁵

However it was developments in West Germany which directly led to the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958. The Bundestag Resolution of 2 July 1958, which was sponsored by all the parties, called on the Four Powers to create a Four Power Group to prepare joint proposals for the solution of the German problem.⁵⁶ The Soviet Union and the DDR wished to pre-empt this Western initiative and prevent the German question being determined by a Commission on which the Soviet Union could be outvoted by the Western Powers, and on which the two German States would have no say.

On 13 August, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister N. Patolichev sent a letter to the CPSU Central Committee proposing that the East Germans pre-empt the West German proposal on the German question. This key document was agreed by the Central Committee Praesidium on 15 August and a Note was sent to the DDR requesting consultation on possible simultaneous Soviet and DDR action to counter the Federal Republic's Note to the Four Powers of 2 July.⁵⁷ Moscow suggested that there should be a Commission of the Four Powers not to discuss the German question in its entirety, but to prepare measures for the conclusion of a German Peace Treaty. In addition to the Four Great Powers, a commission should be created of representatives of the two German states for the discussion of questions connected with German Reunification.

If they were in agreement with this proposal, the letter asked the DDR leadership to take the initiative and make a critique of the West German plan for the formation of a working group, and then put forward the above mentioned proposal in the form of a request to the Four Great Powers. The Soviet Government would then support the proposals of the DDR government in its answer to the Bonn Government on the assumption that:

the USSR and DDR statements and the above proposals will complicate the Adenauer Government's manoeuvres of trying to gamble with the issue of

⁵⁵ Ibid. pp.42-43.

⁵⁶ SIA, p.581.

⁵⁷ Harrison, op. cit. pp.8-10.

German unity and will make our standpoint on the German question more understandable and clear to the German population.⁵⁸

Accordingly, on 5 September, the DDR announced its new proposals for a German Peace Treaty contained in Notes sent to the Four Western Powers suggesting the creation of a Four Power Commission and in addition a joint German Commission to prepare a German peace treaty. Shortly after, on 9 September, the FRG notified the Four Powers of the Bundestag Resolution of 2 July. The Western Powers replied to the DDR in their Note dated 30 September which stated that the prerequisite for any negotiations on the German question must be the reunification of Germany and the formation of an all-German Government by means of free elections.⁵⁹ This was anathema to the SU and the DDR, and a series of high level meetings then took place between Ulbricht, Pervukhin, Soviet Ambassador to the DDR and A. Smirnov, Soviet Ambassador to the Federal Republic on 26 September, 2, 5, 10, 12, 15, and 20 October and 17 November. The content of these meetings suggests that Soviet and DDR motivation for reactivating the German question was primarily defensive, and resulted from three main fears: fear of the nuclear rearming of the Bundeswehr; of impending Western aggressive action against East Germany; and of the destabilisation of East Germany which was becoming weakened by the flow of refugees.⁶⁰ On 2 October, Pervukhin stated that the Soviet Government would answer the Western Powers with a special note. 'In our note, we would again emphasise the position of the Soviet Government on the German question and support the DDR proposal on the preparation of a peace treaty.'⁶¹

On 5 November, East German Deputy Foreign Minister, Winzer sent Ulbricht the Soviet draft response of 10 October to the Western Note of 30 September, and asked for a response on the same day. However the East Germans did not respond until 13 November, by which time Khrushchev had made his 10 November speech so Ulbricht assumed the DDR Note was no longer necessary.⁶² Pervukhin's diary entry for 17

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ SIA, p.581.

⁶⁰ Harrison, op. cit. p.12.

⁶¹ Ibid. p.18.

⁶² Ibid. p.19.

November records that he informed Ulbricht about the Soviet proposals, regarding the Four Power status of Berlin, and that Ulbricht supported the Soviet Plan, and Khrushchev's 10 November speech. This was the first time that the question of the status of Berlin was mentioned. At this meeting Ulbricht stated: 'It would be helpful to publish the Soviet notes to the three Western powers, and also the FRG and DDR governments, no later than November 26, since this would provide the opportunity for us to use the principled position of these documents in the process of preparations for the elections in the West Berlin Senate, which will take place on 7 December. Ulbricht also considered that they should not be in a hurry to transfer to the DDR control functions which had been carried out by the Soviet organs in Berlin 'since this would give us the opportunity to keep the adversary under pressure for a certain period of time'.⁶³

Meanwhile, on 3 November, Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister sent a report to the Central Committee which throws light on Soviet thinking on the German question.⁶⁴ It emphasised the need to pre-empt Western action on the German situation. Gromyko, believed, as did Smirnov that the Western Powers had left the German question in the background since the Geneva Conference of 1955 because of their involvement in events in the Near and Far East, and some European events not connected with Germany. He claimed that 'such a situation does not suit Adenauer who has decided to take steps directed towards the strengthening of his position in the German question'. He attributed Adenauer's actions to Bonn's anxiety about the economic and political strengthening of East Germany, and the FRG's consequent desire to deter the DDR's progress towards Socialism. This had led to an increasingly hostile and lengthy campaign against the DDR. However, the DDR had scored a notable success against Adenauer's manoeuvres by their note to the Four Powers on 5 September on the question of a peace treaty. This had made it difficult for the FRG to evade recognition of the DDR on the resolution of national questions. The Notes of the US, Britain and France, of 30 September stated their

⁶³ Ibid. p.20.

⁶⁴ This document which the author found in the Foreign Ministry Archive supports the views of both Harrison and Zubok: that policy on Berlin was improvised and subject to constant tergivisations, Foreign Ministry Archive, Moscow, (known as) AVP RF, Fond 069, Opis 45, Papka 190, Delo 14, pp.114-116.

opposition to the DDR proposal for the creation of a Commission of the Four Powers to discuss the German question, and emphasised the Western view that the first step towards a peace treaty would be free all-German elections.⁶⁵

In response to this latest Western initiative, Gromyko's report suggested the development of an offensive against the Western position to strengthen the influence of the DDR in an all-German dimension: the convening of a meeting of the representatives of the Four powers and the FRG and the DDR on the question of the preparation of a peace treaty.⁶⁶ This would precede the proposed DDR Commission, and discuss the competence of the Commission and the appropriate representation of Germany in the signing of a peace treaty. The aim of such a step would be to undermine the basic preliminary condition of the Western proposal for a peace treaty, namely that an all-German Government should be created. Gromyko considered that the anticipated Western rejection of the Soviet proposal would be an unpopular move in the eyes of public opinion, especially in West Germany, where the Soviet initiative would be perceived as an active expression of the desire of the DDR and the Soviet Union to find a constructive path forward to a settlement with Germany. The proposed meeting of the six states would also create a precedent for a wider recognition of the DDR in international relations, whether or not an agreement was reached.⁶⁷

Gromyko's report is important for a number of reasons.⁶⁸ First, it indicates that on 3 November, only three weeks before the Soviet Ultimatum on Berlin, consideration of a Peace Treaty with Germany, not a change in the status of Berlin, (as stated in the Soviet Note of 27 November) was still the basis of Soviet policy. Second, it suggests that Soviet aims as regards the DDR were defensive and limited in scope. And third, it emphasises that DDR participation in any meeting of the Four Powers was regarded as an important step towards de facto recognition of East Germany. For the Soviet Union and the DDR, an Interim Agreement on Berlin, not involving either recognition of the DDR, nor a

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

complete end to the occupation regime, would therefore still be a worthwhile goal. One of the most interesting points to emerge from this and other new documents is the flexible and improvised nature of Soviet decision making, particularly during the period 3-27 November.⁶⁹ Khrushchev's speech of 10 November 'bore many marks of improvisation and none of careful preparation for a major campaign against the West'. In addition it contained rhetorical, highly emotional and even inaccurate passages, which suggest that the Soviet leader had not consulted his legal advisors.⁷⁰

Until 3 November, all the evidence points to the fact that the proposed peace treaty was the basis of Soviet policy. Even on 3 November, in his Report to the Central Committee discussing a new initiative, Gromyko makes no mention of the status of Berlin, but only deals with the peace treaty. It was only on Christmas Eve, a month after Khrushchev's speeches, that Gromyko prepared two drafts of a German Peace Treaty.⁷¹ By contrast, Khrushchev's speech of 10 November and the Soviet Note of 10 December dealt primarily with the question of Berlin and the 'Free City' idea, not the proposed German Peace Treaty. Was this then another of Khrushchev's last minute improvisations? Certainly, all Soviet commentators are agreed that Khrushchev dominated foreign policy. On 3 December, in his conversations with Khrushchev in Moscow, Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democratic Senator from Minnesota, was most impressed by his incredibly detailed, almost word for word knowledge of the text of the Soviet Note, suggesting that his was the dominant hand.⁷²

The improvised and flexible nature of Soviet Policy also possibly accounts for Khrushchev's readiness to withdraw deadlines, and soften the tone of Soviet Policy according to Western reaction. The defensive nature of Soviet aims on Berlin combined with Khrushchev's burning desire for domestic reform and detente would later result in pressure being exerted on Ulbricht to moderate his policies on Berlin. Although the DDR

⁶⁹ See Zubok, CWIHP 'Khrushchev's Motives and Soviet Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis', p.19, and Harrison, CWIHP paper, op. cit. pp.11-12.

⁷⁰ See Barker, op. cit. pp.60-61. Khrushchev was mistaken when he claimed that Western rights derived from the Potsdam Agreement.

⁷¹ Zubok, CWIHP paper 'Khrushchev's Motives and Soviet Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis', p.13.

⁷² Khrushchev met Humphrey in Moscow, on 3 December 1958. NSA Chronology, p.61.

leader played a most important part in pressing for a solution to the Berlin and German problems, the latest evidence suggests that it was a Soviet initiative responding to the new geopolitical situation in Europe, which on 13 August initiated the events leading to the Soviet Note on West Berlin of 27 November, 1958, and one of the major crises of the Cold War.

Clarification of Soviet Intentions on Berlin - 27 November-31 December 1958

During this period, 27 November-31 December, the Soviet and DDR Governments made a determined effort to correct what they termed Western misperceptions of Soviet policy. At a press conference on 27 November 1958, Khrushchev emphasised that the Soviet Note on Berlin was not an ultimatum but an invitation to the Western powers to consider and negotiate the issues over a six month period. Non-interference in the internal affairs of the Free City would be guaranteed, and if necessary a joint document could be registered with the UN.⁷³ In his interview with Senator Hubert Humphrey, Khrushchev emphasised the reasonableness of Soviet proposals on the Free City, and his readiness to consider alternative proposals on Berlin as long as talks had started at the end of six months. But he warned that German Reunification could only come about through discussion between the FRG and the DDR.⁷⁴

The Soviet Premier in a fifteen page interview with the Süd Deutsche Zeitung gave further reassurances and dismissed as nonsense Western claims that the DDR had plans to conquer West Berlin. If this were the case, why had his government put forward plans for the Free City and given security guarantees for West Berlin? Khrushchev claimed that the Soviet Union had moderated the DDR position and 'even persuaded the East German Government that they would have to abandon making Berlin their capital and move out for the sake of detente in Germany and Europe'.⁷⁵ In early December, Ulbricht outlined to the New York Times his vision of a demilitarised Berlin which could only be

⁷³ Sir Patrick Reilly, British Ambassador to the Soviet Union to Selwyn Lloyd, British Foreign Secretary, 28 Nov. 1958, no.1563, FO 371/137338 WG 10113/182.

⁷⁴ Reilly to Lloyd, 2 Dec. 1958, no.1576, FO 371/137339 WG 10113/211.

⁷⁵ See Harrison, op. cit. p. 25.

favourable to 'our capital and to all Berliners'. He confirmed earlier reports that the refugee problem was becoming acute, and had to be addressed, and said that strict controls at the sector barriers were on the cards. Ulbricht also made it clear that the Free City could not be an escape route for refugees, and that organisations which looked after refugees would have to be abolished in the same way as espionage organisations.⁷⁶ Czech sources too emphasised the urgency of the Berlin problem for Ulbricht. Evidently, the numbers of professional people defecting through West Berlin had become so serious that (with other economic and political disadvantages resulting from the mere presence of a free Berlin) the DDR could not hold out against the pull of West Germany for another year unless something was done.⁷⁷ In retrospect, Frank Roberts, British Ambassador to Moscow from 1960, said that Khrushchev's overall strategy was to win Western recognition of the DDR and hand over powers to the East Germans, but he had heard Khrushchev remark that 'every now and then he felt, well, better we should perhaps keep some control over things and not give it all to the East Germans'.⁷⁸

Another major influence on Soviet policy was the widespread fear in the Eastern bloc, and particularly in Poland which feared West German 'revanchism' and that the Bundeswehr would be nuclearised. Sir Evelyn Berthoud, British Ambassador in Warsaw, informed the Foreign Office that the initiative of 27 November had been a co-ordinated action between the SU, the DDR, and the Polish Governments, and essentially a move to prevent the FRG from getting nuclear weapons. Wladyslaw Gomulka, the Polish Prime Minister, in a speech attacking West German militarism, stated that a German Confederation, (as proposed by the DDR), was the only practical solution, because the 'security of Poland rested on the boundary of the Elbe separating the two German States'.⁷⁹ Whilst an editorial in the Polish paper Kurier Polski came out in support of Mr Bevan's statement of 4 December in the House of Commons which, it stated, was 'in complete harmony with

⁷⁶ GB Mission Berlin to FO, 2 Dec. 1958 no. 393, FO 371/137340 WG/10113/219.

⁷⁷ Jorisse, the Dutch First Secretary in Prague informed his Western counterparts that the Czech Foreign Ministry had informed Moscow about this problem. See NSA no. 465. 8 Dec. 1958.

⁷⁸ Witness Seminar, British Policy and the Berlin Wall Crisis, p. 137, in Contemporary Record Journal of Contemporary British History (JCBH) Vol. 6, Summer 1992, no.1.

⁷⁹ Berthoud to Lloyd, 4 Dec. 1958, no. 624, FO 371 137341 WG 10113/249.

the Rapacki Pact', in recognising that the Free City proposal would facilitate reunification through agreement.⁸⁰

The Foreign Office's perception that there was a linkage between what appeared to be the Soviets' two main objectives: a change in the status of Berlin and disengagement, was further confirmed by an article in the prestigious Soviet journal on international affairs, Novoye Vremya. On 28 November 1958, it advocated 'the summoning of a summit conference at which the Rapacki Plan and the status of Berlin should be discussed'.⁸¹

This linkage was also a feature of the Soviet Note to NATO Governments of 13 December advocating a conference of Heads of Government as the best method of settling controversial international questions. The Note proposed: an atomic and rocket free zone in Central Europe on the lines of the Rapacki Plan; agreed reductions in foreign troops on the territories of the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries; a permanent ban on atomic and hydrogen tests; and the earliest possible settlement of Berlin. Macmillan pondered long on whether the Soviet call for a summit was propaganda or a serious proposal.⁸²

Meanwhile, on 5 December, Macmillan received a long personal message from Khrushchev replying to his missive of 22 November. The Soviet leader expressed his anxiety over West Berlin, where the Cold War was taking 'such acute and dangerous forms', and where the sensitive contradictions and differences which divided the leading powers of NATO and the Warsaw Pact converged.⁸³ In spite of all the reassurances of the past few weeks, he made it clear that if the West was not prepared to reach an agreement on Berlin within the six months specified, the Soviet Government would not hesitate to 'abrogate its functions deriving from the maintenance of the occupation status of Berlin' (this would involve giving control of access rights to the city to the DDR).

⁸⁰ Berthoud to Lloyd, 1 Dec. 1958, no.104, FO 371 / I37340 WG 10113/232.

⁸¹ Report from the Moscow Embassy, 'Trends of Communist Foreign Policy, December 1958', FO 371/143417 NS 1023/2; See also, Novoye Vremya, no. 48, 28 Nov. 1958 p.10.

⁸² Macmillan, Riding, op. cit. pp.576-577.

⁸³ From Macmillan's Diary, A Horne, op. cit. p.118.

Soviet Policy on Berlin January-February 1959

The main developments influencing Soviet Foreign Policy during January-February 1959 were first, the Twenty First Party Congress, second, Anastas Mikoyan, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister's visit to America, during which he tried to convince the Americans of the peaceful nature of Soviet proposals on Berlin, and third, the publication of the German Peace Treaty which was sent to Allied capitals on 10 January. It is against this background that Central Committee objectives for Macmillan's visit to the Soviet Union should be analysed. Any appraisal of Khrushchev's Berlin policy must take into account the Soviet Union's long term aim of a modus vivendi with the West leading to detente and disarmament, which dominated Soviet rhetoric at the Twenty First Party Congress in January 1959. Nevertheless it was clear that the Soviet leader was determined to maintain the momentum of his diplomatic offensive on Berlin and Germany.

The deliberations of this Congress shed important light both on the domestic considerations determining Soviet Foreign Policy and on Soviet goals in East-West relations. They also provide some insights into Sino-Soviet relations and their impact on the Berlin Crisis, though only tangentially. Reform, detente and disarmament were the watchwords of the Congress, which was dominated by an ebullient Khrushchev. In his speech to the Party, he outlined his goals: the need for a thrusting and forward foreign policy combined with determination to avoid global war. The Soviet Premier was proud of recent Soviet achievements including his country's successful launch of the first interplanetary rocket at the beginning of January 1959. He told the Congress that the record of the preceding years 'had shown the historic importance of Party decisions on the policy of relaxation, decentralisation and a larger measure of democracy'.⁸⁴

With the inauguration of the 1959 Congress, Khrushchev was ready to embark on the next stage of his vision. He was a 'man in a hurry', anxious to preside over the final transfer of Soviet society to Communism.⁸⁵ Pragmatism, Soviet patriotism and pride in economic

⁸⁴ Reilly to Lloyd, Report on 'Foreign Policy Aspects of the XXIst Party Congress', 21 March 1959, FO 371/143417 NS 1022/36; for an account of Khrushchev's reforms see R.A. Medvedev and Z.A.

Medvedev, Khrushchev: The Years in Power (London, 1977); and SIA, p.170.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

and technical achievements appeared to have replaced communist ideology as the chief factors in social cohesion. In general, the Congress was, as always, a propaganda occasion which served to hail past successes in the economic field, to hold out exciting prospects for future expansion, and to impress the West with the growing might of the Soviet Union. The Soviet leader gave a precise timetable for catching up with America economically and for instituting economic reforms benefiting the ordinary people, who were promised less work, more food and a tax free future.

The new Seven Year Plan was a milestone in this transition to the final phase of Communism, and Khrushchev foresaw the next seven to twelve years of economic development as the decisive stage in the struggle against capitalism. He stated that during this period, the Soviet Union would assume the economic lead in Europe and overtake America; first in total production and then in production per head of population.⁸⁶ The Plan envisaged industrial output rising by 80% by 1965. Emphasis was placed on modern technologies, particularly space research. It was predicted that living standards would rise, and housing would improve with fifteen million new city flats and seven million in the countryside.⁸⁷ These targets were modest compared to those of the Sixth Five Year Plan, and the British Ambassador predicted that they were attainable in industry though not in agriculture.⁸⁸ According to Khrushchev, the Plan would speed up the transition from capitalism to socialism throughout the world, and as *Izvestia* commented, it would capture the imagination of mankind. Even Western commentators were suitably impressed. The Economist considered the Plan made a 'staggering impression'.⁸⁹

The subjects of disarmament, European Security and Germany dominated the Congress agenda on foreign policy.⁹⁰ Khrushchev announced that he was pleased that the foreign press had been convinced of the pacific nature of the new plan with its emphasis on peaceful coexistence. This new note of conciliation towards the West was not only a

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ For an account of Khrushchev's domestic policy see M. McCaulay, The Khrushchev Era 1953-1964 (London, 1995). The overall target was to increase the volume of gross industrial output by 80% of the 1958 level, Tompson, *op. cit.* pp.200-204; see also SIA p.160.

⁸⁸ Reilly to Lloyd, Report on XX1st Party Congress, 21 March, 1959, FO 371/143412, NS 1022/36.

⁸⁹ SIA p.168

⁹⁰ Reilly to Lloyd, 19 Jan. 1959, no.1758, FO 371/143410 NS/1022/6.

feature of the Congress, but was simultaneously echoed in articles, lectures and newspaper comment. Ilya Ehrenburg, the Soviet writer reported in Novoye Vremya, that large sections of the West, not only the 'calm, level headed British people', but even Americans, were demanding a 'sober appraisal of the situation'. The editorial in the January edition of the journal Ogonyok featured a similarly optimistic appraisal of East-West relations, and this theme was emphasised by several speakers at the Party Congress. These views were further echoed in a lecture in Moscow, attended by Army personnel: L. A. Onikov, a lecturer in international relations said that a turning point had been reached in American opinion and that the time was now ripe for a summit meeting.⁹¹ Khrushchev's ideas on disarmament enunciated at the Congress had considerable implications for the West. Earlier, at the 1956 Party Congress, he had startled delegates by asserting that war with the capitalist West was no longer inevitable. Now, at the Twenty First Party Congress he succeeded in alienating the Chinese.⁹² He asserted that when the Soviet Union had become the world's leading industrial power, and with China and other Communist countries producing over half of the world's industrial output, 'there would be an actual possibility of excluding world war from the life of society.' Furthermore, in his opening speech Khrushchev emphasised the desirability of a ban on nuclear weapons and the destruction of stocks, though he emphasised that the Soviet Government would only negotiate with the West from a position of strength. He announced that his country had begun the serial production of Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and in his customary threatening fashion boasted that they were sufficiently accurate to be delivered anywhere in the world, including America and countries who acted as hosts to American bases. He attacked the Western position at the Geneva Disarmament Conference on the detection of nuclear tests, voting procedures and control posts, using the customary Soviet argument that they would infringe Soviet security. But he conceded that his country would admit inspectors if the West withdrew unacceptable demands.⁹³

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Reilly to Lloyd, Report of XXIst Party Congress, 21 Mar. 1959, FO 371/143412/ NS 1022/36.

⁹³ Ibid.

Perhaps the most interesting development in terms of the Sino-Soviet relationship, and disarmament in general, was Khrushchev's reference to the need to establish an atom-free zone in the Pacific. This remark mystified observers at the British Embassy in Moscow, who thought it might have been motivated by the desire to prevent China gaining nuclear weapons, and in retrospect this was an enlightened interpretation.⁹⁴ Undoubtedly, Khrushchev's objective was to prevent nuclear proliferation, especially by his two most powerful neighbours, China and West Germany, both of which, by 1958 presented a potential security threat to the Soviet Union.

The literature of the polemical dispute between the Soviet Union and China, released by the Chinese in 1963, indicated that the Chinese bore Khrushchev a grudge for withdrawing Soviet nuclear support in 1959.⁹⁵ A statement in Pravda of 21 August 1963, fuelled the explosive Sino-Soviet dispute, and was in keeping with the whole tenor of Khrushchev's Foreign Policy: 'It would be entirely naive to say the least to assume that it is possible to conduct one policy in the West and another in the East - to fight with one hand against the arming of West Germany with nuclear weapons, and against the spreading of nuclear weapons in the world, and to supply these weapons to China with the other.'⁹⁶ Another cause of Sino-Soviet dissension at the Congress, and a symptom of the struggle for world-wide supremacy was the claim by the radical leadership of the PRC (which had initiated the Great Leap Forward), that the development of Communes had put the Chinese Communists at the forefront of the Communist Movement. This was sharply rebuffed by Khrushchev who emphasised that 'society cannot leap from capitalism to Communism without going through the socialist stage'.

On the German question however, Peking gave its full support to Khrushchev and in talks with Otto Grotewohl, SED Chairman in January, the Chinese went so far as to say that they would regard an attack on East Germany as an attack on the whole 'Socialist

⁹⁴ See A.B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1973, (London, 1968) p.62.

⁹⁵ For a discussion of the Sino-Soviet dispute see W.E. Griffith, Albania and the Sino-Soviet Rift (Cambridge: MIT, 1964); G.S. Gittings, Sino-Soviet Dispute, A Commentary and Extracts from the Recent Polemics (London, 1968); D.S. Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961 (Princeton, 1962).

⁹⁶ Ed. John Gittings, Chatham House Memoranda, The Sino-Soviet Dispute, 1956-1963, Extracts from Recent Documents. (London, 1963) p.46.

camp'.⁹⁷ In general, the leaders of the Federal German Republic were subjected to vituperative comments during the Congress, particularly by Gromyko who said West German statesmen 'infected with atomic virus were planning to get well armed and then to secure reunification and a peace treaty on their own terms. Not only was the conception of peaceful coexistence foreign to them, but they had also not abandoned their territorial claims'. Nevertheless, Gromyko said that the Soviet Union was ready to start talks on Berlin and the peace treaty tomorrow.

In his concluding speech to the Congress, Khrushchev reiterated the Soviet proposals on Berlin, warning that he saw the Berlin situation as a 'time bomb'.⁹⁸ The Russian leader again supported the idea of a reduction or withdrawal of foreign forces from Germany, Poland and Hungary, and the establishment of a nuclear free zone. He also told the delegates that there was no basis for Dulles' statement of 27 January 1959 that the Soviet Union intended to continue the Cold War. He did not believe that Germany could be restrained by membership of Nato, and he advocated talks on a peace treaty as the cardinal interest, as they could lead to immediate relaxation, solution of the Berlin problem and to reunification. Responding to Dulles' flexibility in his speech of 13 January, Khrushchev said that confederation was not the only path to reunification, and that the Soviet Union had no objections to free elections. However, he qualified the Soviet position by adding that this was only a matter for discussion by both Germanies, and that the socialist achievements of East Germany could not be eradicated.⁹⁹

The Soviet Draft Peace Treaty of 10 January 1959

Whilst the Party Congress was in progress, the Soviet Government launched a further diplomatic initiative to maintain the momentum in its pursuit of dialogue with the West on the Berlin and German questions. On 10 January 1959 the Soviet Government sent the Western Powers a Note concerning a German Peace Treaty. This supplemented the

⁹⁷ FO Minute, 6 Feb. 1959, FO 371/143417 NS 1023/3.

⁹⁸ Reilly to Lloyd, 21 Mar. 1959, no.38, FO 371/ 143412 NS/1022/36.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Soviet Note of 27 November 1958 on Berlin.¹⁰⁰ This new Note called for a conference of the 28 nations, (including Communist China), whose armed forces had participated in the war against Nazi Germany, to be held in Warsaw or Prague, with the purpose of drawing up and signing a peace treaty with Germany. An enclosed draft treaty for Germany echoed similar Soviet proposals in 1952 and 1954, except in one most important respect: it envisaged that a peace treaty would be drawn up not with a united Germany but with two German states.¹⁰¹ Any future reunification of Germany would only come about by confederation and with the agreement of the two German States. It also proposed that Germany should assume a 'commitment not to enter into any military alliances directed against any of the powers party to the peace treaty, and not to take part in any military alliances whose membership does not include all four principal Allied Powers of the anti-Hitler coalition'.

It appeared that by this new diplomatic initiative, the Russians intended to conclude a peace treaty with both parts of Germany separately in advance of reunification. Their objective was to secure the Federal Republic's withdrawal from NATO. If this was accepted by the West, it seemed that they would be prepared to see East Germany withdraw from the Warsaw Pact. Thus, even before any talks on reunification would have taken place, the Russians would virtually have achieved three goals; the acceptance of the political status quo in Europe, de facto recognition of the DDR, and the maintenance of the existing political systems of both parts of Germany.

An analysis of the origins of the Note will shed light on the Soviet and DDR aims of achieving neutrality and confederation for Germany.¹⁰² Many of the proposals in the Soviet Note of 10 January to the Western Governments were based on those mentioned in the preceding Note from the Government of the DDR to the Government of the Soviet Union of 7 January 1959.¹⁰³ The latter favoured a free demilitarised city, and the confederation of both German states prior to a peace treaty. It is significant that in this

¹⁰⁰ Heidelmeyer and Hindrichs, *op. cit.* doc. 143, pp. 242-244.

¹⁰¹ See 'PM Visit to Moscow, Synopsis of Government Public Positions', 24 Feb. 1959, FO 371/145820 WG 1073/98A.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Heidelmeyer and Hindrichs, *op. cit.* doc. 142, pp. 233-242.

document, an attempt was made to allay Western fears of the DDR breaking off communications with West Germany once the Free City was established. The other nations concerned would accept corresponding commitments as to the guarantees of the Free City and would likewise guarantee the connections of West Berlin in all directions. In addition they would take all measures in order that 'the passage of goods and the passenger traffic to and from West Berlin, according to the requirements of the economic, political and cultural life of the demilitarised Free City of West Berlin can be carried out without hindrance'.¹⁰⁴

The one option the Soviet Union would not accept was German reunification based on the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr and continued German adherence to NATO. Clearly Khrushchev anticipated that the double challenge to the West of the Soviet Notes of 27 November and 10 January on both the Berlin and German questions would secure the summit conference, which the Soviets had sought for so long.

Mikoyan's Visit to the United States 4-20 January 1959

Meanwhile, Anastas Mikoyan, Khrushchev's Deputy Prime Minister and foreign policy advisor, as well as a personal friend, arrived in America. Although ostensibly on a trade mission, the real purpose of his visit, the first by a top Soviet official since 1945, was to probe Western intentions on Berlin and Germany. He played down the Ultimatum, emphasised the peaceful nature of Soviet intentions and campaigned for Soviet-US rapprochement, thereby putting US foreign policy on the defensive. US Intelligence assessments of the visit indicated that the Soviets were prepared to negotiate on the German problem in conjunction with the Berlin problem but they were not prepared to discuss reunification on Western terms.¹⁰⁵ They wanted East and West Germany to join the occupation powers in any future discussions, an objective which later became apparent during the course of Macmillan's visit to Moscow.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Secret Intelligence Report 4, 29 Jan. 1959, NSA no. 684; see also NSA no. 722, 2 May 1959 for a DOS appraisal of the Mikoyan visit.

Discussions between Mikoyan and Dulles, on 5 and 16 January, and between Mikoyan, Dulles and the President, on 17 January, clarified Soviet policy on a number of points. The Soviets wanted to end the occupation regime in Berlin but were not asking the West to withdraw troops from the city. They invited suggestions or amendments to their proposals from the Western powers, and believed that ideas on a peace treaty could prepare the ground for German Reunification.¹⁰⁶ One of the main aims of this diplomatic offensive was to gain recognition of what they considered East Germany's rightful place at the Geneva Conference. Mikoyan proposed confederation as an intermediate step to German Reunification.¹⁰⁷ In response, Dulles indicated Western Governments' determination to maintain their rights in West Berlin, but he also hinted that German Confederation might be a transitional stage to reunification. He also told the Russians, contrary to indications in December 1958, that the US would not give nuclear weapons to Germany.¹⁰⁸

The Report also indicated that since 1956, Moscow had been interested in establishing an inspection zone as a means of preventing surprise attack.¹⁰⁹ Mikoyan outlined to the State Department, Soviet plans for Europe, at the heart of which would be a confederal Germany incorporated within an atom free zone, comprising Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, part of France and some of Russia, open to inspection by the UN with US and Soviet participation. He talked of cutting foreign troops in Germany by absolute numbers, though it was not clear whether this would be in a divided or united Germany, and he said the Soviet Union was prepared to accept one third cuts.¹¹⁰ Mention was also made of the possibility of a united Germany remaining in NATO as long as there was a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, a matter which was also touched on by Khrushchev, at the Twenty First Party Congress.

As a public relations exercise designed to promote US Soviet rapprochement and to emphasise the reasonableness of Soviet proposals on Berlin, Mikoyan's visit was an

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Dulles-Mikoyan talks, NSA no. 636, 16 Jan. 1959.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ NSA, no.684, 29 Jan. 1959.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

outstanding success. During his tour of the country, a common theme of almost all his speeches and broadcasts to the American people was 'you do not trust us enough', and that it was time for the US and the Soviet Union 'to start talking like human beings'. Mikoyan continually stressed that 'they desired to have the Cold War ended and security guaranteed for all the peoples of the world under conditions of coexistence'.¹¹¹ Whilst there had been no substantial concession to the Western viewpoint, as a result of the visit it was generally taken for granted in Washington that there would be Big Four Talks on Germany in the Spring. Mikoyan's favourable impact on US public opinion and his emphasis on the Soviet desire for peace and detente, might well have led people into thinking that deadlock in East-West relations was due to Dulles' rigidity rather than to the Soviets.

In a television broadcast to the American people on 18 January 1959, Mikoyan complained that he had heard no constructive counterproposals, and no amendments to his proposals. Nevertheless, on his return to Moscow, he reported to the Party Congress that the American people had expressed a wish to improve relations although they had been unwilling to change their policies. In a more optimistic tone, Mikoyan told the Congress that he had not once heard the Americans mention the words, 'containment' or 'liberation'. Arguably, from the Soviet point of view the fact that the Secretary of State at his January Press Conference had even dared venture to discuss the fact that free all-German elections were not the only way to reunification must have raised Soviet hopes prior to Macmillan's visit to Moscow. It would however remain to be seen whether the British Prime Minister would be prepared to make further concessions on behalf of the Western Alliance.¹¹²

At the Party Congress, which continued until February, both Khrushchev and Mikoyan dwelt at length on US-Soviet relations and dropped several hints on the desirability of bilateral negotiations. This was reflected in the final Congress resolution which declared that these two Powers bore the main responsibility for general peace. Khrushchev mentioned the warm welcome given to Mikoyan by the American people, but said that he

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Reilly to Lloyd, no. 38, 21 Mar., 1959, FO 371/143412 NS 1022/36.

had been disappointed by Dulles' subsequent negative remarks. He was obviously annoyed that he had not received an invitation to visit America, but he said he still extended an invitation to the President to visit the Soviet Union.¹¹³ One of the main aims of this Soviet diplomatic offensive was to gain recognition of what they considered East Germany's rightful place at the Geneva Conference.¹¹⁴

Soviet Preparations for the Prime Minister's Visit to Moscow 21 February-3 March

On 24 January, the British Ambassador, Sir Patrick Reilly saw Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister to sound out Soviet reaction to Macmillan's proposed visit to Moscow for a week or ten days, commencing 21 February. To the Prime Minister's relief, an official invitation was eventually delivered to the Foreign Office on 2 February. Prior to Macmillan's arrival, the Times correspondent in Moscow reported that there had been little official Soviet comment on Macmillan's venture. It was the first by a British Prime Minister for sixteen years and Soviet officials had displayed a good deal of reserve about it, possibly because Soviet newspapers 'never threw their caps in the air before a meeting with the West'. There was also an undercurrent of puzzlement about the visit, as the Prime Minister had made it abundantly clear that he was not coming to negotiate on behalf of the Western Powers.¹¹⁵ The February edition of Novoye Vremya reported Macmillan's announcement in Parliament that the visit would be a 'reconnaissance' and it was hoped that conversations with the Soviet leaders would give them a better knowledge of the British point of view and make it easier for the British to understand what was in the Russians' minds.¹¹⁶ Macmillan's choice of words was unfortunate, as in translation 'reconnaissance' means 'espionage', so in his statement, announcing the visit, the Ambassador tactfully called it a 'Voyage of Discovery'

The editorial in the next issue of 'Novoye Vremya', emphasised that the British people wanted to develop friendly links with the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries and

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Dolgilevich, op. cit. p 11; See also D. Melnikov, International Relations since the Second World War (Moscow, 1970) p.206.

¹¹⁵ The Times, 20 Feb. 1959, p.8.

¹¹⁶ Novoye Vremya, 13 Feb. 1959, no. 7 pp. 7-8.

demanded that their government pursue an active policy directed towards peace. It was observed that the visit was closely connected to impending Parliamentary elections, and that the Conservative Party were building their hopes on a successful outcome to the visit. The article concluded by saying that the English people were weary of the Cold War and hoped for an improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations.¹¹⁷ Izvestiya's editor, Alexei Adzhubei, reviewing the attitude of the British press to the visit, said that the British public hoped the visit would result in a reduction of tension, leading to a summit conference and an end of the Cold War.¹¹⁸ As Macmillan observed in retrospect, 'the intensity of the Cold War and the shadow of the nuclear bomb oppressed the whole world, and any attempt to break through the clouds of suspicion was generally welcomed'.¹¹⁹ On the day of the Prime Minister's arrival it became clear that the Soviet Government, possibly influenced by the press feting of Mikoyan in America, intended to make it a high profile visit. According to Sir Patrick Reilly, the largely uncensored media coverage was greater than any visitor to Russia had ever been accorded. Large photos of Macmillan provided by Conservative Central Office beamed purposefully from the front pages of Pravda and Izvestiya, accompanied by long leading articles on the Prime Minister's visit, expressing hope of better relations between England and Russia.¹²⁰ Just prior to the Prime Minister's departure for Moscow, the Soviet Ambassador to the UK, Yakov Malik, had an exploratory conversation with the Swedish Ambassador to the UK during which he tried to establish British motives for the visit. He asked whether Dulles in his recent visit had tried to prevent the visit; and whether Britain dared take an independent line to the US.¹²¹ In reply to the Swedish Ambassador's query as to what the Soviets considered the most essential parts of the recent Soviet Notes, Malik said that West German rearmament was the chief Soviet preoccupation. His Government was not reassured by the assurance that the US had the key to the atomic cupboard, and thought it essential that West Germany should leave NATO. The Soviet Ambassador expressed surprise that

¹¹⁷ Ibid. no. 8.

¹¹⁸ Reilly to Lloyd, no 284, Feb. 1959, FO 371/ 143433 NS 1053/94.

¹¹⁹ Macmillan, Riding p.591.

¹²⁰ Article by Nick Carroll, Sunday Times, 23 February, 1959, p.1.

¹²¹ FO Minute, 17 Feb. 1959, FO 371/143436 NS/1053/106.

Britain and France would even want German Reunification, and he deplored British and US disregard for the Rapacki Pact. When this conversation was reported to the Foreign Office the conclusion drawn was that the Russians were interested in the Eden Plan.¹²² One of the best non-governmental sources indicating Soviet perceptions of Macmillan's visit was the Monthly International Review Lecture, given by Professor G.A. Deboring, an authoritative speaker on international affairs. According to the British Embassy in Moscow, such lectures would have been given the blessing of the Communist Party. Deboring suggested that Britain's true interest lay in joining with the Soviet Union and in opposing the rising forces of German militarism, as had been necessary in the thirties. He also mentioned that it was significant that objections were raised in the West on the grounds that the visit was an assertion of British independence and in particular the New York Times had reported from Bonn that in West German official circles Great Britain was seen as the weak link in the Western Alliance.¹²³

¹²² The Eden Plan put forward by Sir Anthony Eden at the Geneva Conference of 1955, attempted to solve the problem of Soviet security fears concerning German reunification, by proposing the establishment of a zone of limitation of East-West forces and weapons in Central Europe. See S. Dockrill, Britain's Policy for German Rearmament 1950-1955 (Cambridge, 1991); and M. Dockrill, British Defence since 1945 (Oxford 1998); and D. C Watt, Britain Looks to Germany (London, 1965). In 1958, a joint FO/MOD Working Group was set up to make proposals for a zone of military disengagement in Central Europe. Minute, Lloyd to PM, 2 Jan. 1958, FO 371/135627; see also, Report on 'Outline Plan for German Reunification and European Security Arrangements', 11 June, 1958, JP(58)72 (Final) DEFE 6/50; COS 48th Meeting, June 58, DEFE/4.

¹²³ Chancery, Moscow to FO, 27 Feb. 1959, no.396, FO 371/143437/NS 1053/141.

The Central Committee Prepare their Strategy for Talks between the Soviet and British Governments

On 16 February, only two days before the Prime Minister was due to arrive in Moscow, the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MID) submitted to the Central Committee of the Communist Party an eighteen page Foreign Ministry Report entitled 'Proposals for Talks with the Prime Minister of Britain in Moscow'.¹²⁴ This was approved by the Central Committee and formed the basis of Soviet strategy for their talks with the British Government. It was stated that 'the basic aim of talks with Macmillan should be clarification on the possibility of Soviet-British rapprochement on certain international problems and on immediate questions touching on Anglo-Soviet relations, such as the conclusion of an agreement on joint steps to reduce international tension'. The Soviet Government was well aware that the Prime Minister hoped to gain prestige from the visit in order to improve his electoral prospects, and anticipated that the British Labour leaders who were shortly arriving in Moscow for talks with the Soviet Government would also put pressure on Macmillan's Government.¹²⁵

During the opening stages, the Soviet Government intended to emphasise the importance of the joint communiqué issued in April 1956, during Khrushchev and Bulganin's visit to Britain in which both Governments pledged to do 'everything possible to end the arms race in all areas of the world, thereby freeing their countries from the threat of nuclear war'. The Soviet Proposals noted the deterioration in relations between the two countries since that time, in spite of Soviet attempts to improve the situation and introduce steps to end the Cold War. The British Government had adopted a negative attitude towards the Soviet Union with the result that Anglo-Soviet relations were now deemed to be unsatisfactory. However, the Soviet Government hoped that both countries would make a significant contribution to the alleviation of international tension. The MID proposed: that there should be a free ranging agenda and suggested that at the conclusion of the talks

¹²⁴ The author found this document in the Russian Foreign Ministry Archive. AVP RF Fond 069, Opis 46, Papka 194, Delo 15, pp. 115-129.

¹²⁵ Ibid

a joint communiqué should be issued by both states, making specific proposals on the German Peace Treaty and the Berlin Question.¹²⁶

The Soviet Government appreciated that Macmillan was not coming to Moscow to reach an agreement but to clarify the position of the Soviet leadership on controversial questions, and above all to test the firmness of the Soviet position. The ensuing statement in the Foreign Ministry Brief is most significant in the context of Khrushchev and the infamous 'toothache incident'. The Soviet Proposals dwelt at length with familiar Soviet arguments about the dangers of German militarism and the need to warn Britain about the dangers to the world of enclosing the FRG (which soon would have the strongest army within Europe) within NATO. Britain should be warned that West Germany was exploiting divisions not only between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union, but within the Western Alliance itself, by creating a continental block of West Germany, France, and Italy. This had also happened during the course of the Second World War, when Germany had exploited the resources of those countries against both the Soviet Union and Britain. If the anti-Hitler coalition did not take action now the world would once again be engulfed in a new devastating war.

Dealing more specifically with the situation in West Berlin, the Report emphasised that the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany as proposed by the Soviet Union, would facilitate the solution of the West Berlin problem, which was the central point of conflict between East and West. The West needed to be reassured that neither the Soviet Union nor the DDR intended to harm any state signing the peace treaty nor to damage the interests of the inhabitants of West Berlin. There followed a scarcely veiled threat: that if the Western Powers refused to liquidate the remains of the occupation regime in West Berlin and agree to a peace treaty, the Soviet Union would go ahead and sign a separate peace treaty with States expressing their readiness to do so, and then the DDR 'would realize her full sovereignty in relation to links between West Berlin and the outside world'. The Report said the Prime Minister should be alerted to the fact that some Western statesmen were making provocative statements threatening the security of the

¹²⁶ Ibid

DDR, whereas the DDR did not intend to take any action likely to provoke incidents in West Berlin. But if influential circles in the US and West Germany were determined to increase tension over the West Berlin question and the peace treaty with Germany, then Western powers should be warned that the Soviet Union was prepared to honour her socialist obligations under the Warsaw Pact.¹²⁷

If Macmillan brought up the subject of an East-West meeting, the Report proposed that the Soviet Government should state that they would prefer a summit meeting with Heads of Government possessing plenipotentiary power. But, in the event of the British side rejecting a summit meeting, the Soviet Government was prepared to concede that the question of a peace treaty with Germany should be discussed with the Western Powers at a preliminary Foreign Ministers Meeting at which the DDR and the FRG would be participants. The topics the Soviets wanted to discuss at a Foreign Ministers' Meeting were the liquidation of the occupation status of Berlin, and the proposed Free City status for West Berlin. The Soviet side also intended to emphasise the importance it attached to the problem of European Security which should be the subject of discussion by the Western Powers, the FRG, the DDR, and the states bordering on Germany. German Reunification was a matter for the two German states, not the occupation powers, though it was common knowledge that the Soviet Union had never opposed the cause of rapprochement between them.¹²⁸

A separate section in the Report was devoted to the 'top priority' which the Soviet Government attached to both the convening of a summit conference to discuss problems and contribute to the lessening of international tension and the creation of confidence in relations between states. Attempts to achieve a summit, without which it was difficult to reach agreement, had reached a 'dead end'. During the Anglo-Soviet discussions it would be emphasised that if the British Government was really striving to achieve a summit it should do everything possible to achieve this goal in the near future, and to discard sterile preparatory talks through diplomatic channels. Instead a new constructive approach to the organisation of a summit conference should be adopted. It should be possible to reach

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

agreement on preparatory work concerning the date, venue, and participation at such a summit. If during this period, attempts to reach agreement on an agenda failed, it should be proposed to the British that the most important governments should decide on a series of questions which would be examined at the summit.¹²⁹

Given that Europe was dangerously divided between two military alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Government intended to draw attention to the Soviet attempt to create a system of collective security for all European states.¹³⁰

The creation of such a system was an urgent necessity as a result of the growing revanchist mood in the FRG; the re-emergence of the German army and its equipment with weapons including atomic arms, posed a serious threat to Soviet security and that of other European states especially Germany's neighbours.¹³¹

The Soviet Government considered that a radical measure such as a non-aggression pact would eliminate existing alliances in Europe and establish a system of European Security. As a first step, members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact should sign a non-aggression pact. The Soviet Union had put forward this proposal at the Geneva Foreign Ministers Meeting in 1955, and the British should be reminded that Mr Macmillan himself had suggested a non-aggression pact in January 1958. There was a wide measure of support for this proposal amongst countries of the Warsaw Pact, as in countries belonging to NATO. The British should take note of the fact that in attempting to create a common European system of security the Soviet Government in their Statement of 13 December, 1958, suggested that members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact would not give economic or moral help to an aggressor whether or not they were linked by alliance to the aggressor state. The Soviets also wanted to discuss again with the West the possibility of concluding a Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between European States. In June 1958, they proposed this Treaty, to which they attached much importance but it was rejected by the Western Powers, including Britain.¹³²

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

The Foreign Ministry proposed that Macmillan should be reminded of the 1955 Geneva Conference where the Four Powers expressed their readiness to study the possibility of a demilitarised zone between East and West, and to produce a memorandum dealing with measures to strengthen mutual trust in Europe and the establishment of a system of mutual inspection of existing armed forces in Europe, to be examined by the Conference in the future. The aim of the Soviet Proposals was to point out to the Prime Minister that at the UN Conference on Disarmament of 15 November 1955, the British representative recommended a further question could be considered, namely zones of agreed limitations for missiles and arms but the British had soon forgotten about these proposals.

In Spring 1957 the Polish Government, supported by the Soviet and other Socialist Governments, proposed the creation of an atom free zone in Europe including parts of Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. But Western Governments spurned discussion of this question. Extending this idea, the Polish Government produced a new initiative which envisaged the creation of an atom free zone in two stages. In the first stage the production of nuclear arms and installations would be banned in the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia, the DDR and the FRG. The second stage would be preceded by a discussion of the question of mutual arms reduction. During this phase full de-atomisation of the zone would take place and corresponding measures introduced regarding controls. Simultaneously there would be a reduction of general armaments.

Macmillan's message to the Soviet Government of 10 January 1958, had stated that the British Government was studying Polish proposals on the creation of an atom free zone with a view to 'examining whether there was any element which might be considered as the basis of an alternative Plan'. The Central Committee instructed the Soviet side to clarify the attitude of the British Government to these proposals and depending on Macmillan's attitude, to try to insert in the joint communiqué the positive approach of both governments to the creation of an atom free zone.¹³³

The MID proposals for the Macmillan talks also emphasised the importance which the Soviet Government attached to disarmament and the cessation of nuclear tests, and made

¹³³ Ibid.

an oblique reference to the potential nuclear rearming of Germany in the future which, the Soviet Government pointed out, was not in the interests of either country.¹³⁴ The Brief outlined the initiatives already taken by the Soviet Government, and their readiness to meet Western proposals halfway. Depending on the progress of the talks, the Soviet side were instructed to emphasise to Macmillan the need for urgent radical measures to end nuclear testing and the use of all atomic and hydrogen weapons, and to remind Macmillan that the Soviet Union was the first of the Great Powers to put forward the idea of banning nuclear and hydrogen tests in 1955.

These ‘Soviet Proposals for the Talks with the Prime Minister’, approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, tell us much about Soviet aims and indicate that long term Soviet foreign policy objectives were detente and disarmament and the establishment of a system of collective security for Europe based on an atom free zone in Central Europe. There was a clear hope and expectation that as a result of Macmillan’s visit, Anglo-Soviet relations, which had deteriorated in the post Suez-Hungary period, would be restored to the cordial relationship at the time of the Geneva Conference. At that time, both Powers were striving for an end to the arms race and the threat of nuclear war, and some form of limitation of armaments in Europe. It was evident from the Report that in 1959, there was renewed Soviet interest in Anthony Eden’s idea of a zone of limitation of weapons and forces in Central Europe, as a means of safeguarding legitimate Soviet security fears. Thus, the British Government in their negotiating position both at diplomatic level and at the Four Power Working Group were correct in their perceptions of Soviet Policy.

The Report also supports the view that fear of a resurgent, militaristic Germany dominated Soviet foreign policy. In 1959, there was the perceived additional threat posed by the potential nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr, which lent particular urgency to the situation. The Soviets considered that Britain was also concerned about the emergence of a powerful reunited Germany. They intended to exploit this fact during the forthcoming negotiations, by emphasising the isolation of Britain from her continental allies, and the

¹³⁴ Ibid.

attraction of improved Anglo-Soviet relations. Arguably, the Soviets were trying to create a breach in the Western Alliance by attempting to detach Britain from her allies, but it must nevertheless be admitted that fear of West German militarism was the dominant Soviet fear.

Perhaps most important of all, the Soviet Proposals indicate that Soviet motivation resulted from defensive rather than offensive factors. There is nothing in the Soviet Government's proposals to suggest that their ultimate aim was to incorporate West Berlin in the Communist system, as was often argued in the West. If, as the evidence indicates, the main Soviet objective was detente and disarmament, Khrushchev would understand that these aims were incompatible with expansionism in Germany. What is apparent however, was a Soviet determination to preserve the status quo of a divided Germany and improve the position of East Berlin by signing a peace treaty with the DDR. Any thought of German reunification on Western terms, which was still an inherent part of Western proposals for future East-West negotiations, apparently had no chance of success.

Two further significant points should be noted. First, one of the most intriguing points to emerge from this document concerns the infamous 'toothache incident' which took place during Macmillan's visit to Moscow. The Soviet leader had promised to accompany the Prime Minister on his visit to Kiev, on 26 February the morning after initial talks in Moscow. But, after the stormy clash at the meeting of 25 February when Macmillan, on behalf of the Western Powers, had issued his warning on Berlin, Khrushchev said he had to have a filling in his tooth and thought he had better see to it at once. Until now, Khrushchev's unacceptable and undiplomatic behaviour has usually been attributed either to his temperamental and irascible personality, or to a deliberate attempt to snub his guest. But this document reveals that one of the dominant aims of Soviet strategy was to make it clear to the Prime Minister that if he issued any threats on Berlin on behalf of the Western Powers, the Soviet side was instructed by the Central Committee to rebuff any such attempts and warn the West that such pressure would not exert any influence on Soviet policy. Furthermore, serious consequences would ensue for the West if such threats were carried out. Throughout the Berlin Crisis, it is evident that if Khrushchev perceived the Soviets to be under threat from the West, he in return threatened, blustered and bluffed

and a potentially explosive situation could quickly escalate, as happened after Khrushchev's meeting with President Kennedy in Vienna in May 1961.

Second, in all previous Western interpretations of the Berlin Crisis, the Soviet decision to agree to a Foreign Ministers Conference has been attributed to the Prime Minister's diplomatic enterprise in unilaterally visiting Moscow and persuading the Soviets that they should negotiate on Berlin. However, these Soviet Proposals show conclusively that the Soviet Government, probably aware that the Americans would not agree to a summit in the first instance, were prepared to compromise and accept the Western offer of a Foreign Ministers Conference to negotiate on Germany, Berlin and European Security. The Soviet preference for a summit where the representatives had plenipotentiary powers suggests that Macmillan was correct in his assessment that the Western Powers could only do business with Khrushchev, and a summit was a priority. As the Soviet Government intended to use the forthcoming Anglo-Soviet dialogue to probe Western intentions on the questions of Berlin, Germany and European Security, and to inform the West of their priorities, Macmillan's role as an intermediary must have been timely, and extremely useful to the Russians.

Conclusion

Although any attempt to analyse Soviet policy is still limited in scope and fragmentary in nature, the new Soviet evidence sheds significant light on Soviet motivation for policy on Berlin, on the role played by Ulbricht and the DDR and on events leading to the Ultimatum. The British Government's perception of Soviet motivation was correct and far nearer the truth than that of her NATO Allies, namely that the most important reasons for the Russian initiative were the need to stabilise the DDR Regime and the status quo in Eastern Europe, combined with Russian and Eastern Bloc fears of the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr. HMG was also right in suggesting that Soviet Policy was primarily defensive, rather than offensive, as was often suggested by the State Department and the Federal Republic. The new Soviet evidence demonstrates that threats and entreaties about the expected nuclearisation of West Germany were not just propaganda but the result of real fears about the FRG in 1958. These were due to the actual change in the economic

strength of West Germany deriving from the economic miracle, and the perceived potential change in her military strength if she gained control of nuclear weapons. Another factor prompting the Soviet initiative, was the exodus of the intelligentsia which was destabilising the DDR, and Eastern Europe. Given the coalescence of these factors, Smirnov stated it would be a triumph for Eastern Bloc Policy if the nuclearisation of the FRG could be postponed for two or three years by a new initiative dealing with the German question.¹³⁵

Although Ulbricht had been pressing for a solution to the Berlin problem for some years, it was a Soviet rather than a DDR initiative which initiated the sequence of events leading to the Soviet Note of 27 November, 1958. However, Soviet policy was subject to fluctuations and improvisation during the Autumn of 1958, and it appears that the decision to raise the Berlin question, specifically, probably as a lever to obtain a summit conference on Berlin and disarmament was taken only at the last moment, and possibly by Khrushchev himself. For Khrushchev, even a partial settlement of the Berlin question involving the DDR, such as the future Interim Agreement which was the subject of negotiation at Geneva, on 28 July 1959 (which broadly would have been the basis of East-West negotiation at the Paris Summit of May, 1960) would have represented initial progress towards Western recognition of the DDR and the maintenance of the status quo in Eastern Europe. Thus the Central Committee's objectives for the talks with the Prime Minister confirm that the Soviet Government's long term aims were detente and disarmament. Soviet policy on Berlin should therefore be analysed within this context.

¹³⁵ Harrison, op. cit. p.5

Chapter Two

The British Government's Reaction to the Soviet Initiative on Berlin

November 1958 - February 1959

The British Government played a crucial role in the formulation and development of Alliance policy on Berlin during this period. It moderated the more extreme aspects of Western policy on contingency planning for Berlin, and it stimulated a discussion of radical ideas on the German question and the wider, related issue of European Security. The individual and pragmatic stance adopted by the British Government during these early stages subsequently became the basis of future British policy on Berlin and is therefore relevant to the main aim of this thesis: to trace the emergence and course of negotiations on an Interim Agreement on Berlin.

This Chapter will analyse: first, British policy towards the Soviet Union and its impact on Alliance policy from 10-27 November; second, the reaction of Britain and her Allies to the Soviet Note on Berlin of 27 November, and third, the initial attempts of the Prime Minister and Foreign Office to reconsider British policy on Germany, Berlin and European Security, and to feel their way towards an initiative on the Berlin question. The Prime Minister's visit to Moscow in February 1959 was the outcome of these deliberations.

British Policy on Berlin from 10-27 November 1958

The Foreign Office view of Soviet aims had from the first been sanguine and pragmatic, and in marked contrast to the more hysterical assessments made by the US and West Germany.¹ Pat Hancock, Head of Western Department responsible for British Policy on Berlin and Germany, attributed Khrushchev's speech to two possible motives. One was that it was all part of a campaign against nuclear weapons for West German forces; similar attacks and threats had been made by the Russians before the conclusion of the Paris Agreements. The other view was that the main object may have been to secure recognition of the DDR.²

On 14 November, the three Allied (US, British and French) Ambassadors in Moscow produced a remarkably accurate joint assessment of Soviet motivation, which recognised

¹ FO Minute by Sir Frederick Hoyer-Millar, 11 Nov. 1958, FO 371/137334 WG/ 10113/35.

² FO Minute by C.M. Rose, 12 Nov. 1958, FO 371/137335 WG 10113/96.

Khrushchev's flexibility and Soviet security fears. They stated that the most likely reason for Khruschev's action was concern over the weakening internal situation in East Germany together with the strengthening in the rearmament field of West Germany.³ They considered that a solution to the German question could not be put off much longer, and that Khrushchev was aiming at a summit without an agenda other than to deal with the threat to the peace. At this point the Prime Minister became actively involved, and at his request, Philip de Zulueta, his private secretary, asked Richard Brooks of Northern Department for an assessment of the key motives behind Khrushchev's latest moves.⁴ He was told that the minimum Soviet objective was to support the status of the DDR Government in the face of the growing strength of the Federal Republic, but that there was a wider agenda. This was to force negotiation on Germany, possibly at summit level and to discuss reunification on his (Khrushchev's) terms. De facto recognition of the DDR Government would give support to the Soviet view that reunification must be settled by the two German states.

Sir Frank Roberts, Head of the UK Delegation to NATO in Paris, asked the Foreign Office for guidance on the British position in readiness for the NATO Council Meeting of 17 November. In response, Sir Frederick Hoyer-Millar, Permanent Under Secretary and Sir Anthony Rumbold, Deputy Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office discussed the Berlin question on 14 November. They considered that the issues raised by Khrushchev's speech provided an ideal opportunity for tripartite discussions with the French and the Americans and thereafter with the Germans.⁵ They agreed that the Allies needed to work out 'some arrangements for dealing de facto with the East Germans' and 'if necessary actually recognising the DDR Government'. They also decided that a Foreign Office analysis of the Berlin problem should be made, based on assessments from the British Ambassadors in Bonn and Moscow, from Sir Frank Roberts at the UK Delegation (UKDEL) in Paris, and from the British Military Mission in Berlin.

The Foreign Office Memorandum 8113

The Foreign Office analysis of the Berlin situation and initial British reaction to it, thereafter known as Foreign Office Memorandum 8113 was forwarded to Sir Harold

³ US Ambassador Thompson, Moscow to DOS, NSA no. 274, 14 Nov. 1958; see Chap. 1 for Soviet motivation.

⁴ FO Minute, Brooks to de Zulueta, 15 Nov. 1958, PREM 11/2715.

⁵ FO Minute, 14 Nov. 1958, FO 371/137335, WG 10113/100.

Caccia, British Ambassador in Washington, with a request to ascertain the views of the State Department on its contents.⁶ The Memorandum was controversial because it advocated de facto recognition of the DDR as the best of the three options facing the Western Allies. Indeed the Foreign Secretary told Sir Harold Caccia that dealing with the East German authorities on a de facto basis was a 'reasonable compromise' and he would not 'much mind if it ended up with the recognition of the DDR Government'.⁷

The basis of Western Policy on Berlin dating back to the Declaration of 1954, was that any attack on Berlin would be seen as an attack on the West, and that the Western Alliance should be prepared to resort to force rather than withdraw forces or abandon the West Berliners. The Memorandum stated that any weakening of this premise would be fatal, but that if the Soviet Government carried out its intentions, the Allies would have to decide whether to deal with the DDR representatives on present procedures on access and transport matters. It pointed out that the Federal and West Berlin Authorities already dealt with DDR officials de facto in relation to civilian traffic and this would be unaffected by the Soviet withdrawal. In theory, all that would be affected would be Allied official and military traffic, and there would be no difficulty in staging a 'miniature airlift' to take care of this for a maximum period of a year.⁸

Ultimately, the stark choices facing the West were that they could abandon Berlin, resort to force, or stay in Berlin dealing with the DDR authorities, and if necessary recognizing the DDR. In putting forward this last option the Foreign Secretary realised it might well put Britain rapidly on to a slippery slope at the end of which would lie full and formal recognition of the DDR, i.e. that the DDR might make it a condition that the Western Powers should recognize their regime before authorising their representatives to enter into practical arrangements with the Allied Governments over transport and communications. Given the alternatives of agreeing in practice that the government should deal with representatives of the DDR or resorting to some act of force to break a blockade, the Foreign Secretary's view was that it would clearly be in British interests to choose the first alternative.⁹

In retrospect, the contents and impact of the Memorandum 8113 were described by Sir Bernard Ledwidge, Political Advisor to the British Government in Berlin, as follows:-

⁶ Lloyd to Caccia, 15 Nov. 1958, no. 8113, PREM 11/2715. Copies were also sent to the British Embassies in Bonn and Paris, with a request that they should be shown to the respective Foreign Ministers.

⁷ Lloyd to Caccia, 15 Nov. 1958, no. 8112, PREM 11/2715.

⁸ Lloyd to Caccia, 15 Nov. 1958, no 8113 PREM 11/2715.

⁹ Ibid.

it was obviously better to negotiate than fight, that we couldn't desert West Berlin, that the West Berliners' way of life must not be changed but that to recognise the DDR which was probably Khrushchev's objective, was a small price to pay for protecting West Berlin. This was of course a sensation at the time. We put it in a very off hand way, in what was described as a Chancellery paper, but in fact it had Macmillan's approval and it was a proposal for departing from the official allied policy of seeking the reunification of Germany through free elections. This was a matter of moving in the opposite direction, to the reunification of Germany without free elections, in fact deepening the division of Germany and none of our Allies liked this.¹⁰

Arguably, this rapid assessment of policy options was undertaken to ensure that Britain's more compromising attitude would influence Allied decision making, and facilitate a consideration of the wider implications of the Crisis.

On 17 November, the British Ambassadors to Paris and Bonn were officially asked to consult with their respective Foreign Ministers about British views as contained in telegram 8113 to Washington.¹¹ Surprisingly, the French were in broad agreement with the analysis, and were prepared to accept the idea of Four Power discussion of problems raised in the Memorandum, on the assumption that there was general tripartite agreement to it. The French Foreign Minister, Couve de Murville said the real dilemma was whether the Allies were prepared to risk a world war rather than do something which would imply the recognition of the DDR. Thinking aloud, he told Sir Gladwyn Jebb, the British Ambassador in Paris, that he himself had always thought it a would be a grave mistake on the Allies part not to have recognised the DDR.¹² Whilst agreeing that recognition of the DDR would be preferable to war, Sir Christopher Steel, the British Ambassador in Bonn, warned that convincing the Germans and Americans would be difficult.¹³ When he heard about the British memorandum, Adenauer was suspicious and resentful. He sent a personal letter to Macmillan voicing his deep concern that 'the Soviet Union is resolved to make the Berlin question a test for the policy of the free world'. He pleaded with

¹⁰ Contemporary Record The Journal of Contemporary British History no.6 , 1992, pp.129-130.

¹¹ Lloyd to Caccia, 17 Nov. 1958, no.8185, FO 371/137335 WG 10113/77 The FO memos to Paris and Bonn were couched in the form of an aide-memoire.

¹² Jebb to Lloyd, 17 Nov. 1958, no.525, FO 371/137335 WG 10113/76. It is significant that this relatively mild French reaction pre-dated the Franco-German accord struck between de Gaulle and Adenauer at Bad Kreuznach on 27 Nov. 1958.

¹³ Steel to Lloyd, 16 Nov. 1958, no. 1058, FO 371/137334 WG 10113/171.

Macmillan to prevent the SU setting in motion ‘a stone which could become a destructive avalanche,’ by making representations to Moscow.¹⁴

In response, Macmillan sent a personal message to Khrushchev on 22 November, conveying his anxiety over the Soviet leader’s recent statements on Berlin.¹⁵ He warned that the British Government had every intention of upholding their rights in Berlin which were soundly based, and he expressed surprise that whilst fruitful negotiations were proceeding on nuclear tests in Geneva, the Russian Premier should proceed with such action. The Prime Minister’s message to Khrushchev was appreciated in Bonn where the British Memo had been interpreted as implying HMG were in favour of unilaterally recognizing the DDR which might lead to descent of the ‘slippery slope’.¹⁶

The US Ambassador in London also voiced his disquiet over British policy at a meeting with the Foreign Secretary on 19 November. Selwyn Lloyd defended but played down the significance of Memorandum 8113, on the grounds that its object was to provide a preliminary British analysis ‘to start the ball rolling’ in consultation between the Allies, and it was ‘not a considered or final policy’. He argued that ‘he was prepared to fight’, to maintain the Western position in Berlin but was opposed to presenting the options facing the Allies as a choice of recognizing the DDR or fighting.¹⁷ The US view was that full recognition of the DDR would amount to legal recognition of the partition of Germany. This was contrary to their policy of accepting explicitly as opposed to implicitly, Adenauer’s commitment to the reunification of Germany as the linchpin of US policy in Europe. Moreover, the US considered Berlin the major symbol of the Cold War and felt that any defeat for the West would encourage the Russian advance.

Contingency Planning-The Agency Theory

The debate on the attitude of the Western Powers to the DDR led to demands by the Federal Republic for changes in existing contingency planning, based on NSC 5404/1 approved on 25 January 1954.¹⁸ According to these arrangements, in the event of access to Berlin being cut off, the three Allied Powers would not immediately impose an airlift, but would first apply diplomatic and economic measures and then limited force to lift the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ H. Macmillan, Riding p.571.

¹⁶ FO Minute by Hoyer-Millar, 26 Nov. 1958, FO 371/137338 WG 10113/172.

¹⁷ Conversation between Loyd and US Ambassador, 19 Nov. 1958, FO 371/ 137339 WG 10113/199.

¹⁸ NSA Essay by W. Burr, ‘US Policy and the Berlin Crisis 1958-1962: An Overview’, op.cit. p.34.

blockade, even though this might inexorably lead to nuclear war. However, the British saw an airlift as the only 'positive response' to a blockade, so during 1954, as a result of British pressure, these instructions were amended by the Allied High Commissioners in Berlin. They agreed that in the event of Soviet withdrawal from Berlin and on the condition that access to Berlin was not cut off, Western commanders and military travellers would deal with the East Germans as 'agents' of the Soviet Union.¹⁹ This was confirmed in 1957, but the FRG had not been informed of the decision. These purely technical contacts with the DDR officials, subsequently termed the Agency Theory, were not considered as being at variance with Allied policy of support for German Reunification, and the consequent refusal of the Western Powers to recognise either the Pankow regime or the division of Germany.

During the period 1958-60, the Tripartite Ambassadorial Group in Bonn met without German participation to discuss sensitive contingency planning issues and from February 1959, overall contingency planning on measures to be adopted if the Soviets withdrew from their functions with respect to allied access to West Berlin was co-ordinated by the Tripartite Ambassadorial Group in Washington. This body also co-ordinated airlift planning on measures to be adopted if the Soviets withdrew from their functions with respect to Allied access to West Berlin.²⁰ Shortly after Khrushchev's speech of 10 November, the US suggested changes in contingency plans for Berlin. The State Department proposed first that if the DDR took over surface access, the West should show documents, but not allow them to be stamped on the grounds that this might imply de facto recognition of the regime. However, it emerged that neither the British nor the French were prepared to stand and fight on the issue of non-recognition of the DDR, but on 14 November, it was agreed on a tripartite basis that the Germans should at least be informed of the existence of the Agency Theory. Immediately, the Germans put pressure on the Americans to reject any dealings with the DDR.²¹ The State Department also asked their Allies to reconsider another aspect of contingency planning, as specified in NSC 5404/1, namely to commit themselves in advance to the use of force to reopen road access to Berlin.²²

¹⁹ Under normal procedures, Soviet officials manned border checkpoints.

²⁰ From April 1959 a tripartite (American British and French) secret organisation, codename 'Liveoak' under Lauris Norstad, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and C in C of US European Command took over co-ordination of Berlin contingency planning. This body approved all plans and their implementation.

²¹ Steel to Lloyd, 19 Nov. 1958, no.1080, FO 371/137335 WG/10113/107. The three Allied Ambassadors in Bonn were responsible for the administration of contingency measures.

²² Ibid.

The British were totally against this development. They viewed the massive retaliation theory of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff in the fifties as one of brinkmanship, and feared that any confrontation at the checkpoints would quickly escalate to general war and an attack on the Soviet Bloc. Eisenhower's remark that he was 'prepared to put all the chips in the pot' and that of Fay Kohler, Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, that he thought 'it was conceivable that we could get a better stabilisation of the position by a show of force, or a test of strength before negotiations took place' were considered typical of US policy makers.²³ Sir Anthony Rumbold aptly summed up the British attitude when he said public opinion, faced with a choice between recognition of the DDR and fighting, would not support war. 'Can you imagine a more miserable issue on which to go to war?' But he emphasised that HMG would not abandon rights of access and that any forcible attempt to evict allied garrisons would be met by force'.²⁴

This question preoccupied Allied decision makers during these early weeks of the crisis, and the seriousness of the situation was accentuated on 14 November, when the Soviets detained US trucks at an autobahn checkpoint. General Norstad sent a message to Washington saying that in the absence of other instructions, he was planning to dispatch armed military forces to test Soviet resolve in Berlin. If the Soviets were to detain it and did not release it, he planned to rescue the convoy 'by the minimum force necessary'. In his Memoirs, Eisenhower states that the US COS and Administration were sympathetic to the request, but they decided to suspend cargoes and give some time for Allied consultation.²⁵ Later, on 18 November, Dulles told the President that the Berlin situation had eased because General Norstad and the JCS had moderated their 'initial combativeness' on checkpoint procedure as they 'recognised the necessity of bringing their Allies into line prior to taking drastic action'.²⁶ Arguably British and French opposition to changes in contingency planning was beginning to bear fruit.

On 24 November, Dulles wrote to Adenauer suggesting that it might be possible to hold the Soviet Union to its obligations on access while simultaneously dealing on a de facto basis with minor DDR functionaries so long as they merely carried out perfunctorily the present arrangements. Subsequently, at his Press Conference of 26 November, Dulles adopted the moderate pragmatic line of the British. Using the analogy of US policy

²³ NSA, *Essay by Burr*, op. cit. p.35.

²⁴ Rumbold to Reilly, 20 Nov. 1958, FO 371/ 137337 WG/10113/159. This letter was approved by Hoyer-Millar, and shown to Lloyd.

²⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace* (New York, 1965), p.329.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

towards Communist China, Dulles said he did not envisage that dealing with the DDR as a substitute for the Soviet Union would involve Western recognition of the regime, and he reminded his audience that the Federal Republic already had relations with minor DDR functionaries on less important matters.²⁷ Furthermore, he saw the question of the use of force as a purely academic one, as so far there had been no direct threat.

Reaction in the FRG ranged from 'disbelief to dismay and downright anger at the thought of any dealings with the DDR', and on 28 November Heinrich von Brentano, German Foreign Minister stated that it was not possible to accept the transfer of power from the Soviets even tacitly, including the idea of DDR officials acting as agents.²⁸ This perceptible hardening in the attitude of the Federal German Government to the DDR was the result of a historic meeting between Adenauer and de Gaulle at Bad Kreuznach on 27 November 1958. Intrinsic to this new Franco-German alignment was de Gaulle's tacit acceptance of Adenauer's position on the Berlin Crisis in return for German backing for his exclusion of Britain from the EEC.

Meanwhile the British Cabinet met on 18 November for their first discussion of the Berlin situation and to consider their possible options should the Soviets transfer responsibility for access to the East German Government. The Foreign Secretary told the Cabinet:-

We should be faced with a choice between abandoning Berlin or instituting an airlift in order to maintain supplies to Western Sectors or coming to some arrangement with the East German Government which would permit transport by road and rail to continue. The last course would be most realistic, but our best chance of achieving a solution on these lines would be in making it clear that we should maintain our right of access to the Western Sectors of Berlin and were prepared if necessary to institute an airlift for this purpose.²⁹

The Cabinet agreed with this analysis and invited the Minister of Defence, in consultation with the Foreign Secretary, to arrange for an examination of alternative means of maintaining supplies to the Western Sector of Berlin if the existing arrangements were interrupted.³⁰ The Americans were sufficiently convinced by the British argument to take

²⁷ Hood to Lloyd, 26 Nov. 1958, no. 3216. F O 371/137338 WG/10113/162.

²⁸ Conversation on Von Brentano's statement, at the Bad Kreuznach meeting between Adenauer and de Gaulle, on 27 Nov. 1958, NSA. no.426, 28 Nov. 1958. For reaction to Dulles statement from Berlin, see US Mission, Berlin, to DOS, NSA, no.424, 27 Nov. 1958.

²⁹ Cabinet Conclusions 81(58) Minute 2, 18 Nov.1958, CAB 128/32.

³⁰ C.(58) 246, 5 Dec. 1958, CAB 129. On 5 Dec. 1958, this FO Memorandum on Allied Civilian and Military Access to Berlin together with an annex dealing with the juridical position of Berlin was circulated to the Cabinet for information, but not discussed. The Cabinet was informed that since their meeting of 18 November the Soviet Note had arrived and that therefore 'there was no immediate threat to communications'.

part in a tripartite meeting in Bonn on 24 November concerning a Garrison airlift, 'the purpose of which would be to supply the garrisons, transport officials, fly out refugees, and transport non official persons when possible.³¹ British policy had therefore been most successful in moderating the hard-line stance of the US and the FRG, a factor of great significance during the early weeks of the crisis when, as Eisenhower put it, there was a great danger of a shooting match breaking out because the stakes in Berlin were so high for both sides. In reply to a Parliamentary question from Denis Healey, on 28 November, Selwyn Lloyd confirmed the British position:

To the extent that persons appointed by the authorities in East Germany exercise minor technical functions on lines of communications to Berlin, we can be said to accept such persons as the agents of the SU. But the principal functions of control on these lines of communications are in fact performed by Soviet officers.³²

The Reaction of Britain and her Allies to the Soviet Note 27 November-31 December 1958

The Soviet Note on Berlin was dispatched to Western capitals on 27 November. Western leaders took advantage of the six month pause until the 27 May deadline, to take stock of the situation and prepare a measured response.³³ Speeches by Khrushchev, Ulbricht and Gomulka, dispatches from the British Embassies in Moscow and Eastern Europe, and Soviet press reports clarified the Soviet position and facilitated a further reassessment by the Foreign Office of Soviet motivation and aims. The main impression gleaned from these sources was that Khrushchev was determined to regularise the position of West Berlin through negotiations with the West within the six month deadline, thereby confirming the consolidation of the status quo in Germany and Eastern Europe. His other main objective was to prevent the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr.³⁴

Meanwhile Khrushchev had replied to Macmillan's message of 22 November 1958, telling him that he was sure that Her Majesty's Government's 'premature and erroneous' interpretation of the Soviet Government's intentions in Berlin must have been corrected as a result of the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958.³⁵ Khrushchev's long letter repeated

³¹ NSA, no.352, 21 Nov. 1958.

³² Parliamentary Question no 51(2868), 1 Dec. 1958, FO 371/137340 WG 10113/229.

³³ Note of Soviet Government of 27 Nov. 1958 to HMG on 'The Question of Berlin', Reilly to Lloyd, no. 157/2E, FO 371/137341 WG 10113/254.

³⁴ Jorisse, Dutch First Secretary, Prague informed his colleagues of the impact of the refugee problem on the DDR; NSA no. 465; 1 Nov. 1958; on Polish and Soviet fears of the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr, see, Berthoud, British Ambassador, Warsaw to FO, 1 Dec. 1958, no. 104, FO 371/137340 WG/10113/232 and 8 Dec. 1958, no. 624, FO 371137341 WG 10113/249.

³⁵ FO Minute, 5 Dec, 1958, no.1303, FO 371/137341 WG/10113/277.

customary Soviet arguments on Allied disregard of the Potsdam Agreement and pointed out that the strategic and military importance of West Berlin to the Allies had been overtaken by technological developments in weapons of mass destruction. Khrushchev also warned that if agreement was not reached within six months, the Soviet Union would carry out the proposed measures by means of an agreement with the DDR, and no one would be able to prevent the Soviet Union from abrogating its functions deriving from the maintenance of the occupation status in Berlin. As Macmillan describes it, the last two pages of Khrushchev's letter, 'returned to blandishments if not blarney', referring to the 1956 Anglo-Soviet Meetings in London, and Soviet hopes for the relaxation of international tension and the cessation of the Cold War.³⁶ The picture of Soviet motivation which emerged during this period reinforced the conclusions of the controversial Foreign Office Memorandum 8113 of 15 November, and far from reversing their policy, the Foreign Office continued to take an independent line on Berlin.

The day after the receipt of the Russian Note on Berlin of 27 November, Macmillan sent a minute to the Foreign Secretary:

The Berlin issue is in fact an ultimatum with six months to run. We shall not be able to avoid negotiation. How is it to be carried out? Will it necessarily lead to discussion of the future of a united Germany and possibly disengagement plans? As regards Russia, it may be that Khrushchev is really working for a summit conference without the Chinese. In that case it would certainly not be bad politics for us to take the lead in suggesting it.³⁷

With these words, Macmillan had immediately broadened the Berlin issue from one which until the receipt of the Soviet Note of 27 November had been dominated by contingency planning, to one which encompassed the wider issues of Germany, European Security and the possibility of the summit conference, for which he had been pressing throughout 1958.³⁸ The Prime Minister hoped to seize the initiative in negotiations with the Russians, and Dulles' terminal illness and eventual death in May 1959 meant that Macmillan could play an important mediatory role in negotiations between the Russians and the Americans. In contrast, the President made no attempt to link the Berlin question with the broader issues of European Security and disarmament at this stage, and US policy emphasis continued to dwell on contingency planning and the Agency Theory. It

³⁶ Macmillan, Riding pp.574-576.

³⁷ Ibid. p.573.

³⁸ The issue of contingency planning, and in particular the British preference for an airlift, had dominated the Cabinet discussion of 17 Nov. 1958.

was the British both at working level in the Foreign Office and at Prime Ministerial level, who were prepared to make a fresh and innovative exploration of Western policy towards Berlin and these wider, interconnected problems. Crucial to this reappraisal of policy were two factors. The first was the impact of public opinion on the government and the second, Foreign Office perceptions of Soviet objectives. In general, public opinion favoured negotiations with the Russians and some form of arms limitation in Central Europe. During the previous few years the British public had been bombarded with articles and books on disengagement and the impact of broadcasts such as the Reith lectures on public opinion during 1957 and 1958 should not be underestimated.³⁹

On 4 December, opening an impassioned House of Commons Debate, the Foreign Secretary pronounced the Soviet proposals unacceptable, 'pledged HMG to uphold Allied rights in Berlin' and said he was ready to seek discussions with the Soviets on Germany's position as a whole.⁴⁰ He told the House that Allied Foreign Ministers would discuss Western reaction in Paris in ten days time at the NATO Council Meeting, and he reaffirmed that German Reunification would only come about by free elections. A definite note of compromise can be detected in his next statement: 'HMG considers guarantees must be given to reassure the Soviet Union and the East European countries against the dangers of an attack from a united Germany.' Mindful of Russian security fears he was ready to resurrect the British ideas of 1957 advocating a ground control system, aerial inspection against surprise attack and a zone of agreed numbers of nuclear weapons and levels of armament. These proposals were again being discussed with the Russians at Geneva. Macmillan thought Selwyn Lloyd made an, 'excellent speech in his new style, firm, clear, and short'.⁴¹ On behalf of the opposition, Aneurin Bevan and Denis Healey rejected the Free City proposal, arguing that HMG could not carry on indefinitely defending the status quo, and should therefore be prepared to negotiate with the Russians over the future of Germany. They also supported some form of limitation of arms in Central Europe.

The Commons Debate must have confirmed the Prime Minister's view that a reconsideration of the Berlin question had to be part of a general reassessment of European problems, including a change in the European status quo on Germany and a

³⁹ See G.F. Kennan, Russia the Atom and the West (Oxford, 1958); for a discussion of the Gaitskell and Healey Plans and plans on disengagement in general see D. Healey, The Time of my Life (London, 1989), pp. 235-248.

⁴⁰ FO to Ottawa, 15 Dec. 1958, FO 371/13744 WG 10113/347.

⁴¹ Macmillan, Riding p.574.

discussion of some form of arms limitation in Central Europe. An additional factor pointing to the same conclusion was mounting public support for CND. In a letter to his Public Relations Minister Charles Hill, Macmillan wrote, 'I wonder whether all this propaganda about the bomb has really gone deeper than we are apt to think.' In his Memoirs too, he admitted that the genuine public anxiety about nuclear arms amounted to hysteria.⁴² Certainly, there was considerable support amongst the public at large for negotiations with the Russians involving discussion of some form of arms limitation in Central Europe. These considerations strengthened the Prime Minister's resolve to seize the initiative, and pursue a modus vivendi with the Russians.

In the short term, the Cabinet continued to be preoccupied with contingency planning. On 5 December the Cabinet considered a report on contingency measures for Berlin, describing the existing Soviet position and allied instructions on road, rail and air access to West Berlin, and listing possible Soviet measures which would deny access to the city.⁴³ On road access to Berlin, the report envisaged that in the event of the DDR taking control of the checkpoints, Allied travellers would show their travel documents to the East Germans and allow them to be stamped. The possibility of rejecting the Agency Theory or of using force in a land probe was not discussed. Shortly, both issues and the question of whether or not the DDR should be permitted to stamp documents would develop into a source of even greater tension between the US Government and both the British and French Governments.

The preferred Government option, should the crisis suddenly escalate and the Soviet Union hand over control of access to West Berlin, was still an airlift. Accordingly, on 10 December, the Foreign Secretary informed the Cabinet of the Government's intention to discuss with its Allies at the forthcoming Western Summit 'the measures which it might be necessary to adopt for the relief of Berlin if the Soviet proposal to bring the military occupation of the city to an end compelled the Western sections to withstand a blockade'.⁴⁴ The Cabinet was of the opinion that it would be advantageous to abstain from any immediate initiative in relation to Berlin and to allow the other Powers to make the first move'. However, it was hoped that at the forthcoming meeting of the NATO Council, Britain would gain the support of the US Government for 'fresh proposals for the organisation of European trade' and for the preparation of an 'agreement between the

⁴² Horne, pp.51-53.

⁴³ C. (58) 246, 5 Dec. 1958, CAB 129.

⁴⁴ Cabinet Conclusions C.84 (58), 10 Dec. 1958, CAB. 128/32.

Great Powers on the political and economic settlement of Europe'.⁴⁵ Herein lay the basis of Macmillan's quest to reach an accommodation with the Soviet Union on Berlin as an essential prelude to some form of arms limitation in Central Europe, and thereafter detente.

In a minute to the Foreign Secretary of 27 November, the Prime Minister discussed not only Soviet motivation and the Berlin Crisis but also the disastrous turn of events in Europe, particularly the 'unholy alliance' cemented between the French and the Germans at Bad Kreuznach, which had an important bearing on the Crisis.⁴⁶ Macmillan suggested to Selwyn Lloyd that he would find the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Peter Thorneycroft, the most helpful of his Cabinet colleagues on Foreign Affairs, and proposed a 'little dinner for a quiet talk between the three of us'.

Foreign policy initiatives in the Berlin Crisis usually originated from the Prime Minister, but his two private secretaries, his PPS Freddie Bishop, and Philip de Zulueta, his Foreign Affairs Secretary were the most important sources for the Prime Minister's ideas on Berlin, and schemes for disengagement. Freddie Bishop sent a minute on Berlin written by de Zulueta to the Prime Minister to use as background for his talk with the Foreign Secretary that evening.⁴⁷ In the minute, de Zulueta envisaged that only in three circumstances could a settlement on Berlin be achieved: by German reunification; by the establishment of a genuine land corridor to Berlin; or by the surrender of West Berlin. As the first and last options were not acceptable to either side, he suggested a radical examination of possible concessions both sides would have to make to ensure a land corridor. De Zulueta pointed out the attractions of Eden's idea of a nuclear free zone in Germany, not based on the boundaries of East and West Germany, but allied to inspection and control of all forces in both Germanies. De Zulueta thought a tough public stance on the ultimatum might lose West Berlin.

Freddie Bishop thought de Zulueta's minute 'excellent' and used it as the basis of a further paper which he sent the Prime Minister on 2 December entitled 'Berlin and All That'.⁴⁸ He agreed with the Prime Minister's statement to the Cabinet that 'we should take our time to formulate an attitude about Berlin' and meanwhile 'be slightly offhand about it', as the best short-term policy to be followed at the meeting of Foreign Ministers

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Minute, Macmillan to Lloyd, 28 November, 1958, PREM 11/2715.

⁴⁷ Minute, de Zulueta to Bishop, 2 Dec. 1958, PREM 11/2715.

⁴⁸ Minute, Bishop to PM, 10 December 1958, PREM 11/2715.

due to take place in Paris, during December. Bishop condemned the Allies' policy of waiting for the Russian ultimatum to take effect, and then doggedly standing by West Berlin, which was at best only defensive and would not command international opinion. He emphasised the importance of considering 'the Berlin situation in the context of a wider political initiative' including disarmament or disengagement. Bishop's approach was radical in that he questioned whether there were any grounds for establishing a German nuclear capability and for installing Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) in West Germany. Alternatively, drawing on de Zulueta's ideas, Bishop put forward the idea of a zone for the limitation of nuclear arms not contiguous with national frontiers, in which the following stages of disengagement could be successively implemented: the freezing and withdrawal of nuclear arms; international inspection of armaments; a staged withdrawal from the zone of non-indigenous forces; and the establishment of precise proposals on the suspension of nuclear tests under effective control.⁴⁹

In spite of no clear evidence on the content of Macmillan's dinner conversation with the Foreign Secretary on 2 December, one can speculate that such an initiative was discussed, for in the New Year the Foreign Secretary asked for Sir Gladwyn Jebb, Ambassador in Paris to be seconded to London for a month to carry out a detailed analysis of British Policy on Germany, Berlin and European Security.⁵⁰ Certainly Selwyn Lloyd records that he orally suggested on 5 December, or earlier, that the Prime Minister should visit Moscow because the Western Alliance was in hopeless disarray over Berlin, and because he knew the Prime Minister could not face an election without a personal effort to ease tensions. The Foreign Secretary had also been told on a visit to Yugoslavia, in the late fifties that 'Khrushchev was the man for us, as he believed in peaceful coexistence'.⁵¹ Selwyn Lloyd commented that over the years it was surprising how many times he and Macmillan had come to the same conclusion and he had little doubt that the Prime Minister, who agreed about the visit, was thinking along the same lines, possibly as a step to a summit meeting which was at the forefront of Macmillan's thoughts at this time.

Berlin also dominated the agenda in Western Department of the Foreign Office where preparations were underway for the December meeting of Western Foreign Ministers in

⁴⁹ Lloyd to Steel, 22 Jan. 1959, no. 210, PREM 11/2715.

⁵⁰ Lloyd to Steel no. 210, 22 Jan. 1959, PREM 11/2715. There is no indication as to whether the Chancellor, Peter Thorneycroft did in fact attend the dinner.

⁵¹ Selwyn Lloyd Diary, Selo 4/22, 5 August 1960, Selwyn Lloyd Papers, Churchill College Cambridge, pp. 2-3.

Paris. Sir Anthony Rumbold, Deputy Secretary, and Head of Western Department wrote a long innovative memorandum on Germany, Berlin and European Security recommending that Western rejection of the Free City idea should be accompanied by Allied proposals about the related subjects of Germany, Berlin and European Security, on which the West should be prepared to negotiate.⁵² If, as he predicted, the Russians rejected NATO's 1957 'Outline Plan for German Reunification and Security', on the grounds that it was based on German Reunification, Rumbold believed the West should deal exclusively with the Berlin situation and negotiate a new status for Berlin guaranteed by the UN.⁵³ David Ormsby-Gore, Minister of State at the Foreign Office saw the attractions of Rumbold's idea of an interim Berlin settlement because it would not involve recognition of the DDR.⁵⁴ Negotiations would be between the DDR and the United Nations which had no power to grant recognition. The last section of the Rumbold Memorandum reinforced the message of FO Memorandum 8113, and recommended that the Government should try to deal with the DDR. Rumbold pointed out that Dulles had come near to saying the same at his Press Conference of 26 November and he emphasised that there were all sorts of gradations between dealing with the DDR on a practical basis and recognizing it in the full sense.

After the Dulles Press Conference, the British could justifiably hope that the Americans were moving towards their position on Berlin. Eisenhower told Dulles that he was willing to consider the 'Free City' idea as long as it included the whole of Berlin both East and West, and access was guaranteed by the UN. But he added the proviso that this would only be appropriate if the West German Government approved. He told Dulles to urge a Four Power Conference of Western Foreign Ministers with a view to co-ordinating the Western standpoint. Even though the President thought the immediate crisis was averted, he still expected a 'showdown at the end of six months. Every tick of the clock brought us nearer to the moment when we had to meet him head on if necessary'.⁵⁵ Whilst Eisenhower felt that the Allies should convey to Khrushchev the firmness of the West's position he did not wish to be provocative. In contrast, Fay Kohler of the State

⁵² FO Minute by Rumbold, 3 Dec. 1958, FO 371/137340 WG/10113/244. Copies were sent to Sir Patrick Dean, Deputy Under Secretary of State, and John D. Profumo, Min. of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁵³ See Annex to Gen. 676/2 PM Visit to Moscow, Feb. 1959, 'Synopsis of Soviet and Western Plans for European Security', FO 371/145820 WG/1073/98 (A). This Plan was an elaboration of the 1955 Western Plan at the Geneva Conference, in that arrangements for German Reunification and European Security were interlocked and the guarantees given to Russia after unification would operate irrespective of whether Germany chose to stay in NATO or not.

⁵⁴ FO Minute by Ormsby-Gore, 10 Dec. 1958, FO 371/137343 WG/10113/344.

⁵⁵ D.D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace 1956-1961 (New York, 1965) pp.334-337.

Department said 'compromise was virtually excluded', and 'firmness to the point of brinkmanship is our only resource'.⁵⁶ Throughout the Berlin Crisis, it must be emphasised that Pentagon and State Department officials such as Livingstone Merchant, Assistant Secretary of State, European Affairs, Fay Kohler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, European Affairs and Martin J. Hildebrand, Director of German Affairs, were more hard-line in their attitude towards the Soviet Union than the President, and even Dulles.

On 29 November the US gave in to German pressure, and hardened its stance on contingency planning. At a meeting of the NSC on 11 December 1958, Eisenhower approved an Aide-Memoire to the Bonn Embassy outlining plans for the elimination of proposals embodying the Agency Theory and asking them to obtain British support. The US Aide-Memoire emphasised that the populace of Berlin, as well as that of the Soviet Zone and the Federal Republic, would regard any dealing with East German checkpoint officials by the Western Powers as a first step, however tentative, towards recognition of the DDR.⁵⁷ The next part of the message set alarm bells ringing in the Foreign Office: it stated that if the DDR were to interfere with access, a multi-phase diplomatic and military strategy would be implemented ending in an 'attempt to reopen access through the use of limited military force in order to demonstrate our determination to maintain surface access and to test Soviet intentions'.

Western Department rejected such inflammatory action, but was not prepared to 'stick its head above water' as its innovative ideas in Memorandum 8113 had led to such strident Allied opposition. Instead, it was hoped that the Americans and Germans would be brought to the British point of view by the realities of the situation. In their formal response to the State Department, the Foreign Office said that it was premature to say whether they would accept the US position but there was some disquiet about the meaning of the paragraph on the 'use of limited force'.⁵⁸ Further discussion of this difficult problem was scheduled for the agenda of the Paris Foreign Ministers Meeting on 14 December 1958.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Hood to Lloyd, 3 Dec. 1958, no.3279, FO 371/1373340 WG/10113/243.

⁵⁷ Meeting State/Defence/JCS, Ad Hoc. Working Group, 11 Dec. 1958, NSA no.489; see also Caccia to Lloyd, 12 Dec. 1958, no. 3350, PREM 11/2715.

⁵⁸ NSA no.508, 12 Dec. 1958.

⁵⁹ Joint Planning, MOD were instructed to prepare a report for British COS due to meet on 31 Jan. 1959 on the US Aide-Memoire on Contingency Planning of 11 Jan. 1959. JP Contingency Planning for Berlin, DEFE 6/52.

The Paris Meeting of Western Foreign Ministers 14-16 December 1958

In Paris, the Western Foreign Ministers discussed their reply to the Soviet Note, Allied differences on contingency planning and other related issues. With the support of the French, the Foreign Secretary forcefully defended the British position on contingency planning. He also emphasised that at the present time, he could not accept anything like telegram 3350 from Washington, outlining the US viewpoint on military measures following a DDR refusal of access to the West. Selwyn Lloyd said that this would have to be the subject of future discussion.⁶⁰ He then told his colleagues that the Soviet Union could not unilaterally repudiate its obligations and accept the DDR in substitution for the USSR i.e. it could not assign to the DDR its obligations to the Three Powers, but it could nevertheless accept the Agency Theory. Selwyn Lloyd pressed for a communiqué which would express Western willingness to discuss Berlin in the context of European Security. He found that his Allies were generally in agreement with his approach, though they doubted whether they should negotiate under duress.⁶¹ Selwyn Lloyd reported that there was 'a curious reluctance on everybody's part to get involved in really controversial issues'.⁶²

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Four Foreign Ministers rejected the Soviet claim that the status of Berlin could be altered by the unilateral action of one of the powers who had responsibility for the city. They stated that they would not negotiate under duress, and they reaffirmed their rights with respect to Berlin including the right of access. The Foreign Ministers said that Soviet repudiation of an Allied presence in Berlin was unacceptable, as was the substitution in the Soviet zone of East German authorities for the Soviet authorities.⁶³ This rejection of the Agency Theory was a defeat for the British Government, albeit a temporary one. In the Spring of 1959 the US relaxed its intransigent approach and accepted that DDR guards could replace Soviets at the checkpoints as long as the Soviets declared that an agency relationship existed.⁶⁴ It was also clear that the British view had prevailed over the substantive part of the reply.

This reiterated Allied readiness to discuss the specific problem of Berlin in the general framework of negotiations for a solution of the German problem as a whole, i.e. German

⁶⁰ For a discussion of the British Govt.'s reaction to the US Aide-Memoire of 11 Dec. See COS Meeting, 31 Dec. 1958, JP(58)175, DEFE 4/58.

⁶¹ Jebb to FO, 14 Dec. 1958, no.469, FO 371/137343, WG/10113/339.

⁶² Lloyd to PM, 12 Dec. 1958, no.589 FO 371/137343 WG/10113/339.

⁶³ Roberts, UK Del. NATO Paris to FO 14 Dec. 1958, FO 371/137343, WG/10113/328.

⁶⁴ See NSA Essay by Burr, p.35.

Reunification and European Security. The Allied Powers also agreed that their replies to the Soviet Note would be drafted in Paris and would be identical in the substantive parts, but would refute the Soviet claims in their own way. There was also a general acceptance that it was important that the SU should be able to climb down without loss of face.⁶⁵ The Four Foreign Ministers charged the Four Power Working Group with the responsibility for preparing a Western reply to the Soviet Note, and for taking a new look at the Western Plan for German Reunification and European Security', submitted to the NATO Council in October, 1957.⁶⁶ There was general agreement that this Plan 'lacked innovative thought' as to ways of meeting well known Soviet objections to the Western position on free all-German elections, and a reunited Germany's freedom to make a free choice of alliances. The Russians also wanted measures on European Security to precede German Reunification, rather than be implemented simultaneously. The British hoped to break this logjam in the forthcoming negotiations.⁶⁷ The NATO Council on 16 December, endorsed the conclusions of the Foreign Ministers Meeting.

On 31 December, the British reply to the Soviet Note of 27 November coupled rejection of it, with an offer to negotiate on German Reunification, European Security and a German Peace Treaty in 'an atmosphere devoid of coercion and threats'.⁶⁸ It was co-ordinated with the replies of the US and France and Germany, and began, as agreed at the Paris Foreign Ministers Meeting, by refuting Soviet claims over Berlin. The Note stated that the latter depended not on the Potsdam Agreement, as stated by the Soviet Note, but on the unconditional surrender of Germany and the Four Power Agreements of 12 September 1944 and 1 May 1945, by which the Western Powers evacuated one third of what is the existing Soviet zone and moved into West Berlin. The British Note stated that these agreements were binding on the signatories as long as they had not been replaced by other agreements following free negotiations. They could not therefore be unilaterally relinquished by one of the signatories. Moreover the right of the Allied Powers to remain in Berlin did not rest only on these agreements but on the assumption of supreme authority by the victorious powers following the surrender of Germany. The status of

⁶⁵ Jebb to FO, 14 Dec. 1958, no. 590, FO 371/137343 WG/10113/338.

⁶⁶ The Four Power Working Group on Germany was an existing ad hoc Allied Committee sanctioned by NATO in 1958, to consider the problems of German Reunification and European Security in relation to a potential summit conference with the Russians.

⁶⁷ FO Minute by Hoyer-Millar, 7 Jan. 1959, FO 371/145819 WG/1073/76.

⁶⁸ HMG Reply to Soviet Note of 27 Nov. 1958, 31 Dec. 1958, PREM 11/2715.

Berlin was not therefore based on the Potsdam Agreement, and the Soviet Union bore responsibility for the non implementation of that (the Potsdam) agreement.⁶⁹

The Note rejected the Free City proposal which it considered would jeopardise the freedom and security of West Berlin's population. It deplored the fact that the occupation system was still in force thirteen years after the end of the war, and emphasised that the form of government in Berlin was only one aspect of the German problem. It argued that any proposed discussions on the status of Berlin should be considered in the wider framework of the German problem and European Security, and stated that the Western Powers were ready at any time, 'to negotiate with the Soviet Government on the basis of Western proposals for free all-German elections and free decisions for an all-German Government or any other proposals genuinely designed to ensure reunification of Germany in freedom'. The British Note concluded with a warning that the Western Powers could not negotiate under menace but it gave Moscow the benefit of the doubt by assuming that the object of the Soviet Note was not to threaten the Western Powers. Macmillan wrote that on this dangerous but by no means disastrous note, the year ended.⁷⁰

British Policy towards the Soviet Union 31 December 1958-18 February 1959 - The Emergence of the British Initiative on Berlin

In the New Year Macmillan temporarily took over the Foreign Office while Selwyn Lloyd was hospitalised. He reacted to the challenges of the Berlin Crisis with energy and commitment, only too aware that Britain did not have any agreed policy with her Allies, and the Paris Declaration of 16 December, 1958, had 'only papered over the cracks'. In his Diary, he wrote:

I doubt therefore whether we can make the bills of lading or punching the railway tickets into a *casus belli*. What really matters is whether civil or military supplies actually reach West Berlin.⁷¹

The Prime Minister's proactive attitude to the Berlin Crisis was a direct result of his strategic and political assessment of the dangers of the situation and his realisation that any approach to the Soviet Union would be electorally popular. It led to what may be termed the 'Macmillan initiative', which emerged during January - February 1959. This

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Macmillan, Riding op.cit. p. 577.

⁷¹ Horne, op. cit. p.575.

was comprised of two main components: on the one hand the Prime Minister's unilateral decision to take up an outstanding invitation to the British Government dating back to 1956, to visit the Soviet Union; and on the other, a major reassessment of British Foreign Policy on Germany, Berlin and European Security, conducted by Sir Gladwyn Jebb, which resulted in a Prime Ministerial Directive on Germany, Berlin and European Security, issued at Chequers on 16 February 1959.

During the first weeks of January, Macmillan and the Foreign Office were preoccupied with two important questions; first, the dangers presented by the US attempt to change the ground rules on contingency planning, and second, discussions on British policy on the German problem. At a meeting on 1 January, 1959 the British Chiefs of Staff dealt with contingency planning, and framed their official response to the US Aide-Memoire of 11 December 1958 concerning a small land probe fighting its way through to Berlin.⁷² Lord Mountbatten, Chief of the Defence Staff informed the COS that there was a fundamental difference of view between the US State and Defense Departments and the British.⁷³ He convincingly argued against US policy which, he said, was based on their new analysis that the Soviet Government would give way to pressure at any stage during the next two or three years until they had reached a state of nuclear sufficiency. It was therefore preferable to have an early showdown with the Russians. He considered that limited ground action would be impractical, since it would be seen as bluff and would quickly be called. Therefore, a land probe should only be undertaken after all necessary preparations including mobilisation had been made, and with the clear understanding that it might lead to global war. Such an operation could only be undertaken with the full agreement of all the NATO nations and also in Britain's case, of the Commonwealth countries.

Mountbatten argued that since many of Britain's Allies in NATO regarded the continued Western occupation of Berlin as pointless, it was inconceivable that the three occupying powers would precipitate a major war on their own account. Furthermore, if a global war did take place in the near future it was the United Kingdom and European members of NATO rather than the US which would suffer. The COS considered that there was much to be said for Britain's preference for an airlift and de facto recognition of the DDR's control of access, as it would demonstrate British determination to stay in Berlin and allow a breathing space for negotiations.⁷⁴

⁷² COS (59), 1st Meeting, 1 Jan. 1959, DEFE 4/115.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ CRO to Ottawa, 22 Jan. 1959, no. 99 PREM 11/2715.

During these early months of 1959 the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office and the COS were genuinely alarmed by the US attitude to contingency planning. In their view, this factor, combined with the unwillingness of Britain's partners to consider a compromise in any future negotiations with the Russians might easily lead to global war. This, rather than electoral gain was the main motivating force behind the Prime Minister's initiative, although Macmillan was well aware that a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union would be electorally popular. In a minute to de Zulueta, Macmillan confirmed that the views expressed in the controversial Foreign Office Memorandum 8113 had his support. He encapsulated the absurdities of the US argument thus:

the Russian move is to go away and leave the West to make arrangements with the DDR which (we say) Russia cannot do unilaterally.....If that is so, I do not see how we can have a world war or take action endangering the peace on a point of this kind. If the DDR refuse to allow lorries to go through that is another thing but I take it that we are not going to refuse to show our credentials to the DDR authorities. You cannot have a war or military action on that....how to put these thoughts to our Allies is another matter!⁷⁵

The Prime Minister set about doing this on 1 January, after the COS Meeting, when he personally instructed the Ambassador in Washington, Sir Harold Caccia, to raise with the Americans the 'serious' problems posed by the question of Allied contingency planning. Macmillan admitted that the Foreign Ministers Meeting in Paris on 14 December had agreed that in no circumstances would they deal with the DDR as agents of the Soviets if the DDR disclaimed this status, but 'as the Americans already know, we consider that to deal with the DDR on an Agency Theory and even to recognise them would be vastly preferable to global war'. He warned Caccia that he would have to be very circumspect in dealing with the US and avoid giving any impression that Britain was defeatist and anxious to go back on what was agreed in Paris, or weakening in her resolve to make access to Berlin a *casus belli*.⁷⁶

Macmillan later sent a forthright letter to Dulles warning him that a firm decision to take military action needed the agreement of the full Cabinet, and urging his Allies to study the implications of all kinds of military plans without necessarily deciding on them. He told Dulles that in his view the Soviet objective was not to impose a blockade but to force the Western Powers to choose between dealing with the DDR or imposing a self-

⁷⁵ PM's views on Berlin as stated by de Zulueta, 5 Jan. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

⁷⁶ PM to Caccia, 1 Jan. 1958, T. 5/59, 1958, PREM 11/2715.

blockade. Furthermore, even if the Russians handed over their duties to the DDR, either as successors or agents, they 'must see to it that the DDR carry out their obligations including those which the Russians purport to hand over to them'.⁷⁷ Dulles did not reply to this letter until later in the month but on 12 January, he had a revealing 'off the cuff' discussion with Caccia about Berlin.⁷⁸

Speaking without instructions, the Ambassador warned Dulles that no party in Britain in an election year would want to stand on a platform of 'vote for us and a war on Berlin', and that British public opinion would insist on negotiations at a high level before any Western resort to force. Dulles had apparently chuckled and then elaborated on his own ideas: he wondered, for instance, if anything could be made of the idea of a confederation in Germany, though he recognised Adenauer was the problem as he was 'against anything except a rigid insistence on our existing rights'. According to Caccia, Dulles was more flexible and innovative in his approach on Berlin than Livingston Merchant of the State, Assistant Secretary of State, European Affairs, or the military in the Pentagon whom Caccia later characterised as 'being ready to play the game of chicken' in their approach to contingency planning.

The ongoing debate in the Foreign Office and amongst the Prime Minister's personal advisors in Downing Street on the Berlin Crisis was also fuelled by de Zulueta's views about Germany sent to Macmillan in a minute dated 12 January.⁷⁹ He suggested that Britain should look again at German policy as Adenauer was growing older, and Germany was getting stronger. He also questioned whether the West should still support free elections on the grounds that a reunited Germany would secure a commanding position in NATO, and after absorbing East Germany would be a formidable competitor in the Western world. His recommendation was that whilst lip service should be paid to the principle of German Reunification, Britain should aim to perpetuate the status quo: Germany would remain divided with West Germany allied to NATO. This fear of a united Germany, shared by Macmillan, the Foreign Office and the COS, was one with which the Russians had great sympathy, and which they exploited in their dealings with Great Britain.

Intensive discussions on the German question in the Foreign Office and Government circles culminated in a meeting at Chequers, on 18 January, attended by the Prime

⁷⁷ PM to Dulles, 8 Jan. 1958, T. 14/59, PREM 11/2715.

⁷⁸ Caccia to PM, 12 Jan. 1959, T. 20/59 PREM 11/2715.

⁷⁹ De Zulueta to Macmillan, 12 Jan. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

Minister, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Anthony Rumbold, Bishop, and de Zulueta, during which the Macmillan initiative was launched.⁸⁰ Philip de Zulueta's input to the discussion is very marked. Two sets of principle were discussed, the first was the maintenance of the status quo, with Germany remaining divided and a member of NATO. This policy envisaged the Western Powers demanding German Reunification with free elections at a future conference but conceding, as a result of public demand, a zone in Central Europe, not defined by national boundaries, in which all nuclear weapons would be banned, and in which non-indigenous forces would also be limited or banned. If, as expected, this was rejected by the Russians, a nominally provisional solution to the immediate Berlin problems would be proposed at the same conference, and possibly the West would agree to a loose form of confederation.⁸¹

Alternatively, the second course of action discussed, envisaged that Germany after Adenauer's death might well opt for reunification even if it meant neutrality. In this scenario, the Western Powers would work for reunification immediately (thereby extracting the maximum gain) by favouring in principle the Russian proposal for the neutralisation of Germany and the banning of nuclear weapons from Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Both options necessitated a system of control and inspection against surprise attack. Whichever policy was finally agreed, the Chequers meeting made the following decisions: First, there should be a proposal for a nominally provisional solution of the Berlin problem; second, that there should be a discussion of areas and degrees of disengagement and denuclearisation and methods of control and inspection; and third, that the acceptance of a confederation for Germany would be common to both courses of action. These three components of the British initiative became the basis of British policy until the Paris Summit of 1960, although for the sake of Allied unity, the British Government outwardly paid lip service to the principles of the 1957 Western Plan, with its emphasis on free all-German elections leading to reunification

In the immediate future, it was agreed that a telegram should be sent to Washington urging a speedy reply to the Russian Note of 10 January. This would be drafted by the Four Power Working Group, and include a proposal about a date and place for a conference 'about Germany'.⁸² In addition, it was recommended that the British military

⁸⁰ PM Meeting at Chequers, 18 Jan. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

authorities should examine a scheme for a zone of limitation of forces and weapons in Central Europe, and that the Prime Minister should visit Moscow in the second half of February or early in March. Prior to this initiative, the Ambassador in Washington should test the reactions of Mr Dulles and the President to the proposed plan and determine if Dulles was 'content'. If so, a telegram would be sent to the Ambassador in Moscow asking him the best way to put the plan into operation. When the visit had been arranged, information would be given formally to the Americans, the French and the Germans together with a proposal that the Prime Minister would visit them on his return from Moscow for a series of general discussions in the light of his visit to Moscow. Only at a later stage would Harold Caccia be instructed 'most discreetly' to ascertain US reaction to plans concerning European Security. The Prime Minister's dominance over the formulation of foreign policy was such that it was only on 3 February that he informed his Cabinet of his intention to visit the Soviet Union. This was the first time Berlin had been discussed in Cabinet since 23 December, even though a major review of policy under Sir Gladwyn Jebb had been launched and the Prime Minister had unilaterally decided to break ranks with his Allied partners and engage in one-to-one talks with Khrushchev.

After the meeting at Chequers on 18 January, there was a flurry of Foreign Office activity to implement the 'steps' discussed. Telegrams were sent to Washington informing the President and the Secretary of State of the Prime Minister's proposed visit to Moscow, and asking the British Ambassador to urge an early meeting of the Four Power Working Group. This body had been authorised at the December meeting of the Western Foreign Ministers in Paris to draft a reply to the Russian Note, proposing a Conference 'about Germany'.⁸³ On 21 January, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, Ambassador in Paris was summoned to London by the Foreign Secretary for two or three weeks to produce an independent study of the German question in the light of the immediate crisis provoked by the Soviet 'ultimatum as regards Berlin'.⁸⁴

⁸³ Caccia to Lloyd, Jan. 19 1959, PREM 11/2715; and Lloyd to Caccia, 20 Jan. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

⁸⁴ Lloyd to Steel, 22 Jan. 1959, no. 210, PREM 11/2715.

The Jebb Memorandum

The Jebb Memorandum of 12 February, 1959 analysed current Foreign Office thinking on Berlin, Germany and European Security, and as such is central to any analysis of British Foreign Policy on Berlin and Germany. Sir Gladwyn saw the object of his exercise as: 'to analyse the situation both from the short term and long term points of view; and to indicate what objectives should in his opinion be sought and what positions should be definitely resisted'.⁸⁵

In response to the Prime Minister's five general questions on the future of Germany, the Report concluded that: the Soviet Union would never accept a united Germany which remained a member of NATO; that even though Germany might be tempted after Adenauer's death to succumb to a united neutral Germany, it was unlikely that the Soviet Union would ever accept either this option or that of Germany remaining in the Common Market; that NATO was unlikely to survive except in name if Germany became neutral. Consequently the only way of defending the West against Soviet expansion would be to use a major deterrent, thereby committing suicide. The Memorandum also stated that the demise of NATO would inevitably mean that Britain would not be able to maintain an adequate defence against the Soviet Union. In short the possibility of some form of German neutrality previously favoured by some proponents of disengagement was rejected and NATO was to remain the linchpin of British defence policy against a potential Soviet threat.

The Memorandum then addressed the question of contingency planning for Berlin and recommended that the Government should resist all US attempts to force the issue by military means but instead persuade their Allies to introduce a 'garrison air lift' to tide over immediate difficulties.⁸⁶ Although the Memorandum recognized the danger of the 'slippery slope' towards outright recognition of the DDR, it nevertheless dismissed Dulles' 'get tough policy' over DDR stamping of documents on the grounds that 'short of declaring war, there is in the end no alternative to accepting DDR visas under protest'. It recommended that in the likely event of the long term failure of an airlift, the Allies should try to persuade the Soviet Government to instruct the DDR to assume its functions on Berlin, thus enabling the West to claim that the DDR was merely the Agent of the

⁸⁵ Memorandum by Sir Gladwyn Jebb, on 'Germany and Berlin', 12 Feb. 1959, FO 371/145818 WG/1073/67.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Soviet Union. If this proved impossible the Government should urge the DDR to hand over the functions it had inherited to the UN, and in the final analysis if this failed, the government 'should simply say that it doesn't matter if the DDR officials do apply their stamps as we shall regard them as agents anyhow'.⁸⁷ The Americans had therefore failed in their attempts to reverse British policy in this area.

The fifty page Memorandum set out detailed policy recommendations on the Berlin, German and European Security questions which formed the basis of the Prime Ministerial Directive issued at Chequers on 14 February. In the absence of Cabinet discussion and decisions on the Berlin Crisis, prior to the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow, the Jebb Memorandum, provides the best insights into British thinking on the interlinked policies of Germany, Berlin and European Security. It recommended the maintenance of the Government's flexible and compromising approach in order to reach a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union. This was consistent with traditional balance of power factors in British Foreign Policy, which opposed the continental hegemony of any power whether it be Germany or the Soviet Union. One particularly marked feature of the Foreign Office view was latent Germanophobia. This reflected traditional fear of the potential military and economic strength of the FRG, and possibly antipathy towards Adenauer's support for a Bonn-Paris Axis, with all this implied for Britain's policy towards the European Common Market. The Foreign Office did not favour the emergence of either a neutral reunified Germany nor a reunified Germany within the Western orbit. Instead the preferred long term British option was the maintenance of the status quo in Germany and Eastern Europe, linked to measures on security which would ease both Soviet and British fears of the threat of nuclear war, and in the interim a provisional agreement on Berlin. Their common fear of a powerful, reunified Germany explains Moscow's subsequent interest in Harold Macmillan's proposals.

The Prime Ministerial Directive of 14-15 February 1959

During the weekend of 14/15 February, just prior to his departure for Moscow, the Prime Minister held a meeting at Chequers with the Foreign Secretary and Foreign Office officials to discuss both the Jebb Report and the agenda for talks with the Russians.⁸⁸ As a result of the meeting a Prime Ministerial Directive, dated 14 February, 1959, instructed

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ PM Directive issued at Chequers, 14 Feb. 1959, (PRO filed under 20 Feb. 1958) PREM 11/2715

the Foreign Office after consultation with the Ministry of Defence and the COS first, to prepare a draft plan for European Security, called Study A, on the lines of the Jebb Memorandum.⁸⁹ The plan for European Security would be composed of three elements: one based on the abortive British Outline Plan for European Security of March, 1958, including a narrow area of actual disengagement as between non-German troops; a large zone of 'thinning out' on the lines briefly discussed with Dulles and something like the first stage of the revised Rapacki Plan, i.e. no weapons with atomic warheads could be introduced into NATO and Warsaw Pact countries which did not already have them.⁹⁰ The political advantages of such a plan were that 'it might be sufficiently alluring to the Russians to make them willing in exchange for an agreement about it, to undertake to negotiate a stabilisation of the Berlin problem on terms which we could accept.' It would also please the Poles and the Czechs, and have the support of public opinion.⁹¹ Subsequently, in their report of 23 February 1959, the COS gave a generally positive reply to the Paper on European Security. They stated that no significant military disadvantage to either side was apparent either in a ban on IRBMs, nor in a ban on nuclear weapons, though political difficulties were possible. Draft approval was also given to the proposals for zones of inspection against surprise attack and a limited de-nuclearised zone.⁹²

Second, the Directive asked the Foreign Office to produce Study B. This would consider what might constitute a stabilisation of the Berlin problem in accordance with the above plan, Study A, such as Jebb's suggestion of the substitution of a neutral or partly neutral force for the Allied garrison, under a UN commander.⁹³ The Prime Minister thought the most acceptable means of stabilising the Berlin problem would be a Russian undertaking to leave things as they were, thereby indefinitely postponing their ultimatum. Third, the Directive asked the Foreign Office to consider Study C, namely, what the Government should say to its Allies at the forthcoming meetings after the Moscow visit and at NATO in April 'on the British position i.e. what interim cover-plan to adopt vis-a-vis our allies during this period. As regards the Russians we should give no indication of any readiness

⁸⁹ FO and MOD Papers on 'Germany and European Security', 20 Feb. 1959, FO 371/145820 WG 1073/95.

⁹⁰ See Annex to Gen.676/2, Prime Minister's Visit to Moscow, Feb. 1959, 'Synopsis of Soviet and Western Plans for European Security', FO 371/145820 WG/1073/98(A)

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² It can be assumed that the PM was shown a draft copy of the study prior to leaving for Moscow, as at his first meeting in Moscow, he sounded out Khrushchev on his attitude to a zone of 'thinning out'. Memo on European Security, 27 Feb. 1959, MOD (59) 20 final, DEFE/6.

⁹³ Prime Ministerial Directive. 14 Feb. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

to compromise prior to the Four Power Conference'. This study was completed by 19 February, and constituted the basis of the British position at the Four Power Working Group in Washington, March 1959. The Prime Minister did not intend to inform his Allies of his plan of action as he feared the British might be considered 'unreliable' and 'weak-kneed'. Instead he intended to keep it in cold storage until the very last moment, possibly until Khrushchev had as it were ordered his train at the conference in May and 'all the dangers of the autobahn situation were staring us in the face'.⁹⁴

As it was a matter of some urgency, the Foreign Office suggested the appointment of a committee of four to implement the Directive and to avoid the customary lengthy procedures. This was comprised of P. F. Hancock, Head of the British Delegation at the Four Power Working Group in Washington, P. E. Ramsbottom, representing the FO and C. W. Wright and General R. A. Riddell of the Ministry of Defence and the COS respectively.⁹⁵ The actual deadline for the work in hand was not until after Macmillan's return from Moscow, though Rumbold thought the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary would 'be easier in their minds if something could be shown to them before they left for Moscow' even though it would not have received the final assent of the Chiefs of Staff.⁹⁶

As requested by the Directive, the Foreign Office produced two Studies, on Berlin and on Germany. The former recommended that at a Conference the Western Powers should first ask the Soviet Government to continue to be responsible for free access to Berlin and regard the manner in which this was done to be immaterial. If they wished to appoint an agent, they had to ensure that access was free and give written guarantees to that effect. Simultaneously the Western Powers could examine the possibility of an exchange of undertakings with the Russians on free access and in return the Western Powers would agree to undertakings on 'subversive activities' and 'propaganda' in Berlin, and on the possibility of locating UN Agencies in Berlin. If no progress was made in this direction alternatives suggested were a UN Commission in Berlin or a freely elected Council for the whole of Berlin. It was evident that the Prime Minister was determined to uphold the Agency Theory in spite of intense pressure from his Allies.

In their Study on Germany, the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence stated that the British position would be based on the 'Plan for German Reunification and European Security', agreed by NATO at the Paris Foreign Ministers Meeting of December 1957.

⁹⁴ PM Directive, 14 Feb. 1959, FO 371/145820 WG 1073/75.

⁹⁵ Papers on Germany and European Security, 20 Feb. 1959, FO 371/145820, WG 1073/95.

⁹⁶ FO Minute, Rumbold to Powell (MOD) 16 Feb. 1959, FO 371/145819 WG 1073/75.

This plan originated from the 1955 Geneva Conference proposal that a free all-German Government, established by free elections would be at liberty to choose its own domestic and foreign policy and its alliances and negotiate a peace treaty.⁹⁷ To meet Russian fears, this Plan proposed that security measures, including a zone of limitation of forces and weapons could be introduced at the same time as reunification. However the new British Study, whilst confirming that the stated Western objective should be German Reunification, recommended a range of measures which could operate prior to Reunification. These ranged from a plebiscite throughout Germany on free all-German elections, to various modifications to the confederal idea favoured by the Russians, such as an all-German body elected by the Länder including East German Länder, with responsibility for technical matters, or a quadripartite commission to deal with problems. The COS agreed the report on 5 March and sent it to the Ministry of Defence for further consideration.⁹⁸ In effect, the British were merely paying lip service to the idea of German Reunification for the sake of Allied unity. Their real agenda was to reach a modus vivendi with the Russians by attempting to meet what they perceived as the Soviet aim: the maintenance of the status quo in Germany and Central Europe. Harold Macmillan believed a serious attempt to address Soviet security fears would make the Soviets more amenable to a compromise on Berlin.

⁹⁷ For detail on Soviet and Western proposals on German Reunification and European Security from 1955, see Annex to Gen. 676 'Prime Minister's Visit to Moscow, February 1959, FO 371/145820 WG 1073/98(A); for a general account of proposals at the Geneva Conference, see J. Young, Cold War Europe 1945-1995 (London, 1999), pp.18-25.

⁹⁸ COS (59) Meeting, 5 March 1959, DEFE 5/89.

The Impact of the Prime Minister's Decision to Visit Moscow on Inter-Allied Diplomacy - 1 January - 18 February 1959

Anticipating opposition from his Allies, Macmillan began to implement the diplomatic preparations for his visit to Moscow.⁹⁹ On 20 January, the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Harold Caccia was instructed to write to Dulles announcing the Prime Minister's intention to visit Moscow and to probe Russian intentions as regards Berlin and Germany. Meanwhile, Sir Patrick Reilly saw Gromyko on 24 January to sound out Soviet reaction to the British Prime Minister taking up the invitation to visit Moscow for a visit of ten days commencing on 20 February.¹⁰⁰ Whilst politely acknowledging the request, the Soviets took their time about replying. According to the Ambassador this was understandable, as the Twenty First Party Congress was still in progress in Moscow. Nonetheless, Macmillan was obviously relieved when the Russians finally replied on 2 February, agreeing to the dates, duration and plans he had proposed for the visit. As he later admitted, they had stuck their necks out in making the proposal and a rebuff would have been 'damaging as well as embarrassing', especially as Dulles was due in London two days later for discussions on Berlin.¹⁰¹

Understandably, there was some trepidation in the Foreign Office about potential US reaction to the proposed visit. The Prime Minister somewhat euphemistically wrote in his Memoirs, that he was encouraged by the fact that the US was 'not unsympathetic'. 'They say in effect that they have complete confidence in me, and I must do whatever I think best.' He had to admit however, that both the President and Dulles had pointed out the risks connected with such a venture when no agreed Western position had been reached.¹⁰² A conversation between Eisenhower and Dulles revealed definite cynicism in Washington. The President's 'shot gun reaction' was 'to let him go, if he was that good,' but the British would come back 'with their tail between their legs which would make the Americans the smart boys'. He also asked Dulles to remind Harold that he could not speak for his Allies. Dulles, for his part feared that the Russians would interpret the visit as a sign of weakness, and was sure that it was planned for electoral reasons.¹⁰³ In

⁹⁹ Macmillan, Riding p.582.

¹⁰⁰ This invitation had been extended to the Government at the time of Khrushchev and Bulganin's visit to Britain in 1956.

¹⁰¹ Macmillan, Riding p.584.

¹⁰² Ibid. p.583.

¹⁰³ Conversation between President and Dulles, 20 Jan 1959, NSA no.643.

general, the Americans perceived Macmillan's visit as a further blow to the development of a common Allied approach in the impending negotiations with the Russians, especially as the Prime Minister had failed to consult his Allies, only informing the Americans of his decision after the event.¹⁰⁴ Macmillan further exacerbated the strained Anglo-US relationship by turning down an invitation from the President to visit Washington before his Moscow visit.¹⁰⁵

Macmillan's initiative certainly widened the already divergent views of the Allies on how to deal with the Berlin Crisis, and initiated a frank and informal exchange of views between the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the US Secretary of State in which they voiced their inner thoughts on the Berlin Crisis in 'thinking aloud letters'. On 23 January, the Foreign Secretary, via Caccia, thanked the Americans for their 'speedy' reaction to news of the visit, and informed them that the Prime Minister's forthcoming visit would be a 'reconnaissance on Russian views in the light of which the Prime Minister could have frank talks with Adenauer'.¹⁰⁶ Selwyn Lloyd said there was a large measure of agreement that they should not give in to force or the threat of force, but he warned Dulles about the British perception that some people in the US wanted a 'show down' because they knew that the US would not suffer as much as Europe. He said it would be impossible to mobilise British public opinion in favour of world war 'to insist that the Russians should remain in occupation of the Eastern Sector of Berlin, and that they, rather than the East German officials, should stamp passes of Allied personnel travelling to and from Berlin'. The Foreign Secretary thought that as long as Germany remained divided, the Chancellor would not envisage any measures to reduce tension such as a German confederation, the idea floated by Dulles at his Press Conference of 13 January, or some limitation of arms in Central Europe.¹⁰⁷

On 26 January, Dulles wrote another 'talking aloud letter with the hope of getting through to Selwyn and Harold (his) particular points' about the Berlin Crisis.¹⁰⁸ The Secretary of State remained hostile to any thought of dealing with the DDR as a substitute authority for the Soviet Union. In his view, such a course would increase the prestige of the DDR, buttress the Soviet position in East Europe, and reveal the West's lack of will. Dulles' analysis of US strategy was based on the concept that the risk of war would be minimised

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 25 Jan. 1959, NSA no.671.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 21 Jan. 1959, NSA no.651.

¹⁰⁶ Lloyd to Caccia, no.493, 23 Jan. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Letter by Dulles, 26 Jan. 1959, NSA. no.673.

if the Soviet Union realized that the West was prepared to be strong and exercise their rights, 'for the striking power of the US constituted a strong and effective deterrent'. The effectiveness of this policy relied on massive nuclear retaliation, and the will to use it, and in this respect, Dulles considered that Europe lacked nerve. If this was the case, he thought there should be an entire review of NATO, a threat which had been used very effectively by the Eisenhower Administration in the past as a way of bringing its Allies back into line whenever they became 'weak kneed'. However, on this occasion Dulles confirmed that the US would not renege on its responsibilities.¹⁰⁹

In January, the US Government came under increasing pressure from the Federal Republic to toughen contingency planning on Berlin.¹¹⁰ Under existing contingency procedures, Soviet officials did stamp documents on access routes, but at a White House Conference, called by the President on 29 January, it was decided that in the event of DDR officials taking over from the Russians in future, only identification of Allied vehicles would be provided to DDR officials at the checkpoints. 'No stamping of papers or inspection will be acquiesced in'. Existing procedures were reviewed as follows: after the substitution of DDR for Soviet officials, the next convoy of US trucks would be accompanied by a scout with shooting capability. But in the event of obstruction, the effort would be discontinued, and parallel attempts would be made to mobilise world opinion at the UN, and to exert diplomatic pressure, such as withdrawal of ambassadors. It was then that further military measures would be applied.

In Macmillan's opinion such an action could easily escalate to nuclear war. Subsequently, British and French pressure forced the US administration to make an important qualification in their position:- Allied agreement to contingency planning along the above lines was assumed, 'if not, the question of US action would have to be considered in the light of the allied position'.¹¹¹ America therefore accepted that her Allies would not have to make an automatic commitment to the use of force. This point was reinforced by Sir William Dixon, Chief of the Defence Staff at the COS Meeting of 24 February, when they agreed to emphasise to the Allied Commanders in Chief in Germany that ministerial agreement was necessary for any measures they might impose.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Minute (M37/59) by PM 27 Jan. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

¹¹⁰ Memo of White House Conference of the President and his advisors, 29 Jan. 1959, NSA no.686.

¹¹¹ See NSA Essay by Burr, op. cit. for a discussion of US Policy and Contingency Planning, pp.35-36.

¹¹² COS (59) 15th Meeting, 24 Feb. 1959, DEFE 5 (89). A compromise was later achieved on this issue at the meeting between Eisenhower and Macmillan, Camp David, March 1959.

The President was privately sympathetic to the more flexible British views which he described as 'reasonable'. He told Herter that if the East Germans pledged themselves to carry out Soviet responsibilities the US would be tempted to accept, but in the final analysis they could not because 'it would be death to Adenauer'. However, Policy Planning Staff Director Gerard Smith took the view that 'we would be eventually pushed away from no stamping by our Allies'.¹¹³

Meanwhile, Anglo-German relations were becoming extremely difficult. Sir Christopher Steel advised the Foreign Office that since an East-West Conference was now likely, the Germans expected it to produce a partial settlement of the German problem and a modus vivendi on Berlin.¹¹⁴ In his view, there was a chance that new ideas could be imposed on Germany, but only if the initiative came from the US, supported by Britain. However, this assessment seemed at variance with Adenauer's real position. On 30 January, Hilger Albert von Scherpenberg, the German Ambassador personally conveyed to the Prime Minister, Adenauer's views on the current situation. The Chancellor believed there was little use in applying interim solutions to the situation and he believed the 'German people would continue to be staunch if they could see a little light at the end of a long tunnel but to maintain this attitude it was very important to avoid an unnecessary clash'.¹¹⁵

Early in February, when the Chancellor heard about the Prime Minister's proposed visit to the Soviet Union, relations with Germany deteriorated further. Responding to Adenauer's accusation that it was an election manoeuvre, Sir Christopher Steel said that before adopting a firm policy, his government considered it was important to show British public opinion that it had already done everything possible to try to reach an accommodation with the Russians. Adenauer disagreed, and said the unity of the West was the prime consideration, and 'the effect on Khrushchev would be that of a major triumph for his side. The Russians had gratuitously denounced a solemn agreement with the Western Powers, and we were now running to them to negotiate about it'.¹¹⁶ Macmillan had anticipated that the Chancellor would be 'dismayed and even alarmed', when he heard news of his visit to Moscow. What was already a difficult situation became even worse as a result of the Ambassador's frank admission to Adenauer: that the existence of the DDR was a factor which one could not ignore in that the DDR would increasingly be

¹¹³ Trachtenberg, op. cit. p.197.

¹¹⁴ Steel to Lloyd, no.147, 30 Jan. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

¹¹⁵ Conversation between PM and von Scherpenberg at 10 Downing St. 30 Jan. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

¹¹⁶ Steel to Lloyd, no. 160, 3 Feb. 1959, FO 371/145817 WG/1073/35.

recognised by other states, so the Western Powers ought also at some time discuss recognising the DDR'.¹¹⁷ At the time, Adenauer said nothing, but later, on 11 February, he wrote to Macmillan personally, bluntly pointing out that the moment the Western Alliance considered recognising the DDR the whole foreign political situation would be completely changed.¹¹⁸ He also warned the Prime Minister that should Khrushchev raise this matter in Moscow, the Prime Minister's formulation of an answer would be very significant.

Mr Dulles' Visit to London 4-5 February 1959

Dulles, by now a very sick man, was extremely concerned both by the British stepping out of line, and by the Chancellor's intransigence. He decided to make a whirlwind diplomatic trip to London, Paris and Bonn to try and establish a unified position within the Western Alliance. The Foreign Secretary admitted that he was pleased that he would meet Dulles in person so he could deal with some of the misapprehensions in his recent telegram.¹¹⁹ On 4 February, Dulles, accompanied by Merchant, his Under-Secretary, and Martin Hilenbrand, Director of German Affairs in the State Department, arrived in London on the first stage of his tour of Allied capitals to meet the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary.¹²⁰ The three sessions of talks were wide ranging, and in general revealed that Dulles was more flexible in his attitude towards many of the issues than both his deputy, Merchant and the Pentagon. The Prime Minister was surprised, and thought that this sudden US pragmatism was due to the fact that the Administration had lost control of the Congress and had to accommodate the views of the House and the Senate.¹²¹

In reality, Dulles' 'surprising' flexibility was based on NSC 5803, 'Current US Policy towards Germany', para. 4, which stated that although it was not at that moment propitious to advance major new alternatives toward achieving German reunification the US 'should give continuing considerations to the development of such alternatives which may be later required by developments in either West Germany or the USSR or both, with a view to the long term solution of the unification problem'.¹²² Dulles' testing of general

¹¹⁷ Adenauer to Macmillan, 11 Feb. 1958 PREM 11 2715.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Lloyd to Caccia, no. 286, 1 Feb. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

¹²⁰ Macmillan, Riding p.587.

¹²¹ See Schick, *op. cit.* Chap. 2 for a discussion of Dulles' flexibility during the Crisis.

¹²² Gordon Grey Special Envoy for NSA to Dulles, 14 Jan. 1959 NSA no. 625.

reaction to the idea of a German Confederation at his press conference of 13 January had therefore been a response to this policy decision. The general approach of the Eisenhower administration to the Berlin Crisis was that 'terrified by the prospect of nuclear war the Europeans would drift away from the American policy of resistance to Soviet encroachment'.¹²³ This suggested that the political burden on the alliance would have to be eased by coming to a settlement on Berlin, the potential flashpoint for a nuclear war, if this could be reached on reasonable terms.

However, when the US Ambassador in Bonn, Bruce informed the Chancellor about Dulles' famous statement at his press conference that free elections were 'not the only way by which reunification could be accomplished', Adenauer had exploded, saying that any talk of confederation was 'totally unacceptable' and that the repercussions in Germany would be 'momentous'.¹²⁴ In spite of this adverse German reaction, Dulles had still kept the idea of confederation 'in wraps'. He wondered whether it might provide a step towards reunification or a freezing of the present situation, for he believed that unless the Russians adopted a different attitude to their satellites, they would never allow German Reunification.¹²⁵

Adenauer was determined to maintain the status quo because he feared that in a united Germany the socialists would swamp the Christian Democrats. Since the Franco-German realignment following the Bad Kreuznach Meeting of 27 November 1958, the Chancellor could rely on the support of the French President who did not believe that there could be any solution to the German problem, and reunification in particular, in the absence of a European settlement.¹²⁶ In reality, it was acknowledged within Allied circles that German Reunification was not in the interests of France, Germany nor indeed the Common Market.

Anglo-US Talks 4-5 February 1959

In the opening session, the Foreign Secretary explained to Dulles that the Western Powers were in some disarray on these issues, and that Herr von Scherpenberg's visit to the Prime Minister had left him with a feeling of uncertainty as to where they stood.¹²⁷ He then

¹²³ Trachtenberg, op. cit. pp.213-214.

¹²⁴ Gordon Gray, DOS to Dulles, 14 Jan. 1959, NSA no. 625.

¹²⁵ Memo of conversation, between Dulles and Spaak, 6 Feb. 1959, NSA no.730

¹²⁶ See Tint, op. cit. p 212 and also J.Lacouture, De Gaulle: The Ruler 1945-1970 (London, 1993) Chap.27 for a recent account of the Franco-German relationship in this period.

¹²⁷ Record of conversation between Lloyd and Dulles 1959. PREM 11/2175, WG1073/39G.

invited the Secretary of State to give his views on Berlin and Germany. Dulles considered that the Russians had launched their Berlin initiative to build up the prestige of the East German Government and to close the escape hatch from East Germany through Berlin, thereby minimising the psychological impact of a dynamic West Berlin. This assessment was surprisingly similar to that of Foreign Office Memorandum 8133, of 15 November, although it failed to take account of Soviet fears of the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr. Dulles said that he thought the East-West Conference should begin before the 27 May, in Vienna. The Western position should remain largely the same as in Geneva in 1955, with some embellishments such as thinning out of forces though without discrimination against foreign troops and certain types of weapons in a zone not contiguous with national boundaries (this was to avoid offending German sensibilities). During this first session, it emerged that Dulles had considerable reservations about the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow, and was annoyed that sources in the press had given the incorrect impression that the Americans had been consulted in advance about his proposed trip. Macmillan readily agreed that in his forthcoming statement to the House of Commons informing them about his visit, he would merely say that his Allies had been informed in advance.¹²⁸

Further conversations on Germany were characterised by Dulles' realism and the Prime Minister's radicalism, and revealed that Anglo-US attitudes to the future of Germany were not so divergent as previously thought. Indeed it seemed that Dulles was flexible and ready to entertain new ideas, though not the British suggestion of a possible UN presence in Berlin.¹²⁹ Both sides acknowledged that the Chancellor's intransigent position was the main problem blocking progress, and were opposed to Adenauer's view that the West should concentrate on disarmament rather than reunification. Dulles did not see how the Western Powers could dodge the German question in the present situation. Selwyn Lloyd hoped that the Western position could be based on the status quo, thus allowing some flexibility. The inference to be drawn here was that the Western Powers did not have to adopt their 1955 position that German Reunification based on free elections was the only course for Germany.¹³⁰ Macmillan's premiss was that the West Germans were not so keen on reunification as present Allied policy assumed and that

¹²⁸ Memo of Macmillan/Dulles conversation, 4-5 Feb. 1959, NSA. no. 723. It is interesting to note that nothing is mentioned about this point in the British account of the talks.

¹²⁹ Macmillan/Dulles Conversations, 4-5 Feb. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

even if the present policy lasted as long as Adenauer, his successors might be tempted to do a deal with the Soviets. This would destroy the basis of the entire Allied European policy. Given this situation, he felt the Allies should try to get their 'money's worth now', particularly as the status quo might well suit the Allied Occupation Powers, West Germany and the Soviet Union. His hope for the future was in a progressive relaxation of the Communist grip in Russia and its satellites.¹³¹

In discussions about contingency plans for Berlin, Dulles was opposed to the substitution of East German guards at the checkpoint and any stamping of Allied documents by the DDR authorities. He was decidedly 'unenthusiastic' about the British preference for an airlift in preference to a probe down the autobahn. Dulles conceded that if a Western probe was physically held up by the DDR authorities, it would be a mistake to force one's way down the motorway, as it would be necessary to fan out into the countryside. Dulles outlined current US policy for the British: the probe, consisting of a small convoy accompanied by a scout car, if challenged, would refuse to allow DDR stamping of their papers, return to the Western sector and then a 'double barrelled' policy would be implemented consisting of an appeal to the UN and world opinion, and the setting in train of overt preparations for hostilities.

The Foreign Secretary suggested an alternative provisional solution negotiable at a conference: that the Russians might be persuaded to underwrite the obligations of the DDR to grant free access. To the surprise of the British, Dulles assented to this suggestion the following day, with the proviso, couched in obscure legalistic terminology: that what could be accepted 'should not be defined as Soviet insistence that the East Germans had inherited them, not as agents, but absolutely, any rights to control our access to Berlin'.¹³² This was a virtual reinstatement of the Agency Theory and a victory for British persistence since early January. The Prime Minister agreed that Dulles could discuss the problem of the substitution of East German guards at the checkpoints with the French and the Germans. Because Merchant was worried about the reaction of the US COS to Dulles' new formula, which reversed the position adopted by the US at the Paris Foreign Ministers Conference of December 1958, it was agreed that the State Department would judge when it was the best time to approach the military. The Prime Minister had the last word on the contentious issue of DDR stamping of travel documents. Before

¹³¹ Macmillan/Dulles Conversations, 4-5 Feb. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

¹³² Ibid. 5 Feb. 1959, PREM 11/2715 (WG 10113/42G).

Dulles departed, he said the problem under discussion only related to Western forces in Berlin, not to German traffic and that the stamp which the Soviet authorities at present put on passes was only a time stamp, and a reasonable usage which could hardly be made a *casus belli* even if done by the wrong hands.¹³³

Throughout the discussions, Macmillan continued to advocate a summit on the basis that a deal could only be made with Khrushchev. Although Dulles did not rule it out, he thought it should only take place if it was likely to achieve results. However, it was agreed that a meeting of the Four Foreign Ministers should take place on 16 March in Paris, at which they would: decide on an agreed Western position before the NATO Meeting of 2 April; brief the Four Power Working Group on Germany currently meeting in Washington; and finally, discuss the Western reply to the Soviet Note and decide on the Western position for a forthcoming East-West conference. It was anticipated that the Foreign Ministers Conference would start about 10 May and last approximately four weeks.

From the British point of view, the Anglo-US discussions had been relatively successful. Prior to the Dulles visit they had prevented the automatic implementation of US contingency plans which risked the ultimate sanction, nuclear retaliation. Then, they had pressurised the Secretary of State to consider the reinstatement of the Agency Theory. The British Government was also prepared to accept an East German role in the stamping of documents even if the Soviets would not acknowledge an agency relationship. This was unacceptable to the Eisenhower administration, and in the summer of 1959, as an alternative, the British reluctantly accepted a State Department proposal, namely to present East German checkpoint officials with pre-stamped copies of travel orders. Although Dulles only showed perfunctory enthusiasm for Macmillan's more radical ideas on a zone of thinning out in Central Europe, it appeared that British ideas on a confederal German solution, or alternatively, something akin to it, such as the all-German Committee proposed by Sir Gladwyn Jebb, might not fall on deaf ears in Washington. However, as Dulles' visit was prompted by the Prime Minister's unilateral decision to visit Moscow, perhaps the most important result of the talks was that the British had managed to convince the Americans that they were not defeatist. On his return to Washington,

¹³³ Conversation, PM and Dulles, 4 Feb. 1959, PREM 11/2715.

Merchant reported to the National Security Council that the British were 'open minded' on the proposals, and their position on Berlin was 'firm'.¹³⁴

The Prime Minister could now go ahead with his visit to Moscow to pursue a modus vivendi with the Russians over Berlin. His statement to the Cabinet, on 3 February, informing them of his decision encapsulated the reasons for his initiative.¹³⁵

He said a 'dangerous situation might result from the Soviet Government's declaration that they intended to withdraw from East Berlin and leave the East German Government in control of the city and its approaches. This declaration and the Soviet offer to negotiate a Peace Treaty had exposed the latent differences of attitude, on the part of the leading members of the North Atlantic Alliance, on the response to be made to the transfer of authority in Berlin and the lack of a common practicable policy on the wider question of the future of Germany as a whole. There was an increasing expectation of a Four Power Meeting in the Spring to resolve the problems of Berlin and European Security, and in the Prime Minister's view, it would be hazardous to enter into negotiations with the Russians without a common Western Policy. It was urgently necessary that some fresh initiative should be taken to break the present deadlock and to find a basis for Western agreement, and in these circumstances the Prime Minister had decided to accept the invitation extended to his predecessor to visit Moscow. During his visit of 7-10 days he would ascertain the views of and intentions of the Soviet Government in respect of Berlin and Germany's future and thereafter he would go to Bonn, Paris and Washington to discuss these problems in the light of the views of the Soviet leaders. The US had been consulted about this approach before it had been made and the Governments of France, West Germany and the Commonwealth, as well as Nato would be informed that day about the visit.

The Cabinet supported the Prime Minister's initiative and considered the visit would be welcomed by public opinion.

Conclusion

The period from 10 -27 November 1958 was perceived by the Western Powers as a time of high risk in East-West relations since at any moment the Soviet Union might hand over their responsibilities for access to West Berlin to the East German authorities. The British Government feared that ill considered Allied reaction, such as the use of force might escalate to war. Thus, Foreign Office Memorandum 8133, approved by the Prime Minister on 15 November 1958 was an attempt to influence Britain's Allies in a more pragmatic and realistic direction. Although accused of defeatism and appeasement, HMG did not bow to pressure, and kept open the Agency Theory for future discussion thus moderating the Western Alliance's attitude to contingency planning for Berlin.

¹³⁴ NSA no.763, 12 Feb. 1959.

¹³⁵ Cabinet Conclusions C. 4(59) Min.1, 3 Feb. 1958, CAB 128/35.

During the period from the arrival of the Soviet Note of 27 November until 31 December, the British Government, reacting to public opinion and perceiving that Soviet aims on Berlin were defensive, continued to oppose US attempts to alter existing contingency plans for Berlin. Macmillan's Government was not prepared to risk global war because of de facto dealings with the DDR over access. In spite of a temporary setback at the Paris Foreign Ministers Meeting where the Agency Theory was rejected by the Western Powers, the Government fought on, and eventually achieved its reinstatement in the Spring of 1959. The Government forcefully opposed what it considered American brinkmanship on the automatic implementation of a land probe, and by the end of January 1959 had forced the US to accept Britain's position.

The New Year was also characterised by the Prime Minister's initial attempts to feel his way towards an initiative in East-West relations. In preparation for negotiations with the Russians, Macmillan widened consideration of the Berlin issue to include the interconnected questions of Germany and European Security. Both amongst his coterie of advisors, and within the Foreign Office, he encouraged a radical rethink of ideas on a nuclear-free thinning out zone in Central Europe, an interim settlement of the Berlin question and even de facto recognition of the DDR and the status quo in Europe. The review of British policy under Sir Gladwyn Jebb culminated in a Prime Ministerial Directive and Macmillan's announcement of his decision to visit the Soviet Union to explore the possibility of a modus vivendi with the Russians.

Chapter Three

The Prime Minister's Visit to the Soviet Union 21 February - 3 March 1959

Confident that his initiative was fully supported back home, the Prime Minister arrived in Moscow on 21 February with an entourage of twelve including Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Norman Brooke, Secretary to the Cabinet, Macmillan's private secretaries, Philip de Zulueta and Freddie Bishop, and a group of Foreign Office officials, including Sir Anthony Rumbold.¹ The fact that it was the first time a Western leader had been to Russia since the days of Stalin stimulated intense national pride and interest and encouraged Macmillan's ambition to act as arbiter between East and West in the cause of detente.² The Prime Minister was also well aware that such an image would boost his chance of electoral success in 1959.

British public opinion wholeheartedly supported the Prime Minister's attempts to encourage detente, and it was no coincidence that the growing opposition to the threat of nuclear war was symbolised by the first Aldermaston March, albeit by a group of left wing unilateral disarmers. This took place on 17 February, just before the Prime Minister left for Moscow. A crowd of only 300 was expected but on the day 4,000 set off from Trafalgar Square and the numbers soon swelled to 10,000.³ In accordance with the national mood, The Times commented on the great responsibility which the Prime Minister had assumed in his role as mediator in the German, Berlin, and European Security questions. President Truman had commented that 'far from being a sign of weakness, the visit might open a door'.⁴ As a result of Dulles' serious illness, and President de Gaulle's attitude of cold negation, only Macmillan was in a position to engage in fresh exploration and diplomatic leadership on these important questions: 'the eyes of the world will now turn to him and in his hands more than ever, will be the initiative in the coming months'. British public opinion was extremely interested on the Government's support for arms limitation. The Times was of the view that the one area where there was room for negotiation was the idea of an area of controlled armaments

¹ For accounts of the PM's visit see Macmillan, Riding pp.582-635; and Horne op. cit. pp.116-136.

² Anthony Eden visited the Soviet Union in 1941.

³ The Times, 5 August 1995, p.2. The article recalled the rise of CND in 1958-9.

⁴ Ibid. 19 Feb. 1959, p.10.

including men and weapons under inspection in central Europe, which could calm real Russian fears on the 'pace and extent of German rearmament'.⁵

This chapter will describe preparations made by the Foreign Office for the Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union. It will also analyse the course of the talks which took place in Moscow and determine to what extent the Prime Minister was successful in achieving his exploratory objectives of assessing Soviet policy on Berlin, Germany and European Security, and in ascertaining whether the Soviet Government was prepared to negotiate on these questions at a conference with the Western Powers. It will assess the impact of his visit on British public opinion and on British Policy towards the Berlin Crisis. Finally, it will evaluate the Soviet attitude to their discussions with the British Government and determine whether there were grounds for hope of a modus vivendi between East and West on the Berlin question.

Preparations for the Prime Minister's Visit to the Soviet Union

The Foreign Office provided the Prime Minister with a Steering Brief on specific British objectives for the talks. These were to estimate Soviet Policy on Berlin, Germany and European Security, and the readiness or otherwise of the Soviets to negotiate. Hence the success or otherwise of Macmillan's initiative may be judged against these objectives. The Steering Brief is also a useful guide to Western Department's perceptions of Soviet policies and objectives.⁶

On the German issue the Prime Minister's brief was first to ascertain whether the Soviet Government 'was so mortally afraid of dangers to their ultimate ambitions or even to their security, represented by the alliance between a fully armed Germany and US that they will be ready to risk a war in order to destroy this alliance before the process of arming Germany goes too far'. Second, to see if the Soviet Government would be prepared to abandon Ulbricht or the satellites to pay for the neutralisation or even demilitarisation of Germany; and third, to find out what they would demand in terms of measures to be taken for their own security, as the price for allowing German reunification on Western terms.

⁵ Ibid. 18 Feb. 1959, p.11.

⁶ PM Visit to Moscow, Steering Brief, 12 Feb. 1959, CAB 130/159, Gen. 676/1; Ibid. 17 Feb. 1959, Gen. 676, 2-3.

On the Berlin question, the Prime Minister was advised to find out: whether the Soviet Government was prepared to press its claims even to the point of war and to make sure that they realized that 'if they and their East German Allies pursued their intention to the end there is a grave risk of war'. He also should establish whether the Soviet Government was ready to negotiate on Berlin and in what circumstances the Soviet Government might defer the action contemplated on 27 May. Finally, he should investigate whether in the event of the Soviet Government handing over to the DDR rights of control of Berlin communications, they would be ready to underwrite the handover of control of Berlin communications to the DDR so that Western Powers could deal with the DDR as agents.⁷ Possibly, it was in the area of European Security that the Foreign Office and Macmillan were most hopeful of achieving a meeting of minds with the Russians. Here, the brief was to ascertain what prospect there was of the Soviet Government agreeing to some form of thinning out of forces and weapons on both sides of a dividing line, provided there was no discrimination as regards foreign troops and weapons, and provided it did not affect the military balance to the detriment of the West. The Prime Minister was also asked to ascertain whether agreement on the Rapacki Pact or a variant of it was required before the Soviet Government would consider German Reunification on Western terms; and third, to determine whether the signing of an Anglo-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty would be helpful to the solution of other European questions.⁸

Talks in Moscow between the British and Soviet Governments, 21 February- 2 March 1959

Macmillan emerged from his plane in Moscow, an imposing figure resplendent in a tall white fur hat dating back to his last visit to Russia during the Russo-Finnish War of 1940, donned to impress the Russians. It was quickly cast aside in favour of a traditional black fur hat when he realized its embarrassing connotations for the sensitive Russians.⁹ During the rest of his visit, he pointedly dressed as a typical Englishman, even to the point of wearing plus fours on a visit to a collective farm, and a Guards Officer tie, which he evidently considered appropriate for a visit to a nuclear plant.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Horne, op. cit. p.120. The Russo-Finnish War of 1940 was a defeat for the Russians.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.122, Malcolm Muggeridge said the PM looked 'as if he were at Chatsworth'.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were welcomed by Khrushchev, Anastas Mikoyan, Soviet Deputy Prime Minister and the Soviet Leader's principal Foreign Affairs advisor, and Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister, and driven away to the Kremlin for a State Banquet, which was characterised by affirmations of friendship on both sides. Khrushchev set the tone, in his welcome speech. He emphasised the war time alliance and the friendly relationship between the two countries. He said he regretted the decline of harmonious Anglo-Soviet relations during the post war years, but obviously anxious to avoid acrimonious exchanges, he quickly added that it was not the time to argue over how and why it happened. 'It is best to put our heads together and decide what should be done to melt the resulting 'Cold War' ice'.¹¹

In his reply, Macmillan likewise deplored the state of tension during the so called Cold War which had existed for over ten years, during which the two Blocs had confronted each other with ever more terrible weapons of mass destruction. The British, he said, did not fear a calculated act of aggression but it was impossible to hide from the 'dangers of war by miscalculation or by muddle'. The next day, when the two speeches were widely reported in the world press, the general view was that there had already been a distinct thaw in the Cold War, and the Russian press had likewise been directed to encourage the view that the visit was proving a success. Sir Patrick Reilly thought the Prime Minister had made 'a favourable impression' on Khrushchev, on his very first day.¹² In retrospect, the Ambassador conveniently divided the visit into four phases. The first was a period of cordiality; the second one of coldness ending in open rudeness. Then, came the tour outside Moscow, during which there were increasing signs of a desire to make it up, and finally there was the return to cordiality during the last two days.

A Period of Initial and Growing Cordiality 21-23 February 1959

The first serious session of talks between the two governments took place on 22 February, at the government dacha at Semyonovskoye outside Moscow, where the Russian leader held forth on Germany and Berlin. He reiterated familiar Soviet arguments expounded in the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958, and the Note on the German Peace Treaty of 10

¹¹ Visit of the PM and Foreign Secretary to the Soviet Union, 21 Feb. -3 Mar. Doc. 26, Part 2, p. 8; henceforth cited as PM Visit to SU, CAB 133/293. PREM 11/2690 also covers the PM Visit.

¹² Sir Patrick Reilly's Diary of PM's Visit to SU, 9 Mar, 1959. no. 32, 1959, FO 371/143439, NS/1053/179.

January 1959. In accordance with the MID's Proposals for the Talks, which had been approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Khrushchev made it clear that the Soviet Government was determined to stand firm on its decision to 'normalise' the situation in West Berlin by ending the occupation regime, though it was significant that no mention was made of a deadline.¹³ The Soviet leader reviewed East-West relations since the Geneva Conference of 1955 and condemned not only the wrongly conceived Western Policy of 'roll back' after Stalin's death but also the continuing Western conviction that German Reunification should take precedence over questions of European Security.¹⁴ In Khrushchev's view, if agreement could be reached on European Security, and the German question was left for the Germans themselves to solve through some form of confederation if they so desired, other questions would be easier to surmount. It was obvious that the Soviets wanted to 'delink' the Western tripartite proposal to deal with Germany, Berlin and European Security as a total package, and that any settlement of the German problem by the Western Plan for German Reunification was untenable from the Soviet point of view.

Dwelling in more detail on the German problem and the crucial question of the recognition of the DDR, Khrushchev skilfully tried to drive a wedge between Britain and her Allies. He said that he thought British policy was more 'flexible' and that although the UK was in unity with the US there was nevertheless a 'tinge of difference between them'. The British Government was prepared to consider some form of arrangement on access with the DDR, in the event of the Soviet Union unilaterally signing a peace treaty with the DDR so Khrushchev's next exploratory statement was of great interest.¹⁵

He stated that the 'West should acknowledge that there were two German states with completely different social systems, and that if Britain was prepared to recognize the existence of a socialist East Germany, the position would be different'.¹⁶ From this statement it appeared that the Soviet Government would be prepared to accept de facto rather than de jure recognition of the DDR in any future settlement. Khrushchev then

¹³ PM Visit to SU, Doc. 2, pp. 10-14, CAB 133/293.

¹⁴ For FO Review of Western Policy on Germany, Berlin and European Security since the 1955 Geneva Conference, and for the Soviet attitude to these questions see PM's Visit to Moscow, FO 371/145820 WG 1073/98 (A).

¹⁵ Meeting at Semonovskoye, 22 Feb. 1959, PM Visit to SU, Doc. 2, pp. 11-12, CAB 133/293.

¹⁶ Ibid.

began to exert pressure on the Prime Minister, in accordance with his MID brief. He insisted that if Adenauer refused their offer, they would sign a peace treaty with East Germany and he concluded by stating that any subsequent 'policy of threats against the Soviet Union by the Western Powers would not work'. Nevertheless, he emphasised that the Soviet Union was sincerely anxious to improve relations with the Western Powers.¹⁷ The Prime Minister probed to see whether the Soviet side were prepared to make any concessions. The Soviet leader confirmed that he was prepared to agree some of the proposals that had been attributed to him during the past months: namely that the three Western Allies might keep forces in Berlin when it became a Free City with the following qualifications: that they had merely a police function to guarantee non-interference in the affairs of West Berlin; that they were of a token strength; and that the Soviet Union would also garrison West Berlin with a quarter of the total number of Allied troops stationed in West Berlin.¹⁸ These concessions certainly represented an advance on the previous Soviet position.

Perhaps the most important question posed in the Foreign Office Steering Brief on the Berlin question was to ascertain whether the Russians were 'ready to press their claims to the point of war and whether they would be prepared to underwrite an agency role for the DDR in the event of their control of access to West Berlin after the signing of a Peace Treaty'.¹⁹ Thus, the Prime Minister's next question for Khrushchev was whether an agreement on access would broadly preserve the present position. The following statement is of crucial importance to the argument that the Russians wanted to reach an agreement to the Berlin problem which would ultimately be acceptable to the West, and that they did not intend to allow the East Germans to act irresponsibly. Khrushchev said:

It (the agreement) should do more than this because the present position stemmed from the German capitulation and would come to an end when the state of war was ended. The new arrangement would be in the form of an agreement to be registered with the United Nations. It could be more elastic and could provide for sanctions against anyone who violated it. The Soviet view was that the government of the DDR might make a declaration with which our four Governments would be associated guaranteeing access to West Berlin for all

¹⁷ Ibid. p.29.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ FO Steering Brief, 12 Feb. 1959, CAB 130/159 Gen. 676/1.

countries with which West Berlin wanted access. The declaration by the DDR would be registered by the DDR and would become law for the DDR.²⁰

Although this proposal did not encompass the Agency arrangement envisaged by the British Government it did represent a compromise on the former position of the Soviets. No mention was made of the 27 May deadline, and from the initial discussions, it did not appear that the Soviet Government wished to provoke war with the West over access to Berlin.

In accordance with the Western position, the Prime Minister rejected the proposal that West Berlin should become a Free City. Instead he suggested other possibilities such as German Reunification with Berlin as the capital, or alternatively, that as a temporary expedient a Free City could be established for the whole of Berlin. As anticipated, Khrushchev rejected these rather unrealistic suggestions on the basis that Berlin was a part of the Eastern Zone and the occupation arrangements were only to last until a Peace Treaty was signed. When that was signed the whole of Berlin should go to East Germany. Significantly he added, 'they had however agreed with the East Germans that to prevent an upheaval they should put forward the proposal for a Free City in West Berlin and this proposal represented a major sacrifice by the DDR'.²¹ The Foreign Secretary then emphasised the Western view that Allied rights in Berlin derived from the German surrender, and if the Soviet Union signed a peace treaty with the East Germans this would not affect Western rights in the City.

As regards German Reunification, the Russians were uncompromising. They rejected the Western view of free elections preceding the establishment of an all-German Government, and reiterated that this was a matter for the Germans themselves. The West Germans would have to accept the East German proposal for an all-German confederation and the establishment of an all-German Government on a basis of parity between the two states. This meant equality between the two states and not a relationship based on size and population. Although the Russian leader remained intransigent on Germany, he did make one concession, namely that the two Germanies could keep their present alliances after the implementation of a peace treaty. This was confirmed at a later meeting.²²

²⁰ PM Visit to SU, Doc. 2, p.13. CAB 133/293.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Macmillan, op.cit. p.600.

In the evening the talks were entirely devoted to disarmament and were 'detailed, long, and hopeful'.²³ Khrushchev agreed with the Foreign Secretary that disarmament would have to be a gradual process and also liked his suggestion that the programme should be 'first an end to tests; then control over the use of fissile material for weapons purposes; then confidence would begin to grow'. Selwyn Lloyd then broached for the first time Britain's idea of establishing 'certain areas in which one could have a controlled limitation of armaments of all kinds.' In response, Khrushchev said 'the Soviet Union would be prepared to go quite a long way on that. He thought the main point was that we should try to disengage our forces. The further apart we went, the greater the area we disengaged from, and the more thorough the inspection of that area, the better it would be'. To which Macmillan replied 'if we started in a small way we would begin to learn how to do it. Then we could apply it in a wider field'.²⁴ Khrushchev's reply had been encouragingly positive.

During the first formal meeting at the Kremlin which was mainly devoted to disarmament, Macmillan suggested to Khrushchev that the scientists already working at Geneva should pursue an agreement to end tests and effect some compromise on the controversial inspection issue. Then they could move on to a study of a system of 'limitation and inspection and control of armaments, whether conventional, or unconventional in some area of Europe big or small'.²⁵

The British thought it significant that Khrushchev indicated several times that he did not want nuclear weapons to spread beyond the three countries already possessing them. At one moment he seemed to suggest that he would not want to pass on weapons or information to the Chinese, thus revealing Soviet fears of their powerful and dangerous neighbours having access to nuclear weapons. Khrushchev said the only sensible thing to do was to accept their differences on other issues and at least achieve common agreement on disarmament policy. For this he suggested a summit meeting to work out principles, then give directions to the Foreign Ministers and 'lock them up with a limited supply of bread and water and tell them to reach agreement'.²⁶ Macmillan disagreed, no doubt realizing how difficult it would be to convert President Eisenhower to the idea of holding

²³ PM Visit, Doc. 3 pp.14-20, CAB 133/293.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ PM Visit, Doc. 4, pp.21-25, CAB 133/293.

²⁶ Ibid. p.23.

a summit, as he had repeatedly rejected Macmillan's attempts to convene an East-West summit during 1958.

On the way to Dubna, on 24 February, Gromyko pressed Lloyd further on the Prime Minister's ideas on disarmament, informing him that 'they were extremely interested in the possibility of limitations of armaments in a restricted area'.²⁷ Mr. Gromyko gave the Foreign Secretary the distinct impression that he was genuinely interested in the idea, and when the Foreign Secretary said that 'we could not accept the exclusion of foreign troops', he did not demur.

The first phase of the visit culminated in a 'markedly cordial atmosphere' at the Embassy dinner on 23 February. Khrushchev, who had announced that he was planning to accompany the Prime Minister on his trip to Kiev, made a very friendly speech in which he said that it was the Prime Minister's frankness and understanding that the Soviet Government liked in their discussions with him. He concluded by regretting the misconceptions of the past and by advocating mutual coexistence and the establishment of friendly relations between the two countries.²⁸ Macmillan judged the first three days to have been very successful and to have more than satisfied British expectations. Headlines in the British Press were enthusiastic, ranging from: 'End Cold War Competition', to 'Mr. Macmillan Gets to Business'.²⁹

At the end of this first period of discussions Macmillan telegrammed his initial impressions to his Allies. He said Khrushchev had not liked the idea of a Foreign Ministers Conference rather than a summit, and that 'in spite of their great new power and wealth, the Russians are still obsessed by a sense of insecurity'.³⁰ Since Stalin's death, the Russians felt that the West had put pressure on them in the belief that they would be weakened by internal disputes, and therefore more amenable to concessions. In general Khrushchev felt the West had 'created an atmosphere of war'.³¹ The Prime Minister's other general impression was of Soviet hatred and distrust of the Germans, and the continued influence of the old bogey of encirclement.³²

²⁷ Conversation between Lloyd and Gromyko, en route to Dubna, 24 Feb. 1959, CAB 133/293, Doc. 15, p.59.

²⁸ Reilly's Diary of PM Visit, 9 Mar. 1959, point 5, FO 371/143439 NS /1053/179.

²⁹ Sunday Times, 22 Feb. 1959, p. 1.

³⁰ PM to President, 23 Feb. 1959, T. 99/59, PREM. 11/2690.

³¹ Ibid.

³² PM to de Gaulle, T. 101/59, 23 Feb. PREM 11/2690.

The ‘Toothache Incident’ and its Repercussions

The second phase of the visit during which Anglo-Soviet relations seriously deteriorated, began on the morning of 24 February. Khrushchev made an electoral speech in Moscow, attacking the Western position on Germany, and opposing the Western proposal for a Foreign Minister’s Conference. In his customary style, he colourfully described it ‘as a bog without an exit’. He spoke offensively about Adenauer and the Shah of Iran, and attacked Dulles and Eisenhower. Furthermore, his remarks about the nuclear tests bore no resemblance to discussions he had had with the Prime Minister.³³ But at the end of this provocative speech he unexpectedly offered an immediate Non-Aggression Pact to the British. This was perceived by the Prime Minister’s Allies as the expected attempt to separate the British from the Americans and the West Germans.³⁴ In fact, as the MID Proposals for the talks pointed out, the Soviet Union had put forward this suggestion long ago, in 1955, at the Geneva Conference. Furthermore, Macmillan himself had proposed a Non-Aggression Pact to the Soviets in January 1958. However, as he knew his Allies would view such a development as a breach of the NATO Alliance, Macmillan had back pedalled on this initiative during 1958, and he continued to do so during the Moscow Talks.

Knowing that the world’s press were eagerly following every twist and turn of events in Moscow, Macmillan and Lloyd went for a walk in the Embassy garden and attempted to have a private, ‘bug free’ exchange of views on how they should react to the speech. They decided to ‘play it by ear’ since Soviet motivation was so unclear to them at that stage.³⁵ When talks on Germany and Berlin resumed at the dacha on 25 February the Prime Minister, in careful, courteous and measured tones, delivered a warning that it was the Russian initiative (i.e. the Note of 27 November 1958) which had created the present tension.³⁶ He stressed two points which he thought the Russian leader should take careful note of: ‘The first is that the German situation is full of danger and could develop into something tragic for us all. The second is that it must surely be possible to avoid this by sensible and co-operative work’.

³³ SIA 1959-1960, p. 19.

³⁴ See Horne, op. cit. pp.122-129; and Macmillan, op. cit. pp.591-634 for accounts of the PM’s Visit.

³⁵ See Macmillan, op. cit. pp. 124-125 and Reilly’s Diary, 9 Mar. 1959, FO 371/143439 NS/1053/179.

³⁶ PM Visit, Doc.5, p.29, CAB 133/293.

Khrushchev worked himself up into a rage on hearing this warning and replied that he could not understand why the Western Powers wished to preserve the dangerous character of the Berlin situation. He asked whether it was because the British wanted to maintain the possibility of moving from the state of armed truce which now existed to a state of real war? Or because the British were arming the West Germans to make use of them in a future war? He then said it was obvious the West wanted to help Adenauer liquidate the DDR, but that if there was any violation of the DDR after the peace treaty was signed then the 'consequences would be very grave and it would be the fault of the West'.³⁷

The atmosphere at the Kremlin, during face to face talks on the following day, 26 February was 'thoroughly bad' from the outset.³⁸ Khrushchev resumed the row over Germany and launched into an offensive statement making an 'unpardonable reference' to Suez and comparing the present visit to that of the Anglo-French Mission of 1939 which, he said, had been followed by war. He implied that if this happened again, it would be entirely the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government. He continued to maintain that he had been threatened, and said that if Western Governments tried to impose their will on the Soviet Government by threats of war, the Soviet people would retaliate with all the means in their possession. At the end of the meeting he announced that he had hoped to accompany them to Kiev to introduce them to his daughter who lived there, but now he would be unable to come because 'you have insulted me'. Then he changed his tune and said he had a troublesome tooth, and that with the help of science and technology he hoped to keep his teeth strong and sharp. In Sir Patrick Reilly's view the meaning of the colourful metaphor was obvious.³⁹ The Soviet leader's blatant courtesy to the Prime Minister was heightened when it became known that Khrushchev had received an Iraqi Economic Delegation instead of accompanying the British to Kiev.⁴⁰

Khrushchev proceeded to attack Selwyn Lloyd as 'a man whose imagination was dangerous'. Macmillan recalled: 'I tried to keep my temper and merely said that I was sufficiently friendly with Mr. Khrushchev not to answer his remarks but that did not mean

³⁷ Horne, *op. cit.* p.125.

³⁸ Reilly's Diary, no. 32, 9 Mar. 1959, FO 371/143439 NS/1053/179; and PM Visit, Doc. 6, pp.36-37, CAB 133/293.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Macmillan's Diary in Horne, *op. cit.* p.126.

that I could accept them. I thought it better to leave things on the joking tone in which Khrushchev had spoken.⁴¹ The unflappable Macmillan had proved himself admirably fitted to deal with the irascible Soviet leader, for he did not over-react to Khrushchev's rapid changes of mood and rude outbursts. Sir Patrick Reilly praised the Prime Minister fulsomely for receiving this onslaught 'with a self control and an imperturbable courtesy which was beyond praise. A flare up at this moment might have done irreparable harm'.⁴²

Macmillan was naturally disappointed that the talks had reached an impasse and when he talked it over with the Foreign Secretary he was in favour of giving up the talks straight away and returning to England. He did not think there was any hope of achieving the kind of negotiation he wanted, but Lloyd persuaded him to go to Kiev.⁴³ Macmillan's PPS, Freddie Bishop was most impressed by the Prime Minister's philosophical demeanour. He described how when Macmillan returned to the British Embassy, he deliberately talked beneath the chandelier which was presumed to be bugged, commenting: 'of course we shall have to recall the Ambassador and order the plane.' But, he had evidently called Khrushchev's bluff.⁴⁴ During the next few days the Soviets offered a series of olive branches so that the final session of the talks scheduled for 2 March was able to proceed in a more cordial atmosphere. World press coverage of the visit had inclined Macmillan to underplay Khrushchev's courtesy, but nevertheless the 'toothache' affair had almost become an international incident.⁴⁵

In England, where public opinion was so important to the Prime Minister, the headlines in the popular dailies ranged from 'the Toothache Insult' and 'Mr. K Snubs the Prime Minister,' to the claim that the visit was a 'Monumental Flop'. The Sunday Times attributed Khrushchev's sudden change of tone during the talks to frustration and disappointment that the Prime Minister would not negotiate.⁴⁶ It considered that Khrushchev's brinkmanship would provoke the 'most explosive international crisis in Europe since the war', but that 'Mr Macmillan will give an urgent lead to the West in

⁴¹ Macmillan, *op. cit.* p.617.

⁴² Reilly's Diary, 9 Mar. 1959, no 32, FO 371/143439 NS 1053/ 179.

⁴³ Witness Seminar on 'British Policy and the Berlin Wall Crisis', held at the Dept. of War Studies, Kings College London, 22 Mar. 1991, Journal of Contemporary British History Vol. 6 Summer 1992, p.138.

⁴⁴ Horne, *op.cit.* p.126.

⁴⁵ See Don Cook's report in The Times, p.10, 26 Feb. 1959.

⁴⁶ The Sunday Times Editorial, 28 Feb. 1959.

preparing a strong united policy to meet the challenge'. The Prime Minister was also praised for 'expelling from Kremlin minds illusions about the softness or divisibility of Western policy, particularly on Berlin', and for his firm position that any fruitful meeting on Germany must start from respect for existing Four Power rights, and self determination for the Germans.

The Home Secretary who was standing in for the Prime Minister informed the Cabinet that the meetings in Moscow of 25 and 26 February had taken place in an atmosphere of coolness and that Khrushchev had maintained his inflexible attitude on Berlin and Germany.⁴⁷ The Soviet leader had expressed the suspicion that the West's policy was dictated by their determination to attack the Soviet Union whenever it was judged most favourable to the West. He told the Cabinet that the Soviet Union's position was that they would resist any attempt by the West to impose their will on the Soviet Union. There appeared to be only one redeeming feature of the otherwise acrimonious talks: Khrushchev had stated:

The Soviet Government were prepared to enter into negotiation with the Western Governments at any time. If the date of 27 May which the Soviet Union had suggested was unacceptable, a later date could be arranged. The Soviet Government would also be prepared to modify to some extent their proposals in connection with Berlin. In particular they would be prepared to guarantee its status as a free city and to send Soviet troops as a symbolic force to join Western troops in ensuring access by Western Powers to West Berlin.⁴⁸

The Prime Minister considered that these Soviet concessions possibly: 'foreshadowed a more accommodating attitude on the part of the Soviet Government, which might become more apparent at the final stages of the talks'.⁴⁹ In discussion, the Cabinet stated that the atmosphere of crisis had waned as the Soviet Union was now prepared to adjust the timetable. Furthermore, the British Government's response was considered realistic and practical, seeking a 'constructive approach' and recognizing that otherwise the West would face either a major diplomatic defeat resulting from an aggressive policy, or alternatively the risk of a major war. In response, the Prime Minister was sent the

⁴⁷ Cabinet Conclusions 13 (59) Minute 1, 27 Feb. 1959, CAB 128/33.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

following warm message of reassurance by the Home Secretary, R. A. Butler, telling him that it was worthwhile for him to continue his role as a mediator:

Public opinion has registered the difficulties created by your host's public speech and has not missed the stiff tone of the President's Press Conference. There remains, however, a strong desire that you should probe further despite what may appear to be rebuffs - and indeed, the belief that you are the only person who can do it.⁵⁰

After the 'toothache incident', in spite of Cabinet support, Macmillan found the criticisms and the condolences of his friends hard to bear. Eisenhower regarded this incident as 'an affront to the whole free world'.⁵¹ He delivered a tough speech saying that he could see no hope for a successful summit, but the President praised Macmillan for 'his hard and earnest work in a very difficult situation', and said that at the very least even if the Soviets were intransigent, the impressions he would bring back from Moscow would be fresh and that would make the trip worthwhile.⁵² The British Ambassador in Paris reported that de Gaulle thought Khrushchev's behaviour had been 'caddish', but that he did not think the Soviet leader would push the West to the point of war.⁵³

Macmillan recalled in his Memoirs that he was certain Khrushchev had winked at him during their meeting of 25 February, implying that the speech to his constituents had been very 'naughty' but it had been great fun.⁵⁴ Having analysed the speech from all points of view, Macmillan came to the simplest explanation, namely that Khrushchev had prepared the speech long beforehand as a 'sort of Blackpool speech', not realising that the Prime Minister would take it as an insult. He therefore tried to cover his mistakes by taking offence at Macmillan's protest. It is a tribute to the wisdom of the Prime Minister that he saw it in this light. In contrast, it appears that at the Vienna Meeting of May 1961, the more youthful and inexperienced President Kennedy, who was smarting after the Bay of Pigs debacle may have over-reacted to Khrushchev's similarly aggressive and arrogant behaviour, and set in motion a series of moves and countermoves that ultimately led to

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Macmillan, *op. cit.* p. 619.

⁵² President to PM, 25 Feb. 1959, T. 107/59, PREM 11/2690.

⁵³ FO to Reilly, Feb. 27 1959, no. 383, PREM 11/2690.

⁵⁴ Adzhubei told the author that prior to the meeting of the General Assembly in New York of September 1960, when Khrushchev banged his shoe on the table to emphasise his point, before the meeting, he said to the Soviet Delegation, 'let's have some fun today!' It seems that rather childish and boorish behaviour appealed to the Russian leader's sense of humour. Interview, Moscow, 12 Sept. 1991.

the Berlin Wall going up on 13 August, 1961. Philip de Zulueta took the view that Khruschev had 'no precalculative motive' to humiliate Macmillan and that it was just 'his Russian spontaneity; heavy jokes like Peter the Great, and also an element to see if this new Prime Minister who appeared ready to make concessions could be broken down'.⁵⁵ Retrospectively, Sir Patrick Reilly doubted whether it was Soviet tactics to humiliate Macmillan during the course of the visit. Khrushchev knew that he had been wrong to make his electoral speech of 24 February, but the Ambassador pointed out that the first Soviet rule when in the wrong is to attack. He also thought that Khrushchev, who was deeply committed to a peace treaty, had been angered by the proof that he could not divide the British Government from her Allies. Hence, what Macmillan saw as plainly stating the dangers of the current situation, was interpreted by the Soviet Leader as a threat of war. According to the Ambassador, another factor in the equation was that Khrushchev may well have regarded it as a slight when the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary spoke between themselves at their meeting on 26 February, whilst the interpreter was relaying Khrushchev's protest to the Prime Minister.⁵⁶ Baron Thomas Brimelow of Northern Department, who accompanied the Prime Minister to Moscow said that after the Prime Minister's warning, his (Khrushchev's) face went the colour of rather too old leather; he was furious, rocking to and fro, obviously thinking that if he acted it would mean war.⁵⁷ Indeed Khrushchev's famous outburst followed this incident.

Russian reaction to the diplomatic impasse may be gauged from Mikoyan's election speech in Rostov on 27 February, which was reported by Tass.⁵⁸ Mikoyan said that the British Prime Minister had shown initiative and had at first given the impression of seeking solutions acceptable to both sides. This aim, he said, was of course shared by us but later in the course of talks about a peace treaty with Germany and the Berlin question, the British Prime Minister, possibly under the influence of the burden of his connection with the Allies of Britain, had chosen a tougher line. Mikoyan said that the Prime

⁵⁵ Horne, *op. cit.* p 127.

⁵⁶ Reilly's Diary, 9 Mar. 1959, no. 32, FO 371/143439 NS1053/179; also see Burlatsky, *op. cit.* pp. 160-161. The latter emphasises the intensity of Khrushchev's inferiority complex, when he met foreign leaders, including Eisenhower at Camp David. He was extremely sensitive if he thought he was being slighted.

⁵⁷ Witness Seminar on 'British Policy and the Berlin Crisis', *op. cit.* p.138.

⁵⁸ The Times 28 Feb. 1959, p.6.

Minister also met with silence Khrushchev's proposal to conclude a Non-Aggression Treaty, which he had earlier advocated.

He prefaced these remarks with a reminder that recent Western proposals had accepted the participation of East and West Germany at a possible conference, but that the West now seemed to be drawing away from the view that free elections were not the only way of dealing with German reunification. Mikoyan believed that the attempt to substitute a Foreign Ministers Conference for a meeting of Heads of Government was being made to delay the negotiation.⁵⁹ This speech suggests that following Dulles' speech of January 1959, the Soviets had perceived the beginnings of a more flexible Western attitude towards the German question, but Macmillan's positive statement supporting existing Western ideas on Germany had dashed their hopes. Pravda also questioned whether the Prime Minister meant to make a real contribution towards 'detente', or whether his visit was only in connection with the forthcoming election.⁶⁰

The Tour outside Moscow and a Return to Cordiality

Vasily Kuznetsov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, accompanied the Prime Minister and his party to Kiev and fortunately there was no direct contact with Khrushchev for three and a half days. According to Reilly, the sharp reaction both in the UK and abroad seemed to have caused the Soviet Leadership to have second thoughts about their discourteous treatment of the Prime Minister.⁶¹ The Sinhalese Ambassador who saw Khrushchev the next day formed the strong impression that he regretted that he had gone that far, and that same evening Khrushchev's daughter suddenly appeared at the dinner in Kiev held in honour of the British.

The Foreign Secretary had frank exchanges on 27-28 February with Kuznetsov, and told him that they had not been impressed with the Russian Leader's offensive attack on Thursday and 'the childish business of the tooth'.⁶² On 1 March, in an obvious attempt to complete the series of olive branches being offered to their guests, Gromyko and Mikoyan unexpectedly arrived in Leningrad, to meet the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. Frank private talks took place between both sides in an obvious attempt to heal the

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Reilly to FO, 28 Feb. 1959, no.379, FO 371/143437 NS/1053/143.

⁶¹ Reilly's Diary, 9 Mar. 1959, FO 371/143439 NS/1053/179.

⁶² PM Visit, Doc. 17, pp.60-61, CAB 133/293.

wounds.⁶³ Gromyko expressed serious interest in the idea of zones of limitation. He said that the Soviet Government had been in favour of Anthony Eden's suggestion, and would have liked to have discussed it but the British Government had appeared to lose interest so the idea had been dropped. Gromyko said:

They had listened with interest to the Prime Minister's ideas (in the Moscow discussions) and if the British Government would like to go into detail or put forward more concrete suggestions, the Soviet Government would like to hear them and talk about them. Perhaps there was a possibility of agreement here and of doing something useful.⁶⁴

Macmillan said he did not want to leave things as they had been left on Thursday. Gromyko agreed that the talks had been most 'unfortunate' but he pointed out that it was a pure coincidence that Khrushchev had made his electoral speech on 24th February, the day before the Anglo-Soviet discussion. The speech had in fact been planned beforehand. Nevertheless, he said, the Soviet position was firmly held and Mr Khrushchev had said nothing new. As the British were responsible for the change of tone in the talks, Gromyko took the view that what happened next, was up to them. On a more conciliatory note, he emphasised that if Britain and the Soviet Union could reach an understanding they could not have 'better and more trusted friends'. In so far as the next step went, he said that the Soviet side were extremely interested in the Prime Minister's idea of a Foreign Ministers Meeting before a summit. This would be followed by some sort of Commission, and then by another Foreign Ministers Meeting. Gromyko told the Foreign Secretary that they would study the suggestion most carefully and it would be a good thing for the Prime Minister to refer to it during the next session of the next talks.⁶⁵ Once again the British brought up the subject of a possible Agency arrangement with the DDR. The Foreign Secretary said he wanted to be sure that Gromyko correctly understood the morning's conversation between himself and Kuznetsov, during which he had put forward what he termed a tentative idea, which might provide a way out:

One possibility worth exploring if the Soviets wanted to make a Peace Treaty with the DDR was for the Soviet Government to frankly acknowledge our rights, and to say that if it was handing over the obligation to respect them to the DDR it would

⁶³ Private Conversation in Leningrad between Lloyd and Gromyko, 1 Mar.1959, PM Visit, Doc.19, pp. 65-67, CAB 133/293.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.67

⁶⁵ Ibid.

ensure that the DDR would do so. If the Soviets wanted to create a successor State they must see that that State carried out existing obligations.

He was not putting it formally, and he warned that the British could not count on their Allies.⁶⁶ Kuznetsov then made a very significant statement. He said that it should be possible to reconcile the signing of a peace treaty between the Soviet Union and the DDR with the maintenance of Western rights. During the course of this private conversation between Lloyd and Kuznetsov, the British Government came further than in previous diplomatic exchanges to stating that they might be ready to come to some 'de facto' relationship with the DDR. However, later that day Gromyko reneged on his statement and told the Prime Minister he could not understand the Western position because the Western Powers' rights had lapsed and therefore the Soviet Government did not think Western ideas on this point were sound.⁶⁷

Perhaps the most significant Soviet peace offering made in Leningrad was their provision of an advance copy of the Soviet Note of 2 March 1959 (in reply to the British Note of 10 February 1959). Whilst stating a preference for a summit meeting, this Note removed the deadline of 27 May and agreed to a Foreign Ministers Conference. It also suggested that the Foreign Ministers should confine their discussions on a German Peace Treaty and Berlin to a two or three month time period and that the Heads of Government should cover only the topics listed in Khrushchev's speech of 24 February.⁶⁸ Representatives of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the two Germanies should also be present at negotiations on Berlin, the peace treaty and European Security. The decisions at the summit on the peace treaty should be submitted to a peace conference; and others should be implemented by the Foreign Ministers. Reunification would have to be reached by agreement between the two German States, with the Four Powers helping to 'eliminate the present estrangement' in their relations. The Soviet Note also proposed a Non-Aggression Pact with Britain, and attacked both the equipping of the Bundeswehr with rockets and atomic weapons, and the encouragement of militarism in Germany. Taking up the ideas which Macmillan had

⁶⁶ Private conversation between Lloyd and Kuznetsov, in Kiev, 29 Feb. 1959, PM Visit, Secret Annex , Part. 3, Doc. 48 , p.4, CAB. 133/293.

⁶⁷ Private conversation between the PM and Gromyko, 1 Mar. 1959, PM Visit, Part 3, Doc. 50, pp.38-42. CAB133/293.

⁶⁸ SIA 1959-1960, p.20. On 24 Feb. in an election speech in Moscow, Khrushchev called for a summit conference to discuss not only the German Peace Treaty but also a wider range of topics including European Security, disengagement, test bans and nuclear and conventional disarmament.

earlier discussed during the Moscow talks, the Soviet Note called for: the creation of an atom free zone; a zone of disengagement between forces of East and West; and the cessation of tests.⁶⁹ These discussion behind the scenes did much to restore Anglo-Soviet relations and improve understanding of the other side's point of view.

The Anglo-Soviet Talks of 2 March - Soviet Concessions and British Perceptions of Soviet Policy on Berlin Germany and European Security

The final session of talks began on Wednesday 2 March, when Khrushchev made a conciliatory speech starting with the rather endearing comment that his tooth was better as a result of treatment using a newly designed English tooth drill.⁷⁰ Both sides again declared their support for peace by negotiation and Khrushchev praised the Prime Minister for his courage in undertaking the visit which he knew had been a contentious issue amongst the Western Allies. He also emphasised that the Soviet Union, unlike Hitler, had no need for expansion by guns and bayonets. In so doing, he emphasised the revolution which he had effected in Soviet foreign policy through his adoption of the doctrine of peaceful coexistence. Although he said he would be delighted if the Prime Minister were to embrace Marxist-Leninist ideas, 'this was a matter on which each man must decide for himself'.⁷¹

The FO's Brief for the Prime Minister's Visit had asked him to establish the Soviet position on Berlin, Germany and European Security and the extent to which the Soviet Government was prepared to make concessions. These objectives were clarified during this last session. The Soviet Government's decision to agree to a Foreign Ministers Conference, in spite of their obvious preference for a summit conference, was perceived by the West as the most significant Soviet concession. It showed that the Soviets did not want to push the Berlin Crisis to the point of war. The British Ambassador saw this as 'almost certainly a consequence of the visit', which might prove to be its most significant result. This interpretation was wrong.

The recently released Russian documents show that the decision to make this concession for which the Prime Minister subsequently achieved much acclaim was contained in the

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ PM Visit, Doc. 7, pp.38-42, CAB133/293.

⁷¹ Ibid.

MID Proposal agreed by the Central Committee on 16 February, prior to the Prime Minister's Visit. This stated that if they were unsuccessful in achieving their preferred option of a meeting of Heads of Government, the Soviet Government would agree to a preliminary meeting of Foreign Ministers, at which the DDR and the FRG would be present to discuss the occupation status of Berlin and the Free City proposal.⁷² At such a conference the Soviet Government would also emphasise the importance it attached to the questions of European Security and of leaving any future German rapprochement to the discretion of the two existing German states.

During the last session of talks, Khrushchev moved on to another contentious issue.⁷³ Because the Western powers perceived the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958 as an ultimatum, they considered that it had led to the most serious international crisis since the 1948 Berlin Crisis. In response, the US government had stated their readiness to use force if necessary, to maintain Western access to Berlin after the 27 May deadline. The British Government had consistently opposed the use of force when it came up in Allied discussions, since fundamentally they believed that Soviet motivation for their initiative on Berlin was defensive rather than offensive. It was therefore very important from Macmillan's point of view that the Soviet Government should remove the deadline of 27 May and agree to negotiate on the Berlin question. Khrushchev showed his readiness to compromise on this issue. On 1 March, he said:

he could not understand why the West was so rigid. If it were a question of prestige, May 27 had no particular significance. It had been mentioned only because it was six months after the Soviet Note of November 27, it could be June 27 or August 27, or the West could name a date. The Soviet Government were concerned with the substance not the date.⁷⁴

The British Government therefore concluded that although the Soviet Government was determined to make a peace treaty with East Germany, it seemed unlikely that they would do this while there was any prospect of holding a conference or while such a conference was in session.⁷⁵

⁷² AVP RF, Fond 069, Opis 46, Papka 194, Delo 15, pp.115-129.

⁷³ PM's Visit to SU, Meeting in Kremlin, 2 Mar. 1959, Part 1, Doc. 7, p. 39; CAB 133/293.

⁷⁴ Ibid. On 3 Dec. 1958, Khrushchev had assured Senator Humphrey (during his visit to Moscow) that the Soviet Note was not an 'Ultimatum', and that he would consider alternative proposals on Berlin.

⁷⁵ FO to UK Del. NATO, 5 Mar. 1959, no. 343 FO 371/145822 WG 1073/116.

In the last session of talks the Soviet Leader also announced other concessions concerning Berlin, that had already been touched upon during the earlier discussions. He stated that:

when the Soviet government had worked on this problem it seemed to them that if a Peace Treaty were signed with the two German States - it must be the two German States because they were quite separate- it would be reasonable that West Berlin be made a Free City so that it might be able to retain its present social system. As regards the rights of the Western Powers, they were prepared to guarantee the fullest access to Berlin. They were willing to work out with Britain and her Allies a definition of the status of the Free City which would guarantee access.⁷⁶

Although the Prime Minister did not specifically ask Khrushchev whether the Soviet Government would undertake an Agency relationship with the DDR on Western access to Berlin, the above statement shows that the Soviets were anxious to address Western concerns over this question and guarantee any change in the status of West Berlin.

On the question of the recognition of the DDR, the Soviet Leaders made an important concession, which was essential if the British Government was to continue its efforts to achieve a modus vivendi on Berlin. Khrushchev stated that:

if Britain was reluctant to sign a peace treaty with the DDR, some other formula could perhaps be worked out which would avoid the necessity of signing with them. There must be de facto recognition of the frontiers and perhaps this could be done through a third state. He was not worried about de jure.⁷⁷

As a result of their discussions about the all important question of the future of Germany and European Security, the British Delegation formed the strong impression that the Soviet Government were preoccupied by their desire to strengthen their hold in Eastern Europe. 'The point upon which Khrushchev insisted more strongly than any other was that the dividing line between East and West created as a result of war could not be altered.'⁷⁸ The only process by which unification could be brought about was one which recognized the two different social systems and which was based on parity as between the two states, so any question of reunification on Western terms would not be acceptable. Apart from the usual attacks on NATO, the Russian leaders said nothing to suggest that they were in a hurry to try and detach Western Germany from NATO or

⁷⁶ P M Visit to SU, Part 1, Doc. 7, p. 39, CAB 133/293.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Roberts, UK Del. NATO to Lloyd, Statement for NATO Council, 4 March 1959, FO 371/145822 WG 1073/116.

prevent the growth of Western Germany as a nuclear power. The British Government recognized that these goals remained among the principal aims of the Soviet Government, but from what passed in Moscow it appeared that their most pressing need was to maintain their grip on Eastern Europe.⁷⁹

Discussing European Security, Khrushchev seemed to accept the idea of working for the successive cessation of tests, the control of the use of fissile material for weapons purposes and security through areas of limitation of armaments. This was a reference to the Prime Minister's idea of a designated area in Central Europe in which there would be limitation of troops and weapons. The Soviet response to this British initiative was therefore encouraging.

The British Delegation did not react positively to the Soviet Government's offer of an Anglo-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, and did not discuss the Soviet draft in detail. Instead, Macmillan suggested that a Non-Aggression Treaty might well come about between the Warsaw Pact and NATO as a result of negotiations on current problems. The Prime Minister made it quite clear that the British could not contemplate anything which would destroy the Western Alliance just as he would not expect the Soviets to accept anything which would destroy the Warsaw Pact.⁸⁰ Khrushchev accepted this philosophically, and instead offered a joint declaration which would include the renunciation of unilateral action to the prejudice of the other party. However, his suggestion was left in abeyance, to await further discussions.

The Russian Leader also welcomed the Prime Minister's ideas about a continuing negotiation at different levels, including Macmillan's idea of regular summit meetings, to remove any atmosphere of crisis. He was sure that if the West could understand the Soviet position on Berlin and Germany and settle these problems, 'all the other knots could be untied'.⁸¹ Decisions could be taken on these two problems at a Summit Meeting in four or five days, then the Foreign Secretaries could work out the details for Heads of Government to sign.

Perhaps one of the most important outcomes of the visit was the new personal relationship forged between Macmillan and Khrushchev which was essential to the Prime

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Reilly to FO, 3 March, 1959, no. 422, PREM 11/2690.

⁸¹ PM Visit to Moscow, 2 Mar. 1959, Part I, Doc. 7, p. 41, CAB 133/293.

Minister's hopes of assuming a mediatory role in East-West relations. At a one-to-one meeting on the last morning of his visit, the Prime Minister suggested to Khrushchev that they should conduct a private correspondence as problems arose in the future.⁸² This idea was warmly received by the Khrushchev who, like Macmillan, valued personal relationships. In their future attempts to achieve detente both leaders exchanged letters up to, and beyond the disastrous Paris Summit Conference of May 1960, when the Soviet leader pleaded with Macmillan to intervene with the Americans to save the Paris Summit. The Anglo-Soviet Communiqué issued at the end of the visit ranged over a number of topics concerning Anglo-Soviet relations.⁸³ It acknowledged the value of the discussions which had created a better understanding of the respective views of the two Governments. The two leaders stated that whilst acknowledging that they were unable to agree about the juridical and political problems involved, they agreed that 'a basis for the settlement of the differences over Berlin and Germany should be sought in negotiation'. Possibly, the most important clause in the communiqué was one relating to European Security: Agreement was expressed that 'a study could usefully be made of the possibilities of increasing security by some method of limitation of forces and weapons, both conventional and nuclear, in an agreed area of Europe; coupled with an appropriate system of inspection'. As the British Government had predicted, the Soviets were extremely interested in their ideas about a zone of controlled armaments in Central Europe.

Initial Allied opinions of the value of the Prime Minister's visit were favourable. Sir Patrick Reilly told Con O'Neill, Superintending Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office that his colleagues, the other Western Ambassadors in Moscow, had thought the visit 'well worthwhile' and that the Prime Minister's demeanour had been 'admirable'.⁸⁴ Most importantly, the US Ambassador in Moscow, Llewelyn Thompson, who had expressed reservations before and during the early stages of the visit reported to Washington, that he thought that on balance it had been justified by results. The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary had had a 'considerable and salutary effect' on Khrushchev and his colleagues, who would have learned much from the meetings.

⁸² This exchange was not in the official record but emerged in a letter from Bishop, PPS to the PM to Laskey, Northern Dept. Mar. 4 1959, PREM 11/2690.

⁸³ Anglo-Soviet Communiqué, 3 Mar. 1959, PREM 11/2690.

⁸⁴ Letter, Reilly to O'Neill, 9 Mar. 1959, PREM 11/2690.

Thompson's one regret was that the Prime Minister had pursued the Non-Aggression Pact, so giving away at this stage of the game, the card of accepting some form of disengagement or thinning out.⁸⁵ In retrospect, Sir Patrick Reilly pointed out that in those days it was generally believed the public would vote for anybody who was seen to make an effort to come to terms with the Russians. 'But what was remarkable, was the truly dramatic effect that HM's obvious sincerity and his hatred of war, his memories of 1914-1918, had in defusing what was an undoubtedly a dangerous situation over Berlin. I think that this was Macmillan's greatest contribution with the Russians, and undoubtedly had its effect over the negotiations with Berlin later.'⁸⁶

The Impact of the Prime Minister's Visit on British Public Opinion, and Government Policy

After ten exhausting and hazardous days the Prime Minister arrived back at London Airport to face intense media interest in his visit to the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister's journey to Moscow, the first visit of a Western Statesmen to the Soviet Union since the War was perceived as highly successful and had been the subject of banner headlines throughout. The Times commented that the visit had been worthwhile, as the danger of a flare up over Berlin had been reduced.⁸⁷ Not only had the Soviet Government postponed the date of 27 May as the deadline for the Soviet handover of Berlin communications with the West to the East German Government, but they had also agreed to a Foreign Ministers Conference which would work for two or three months beginning in April. The paper also welcomed the idea that there should be a study of a limitation zone for forces and weapons, which they saw as a variant of the Rapacki Plan. This had been the subject of several long articles in the paper during the previous months. The paper predicted that although at a future conference the Russians might start off with a maximalist position, Khrushchev might be prepared to make concessions.⁸⁸ The Daily Telegraph made another most important point: that whatever the outcome, the Prime Minister's visit had provided a unique opportunity for getting to know how Khrushchev's

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ PM's Diary, cited in Horne, op. cit. p.128.

⁸⁷ The Times 4 Mar. 1959.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

mind worked, and this in itself was sufficient reward for the mental and physical strain of the past ten days.⁸⁹

Reaction to the Prime Minister's visit was equally favourable in the House of Commons, where the Prime Minister, entering with Winston Churchill, received a standing ovation from the Conservative Party.⁹⁰ For the Opposition, Gaitskell generously said 'this side of the House would not wish to put anything in the way of an initiative towards peace on behalf of the British Government'. Denis Healey welcomed what he saw as a belated agreement to a study of a zone of limitation of forces and weapons in Europe, and in view of the current crisis, pressed for the notion of disengagement to be taken up by both Governments.⁹¹

The impact of Macmillan's visit on Government policy was highly significant. In terms of British perceptions of Soviet Foreign Policy, one of the most useful results of the visit, as Eisenhower acknowledged, was the opportunity to study the Soviet leadership, and particularly Khrushchev at close quarters. It is evident from his Memoirs and from Foreign Office accounts of his visit that the Prime Minister developed almost a paternal feeling of affection for Khrushchev, who in spite all his faults and crudities, still gave the impression of an excitable, petulant, occasionally impossible, but not unlovable extrovert. Sir Patrick Reilly agreed that Khrushchev completely dominated his colleagues and that Mikoyan was in a class by himself as the second personage in the regime. By contrast Gromyko was no more than a 'highly competent official'. Khrushchev's extraordinary behaviour, in the Ambassador's opinion, stemmed from a 'paradoxical combination of acute consciousness of power with an inferiority complex that still went deep'.⁹² He was therefore extremely sensitive to imagined slights and anything which could be construed as a threat, such as the warning over Berlin. On the other hand, he responded to careful and sympathetic handling and to proof of an attempt to understand the Soviet point of view, especially on matters touching on Soviet security. Given the complexities of Khrushchev's character, Macmillan's handling both of the Soviet Leader, and of a difficult situation which threatened to become a major diplomatic incident was, by any standards admirable.

⁸⁹ The Daily Telegraph 4 Mar. 1959, p.1.

⁹⁰ Horne, op. cit .p.129.

⁹¹ The Guardian, 5 Mar. 1959, p.1.

⁹² Reilly's Diary, 9 Mar. 1959, FO 371/143439 NS/1053/179.

Macmillan prefaced his statement to the Cabinet on 4 March 1959, with a remark obviously aimed at refuting any potential criticism of his initiative. He said 'we (Britain) must not get into the position we got into at Munich, I will be no Mr. Chamberlain. We must therefore talk to ourselves quite boldly about preparations for war and see what de Gaulle and Adenauer say in response. What would be the worst thing of all for the West would be a humiliating climbdown after talking big'.⁹³

The Prime Minister then told the Cabinet that the 'most significant' outcome of his discussions was that the atmosphere of crisis which had been developing in relation to the date of 27 May had been reduced, and the Soviet Government had been prepared to adjust the timetable. As regards the long term future of Germany, the Soviets considered it a matter to be settled by the two Germanies, and it was evident that they favoured the indefinite partition of the country, though they were prepared to contemplate some kind of confederation of the two parts. The Soviets were also concerned to 'avoid a major war' which they recognized would be as disastrous for themselves as for the Western Powers. However they were determined to go forward with their policy of concluding a peace treaty with Germany.⁹⁴

The Prime Minister then summarised the policy he considered HMG should pursue in relation to the Berlin Crisis, emphasising the pressing need to convert Britain's Allies to a more conciliatory stance. He said:-

Whilst publicly maintaining the solidarity of the Western position we should seek to convince our Allies of the wisdom of making a realistic response to the Soviet willingness to negotiate. If the Western Powers were not prepared to go some way to meet the Soviet Union, they would face in the near future either a major diplomatic defeat as the result of adopting an aggressive policy which in the event they would be unable to sustain or the risk of a major war as a result of following that policy to its logical conclusion. Our Allies might be reluctant to recognize the need for a more constructive approach towards the problem of Berlin and might be liable to criticize us for appearing to be ready to yield to Soviet intransigence. Nevertheless it would be prudent that we should recognize the Soviet determination to regularize the Soviet position in Berlin, with some consequential adjustment in the status of Berlin and we should seek to extract the maximum advantage from the willingness of the Soviet leader to negotiate that adjustment.⁹⁵

⁹³ Macmillan's Diary, in Horne, op. cit. p. 128.

⁹⁴ Cabinet Conclusions 14 (59) Minute 1, 4 Mar. 1959, CAB 128/33.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

In the ensuing Cabinet discussion, the main concern was the disturbing reports recently received from Washington, which revealed the increasing hostility of the US towards the Soviet Union, and the US propensity to resort to force. However, as a result of the withdrawal of the deadline, the Cabinet considered that there was less risk that the US would take drastic action within the next few weeks to ‘nullify the tactical advantage which had been secured by the Prime Minister’s visit to Moscow’. The meeting approved the Prime Minister’s strategy of going to see President de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer before going to Washington, as it was important not to give the French and Germans any grounds for thinking a separate deal would be negotiated with the US.⁹⁶

The Prime Minister’s statement to the Cabinet reveals that his visit had strengthened his resolve to act as mediator between East and West in attempting to achieve a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union on the Berlin Crisis. Furthermore, he was determined to maintain the continuity of British Foreign Policy towards the crisis over Berlin. In the words of Sir Bernard Ledwidge, who was political advisor in West Berlin from 1956-1961, the British Government considered:

It was better to negotiate than fight, that we couldn’t desert West Berlin, that the West Berliners’ way of life must not be changed, but that to recognise the DDR which was probably Khrushchev’s objective, was a small price to pay for protecting West Berlin.⁹⁷

The Soviet View on the Moscow Talks with the Prime Minister

Until this point in time, it has only been possible to speculate on the Soviet view of the Anglo-Soviet discussions in Moscow. However, the opening of the Foreign Ministry Archive has facilitated for the first time an analysis of Soviet perceptions and opinions of the visit. The Foreign Ministry (MID) Report to the Communist Parties of the World, approved by the Central Committee, dated 22 July 1959, provides a comprehensive evaluation of the discussions.⁹⁸ The Soviet Government, the Report stated, welcomed the

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Statement by Sir Bernard Ledwidge, at a Witness Seminar at Kings’ College, p.129, op. cit. He was discussing the content of FO Memorandum 8113, 15 Nov. 1958, which he said, had received the approval of the Prime Minister. It faced vociferous opposition from Britain’s allies.

⁹⁸ Report to the Communist Parties of the World on the ‘Talks between the Prime Minister and Khrushchev’ in Feb.-Mar. 1959, 22 July, 1959, AVP RF, Fond 069, Opis 46, Papka 154, Delo 15, pp. 115-129.

British Prime Minister to the Soviet Union because it attached great importance to any meeting which pursued mutual understanding on international problems. It noted the improvised nature of the visit and said that Macmillan continually thanked them during his time in Moscow for replying so quickly to his request for an invitation to the Soviet Union.

This Report provides interesting insights into Soviet perceptions of British Policy. In the first place the MID considered that Mikoyan's visit to the US in January 1959, compelled the Prime Minister to decide on a visit to the Soviet Union.⁹⁹ Perhaps one can detect here a Soviet appreciation of British fears that their influence would be minimised if East-West relations were mainly conducted on a bilateral basis between the US and the Soviet Union, leaving Britain out in the cold. Another interesting comment was that Britain hoped to improve Anglo-Soviet relations because she wanted to end the isolation brought about by the establishment of the new Franco-German Axis. However the Soviet Government realised that the Prime Minister did not intend to engage in official negotiations, as he understood that he could not come to any agreement without the permission of his Allies.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless important discussions on international questions had been anticipated whilst the Prime Minister was in the Soviet Union.

During the initial exchange of views, the Soviet Government thought the Prime Minister displayed a realistic understanding of the Soviet Government's position, and obviously considered it significant that Macmillan repeatedly stated that problems should be solved by negotiations between the parties concerned.¹⁰¹ When Khrushchev introduced the issues of Berlin and Germany, Macmillan and Selwyn Lloyd showed great interest, and obviously wanted to delve into the true position of the Soviet Union on these subjects, and to ascertain whether the Soviet Union would make any concessions or new proposals. Khrushchev then reaffirmed Soviet determination to end the occupation regime, establish a Free City and sign a peace treaty, but he also reassured the British that the 27 May deadline was not an ultimatum.¹⁰²

The Report explained why the Soviet Government thought the talks, which had been conducted in a friendly atmosphere up to this point had become confrontational. During

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

the early exchanges on Germany and above all on the Berlin question, Macmillan had demonstrated his ‘well known flexibility’. But during the course of the meeting of 25 February, before the Prime Minister’s departure for Kiev, Macmillan informed the Soviets that it was the firm purpose of the Western Powers to maintain their rights in West Berlin, and he emphasised that NATO members were at one on this point. Then Macmillan told Khrushchev that if the Soviet Union were to carry out their proposed measures, the West would match the Soviet Union in using ‘indefinable force’.¹⁰³ The Soviets considered Macmillan spoke with the agreement of the US, and on behalf of the Western Powers so they reacted very strongly to what they clearly perceived as the Prime Minister’s resort to threats.

There was clearly an expectation on the Soviet side that Macmillan might bring some new proposals to Moscow, whereas he had merely repeated Western statements on the desirability of a Foreign Ministers Conference, and a preliminary review of the German question. Macmillan’s attempts to pressurise the Soviet Union had therefore influenced the first phase of talks, and continued to do so during the meeting of 26 February, when it was considered that Macmillan had adopted a similarly provocative attitude. According to the Report, the Soviet side rejected the Prime Minister’s attempts to exert pressure on the Soviet Union and condemned both his attempts to defend Adenauer and the Shah of Iran, and his pledges of loyalty to his Allies. The Soviet Government compared the present situation to that of 1939, which the British considered an inflammatory statement. The Report admitted that the change in atmosphere of the talks on 25 and 26 February was partly due to Khrushchev’s electoral speech which had criticized the Western position and emphasised the validity of the Soviet stance on Germany. In the Soviet view, the meeting of 25 February had been most ‘unfortunate’; what had particularly upset Khrushchev was that the Prime Minister had held a conversation with the Foreign Secretary, whilst his speech was being translated, and he saw this as ‘deliberately offensive’. He had even thought of leaving the meeting but had decided against this.¹⁰⁴ The Soviets considered that the reason why the atmosphere improved for the last session of the talks was due to a change of heart by the Prime Minister. During his tour outside

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid; see also, private conversation between Lloyd and Gromyko. 1 March, 1995, P M’s Visit, Part 1, Doc. 21, p. 76, PREM 11/2690.

Moscow Macmillan had 'realized that the tone he had adopted would not bring the required results and would even result in the breakdown of the talks, and this had not entered into his calculations'. He then changed tactics and on the journey back from Leningrad, Macmillan continuously expressed the wish that they should return to the friendly atmosphere that characterised the first three or four discussions with Khrushchev.¹⁰⁵ During the course of the ensuing discussions Macmillan strove to avoid any deterioration in the situation and, judging by his statements, he showed a deep understanding of the Soviet position. He promised to discuss the Soviet proposals with his Allies. In other statements, he also adopted a more realistic attitude by appreciating the Soviet position on the cessation of nuclear tests and on the summoning of a summit conference, and by admitting that it was necessary to understand the position of both sides, in order to return to the friendly spirit of the first meetings and to resolve questions through discussion.¹⁰⁶ The Soviet side noted:

He gave us to understand that on the German question and particularly on Berlin, the British would permit any solution which would reconcile the signing of the Peace Treaty with the DDR with the securing of the rights of the Western Powers in West Berlin. Reacting to this, and taking into account considerations of prestige, the Soviet side had proposed a compromise which would allow symbolic forces from the Four Powers to stay in Berlin during the transitional period, not as occupation forces but on a new basis.¹⁰⁷

On another key question the Report emphasised that only a summit conference possessing plenipotentiary power and responsibility for peace in the world could purposefully examine and resolve the most important international problems, particularly the problems of a German peace treaty, the Berlin question, and the cessation of nuclear tests and the prohibition of these weapons.¹⁰⁸

In his colourful metaphorical style, Khrushchev told the British that they could reach an understanding leading to a resolution of the German problem at a summit conference so that 'all the existing knots which ensure the continuance of the Cold War could be untied.' According to the Report, Macmillan realised the necessity for a summit conference, and put forward an interesting idea about the possibility of summoning every

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

six months summits, which would alternate with meetings of Foreign Ministers briefed to examine one or two specific problems in each sphere. The Report noted that 'The Soviet side expressed a positive response towards Macmillan's idea of regular meetings of the Great Powers and towards this method of holding summits'.¹⁰⁹

The section of the Report dealing with disarmament stated that 'Macmillan and Lloyd in a general way broached the question of a zone of disengagement in Europe, and agreement was reached that a study should be made of this question'. Another question of great interest to the Soviets was the possibility of a Non-Aggression Pact with Britain, but according to the Report, Macmillan was evasive about discussing this because of clause two which stated that neither country should allow the use of their territory for foreign bases. The Soviets considered that this was because the British did not want to forfeit the trust of their Allies.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

The MID Report is of great interest in that it reveals Soviet perceptions of British Policy during the visit, and emphasises the sensitivity of Khrushchev to any perceived attempt by any Western Power to threaten, humiliate or treat the Soviet Union as an inferior power.¹¹¹ More importantly, it pinpoints those British ideas which the Soviet Government thought were significant regarding the Berlin Crisis, and provides further evidence that a modus vivendi was possible. First, the MID Report recognised that the British Government appeared ready to consider a 'readjustment' of the status of Berlin, based on reconciling the signing of the peace treaty with the DDR with the securing of the rights of the Western Powers in Berlin. In turn, the Soviet side was prepared to guarantee the freedom of the citizens and free Western access to the City of Berlin which were the two cardinal principles underpinning Western policy. Thus, although it was clear that the main Soviet aim was to end the occupation regime, it was still open to the British Government to explore the possibility of the Agency Principle as the basis of a

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Burlatsky, one of Khrushchev's advisors, mentions the crucial symbolic importance for the Soviet leader of Western recognition of the political parity of the Soviet Union with the US. See Burlatsky op. cit. pp.160-161.

sustainable, future relationship with the DDR. This would not involve de jure recognition of the DDR.

Second, both the above Report, and more particularly, the MID's Proposals for the Talks, agreed by the Central Committee on 16 February, show that in 1959, the Soviets were extremely interested in a zone of disengagement in Central Europe, based on the Eden proposal of 1955.¹¹² Macmillan's support for such a zone was based on Sir Gladwyn Jebb's Report, and envisaged that nuclear weapons would be banned in the zone. This proposal addressed the problem of the potential nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr, the main Soviet security fear. Macmillan hoped that at a future summit, this concession might encourage the Russians to be more accommodating on Berlin.

Finally, both sides supported the idea of a summit or a series of summits to negotiate on East-West problems and disarmament. A most important component of Khrushchev's conception of peaceful coexistence was the development of a new personal relationship between himself and Western statesmen on the basis of parity of esteem. Arguably, the new relationship established between the two leaders, and what the Soviets termed as British 'flexibility', would facilitate Macmillan's mediatory role in future negotiations on an East-West modus vivendi. The new Soviet evidence suggests that Macmillan's visit to the Soviet Union, far from being an unnecessary and futile appeasement of the Russians which was rebuffed by Khrushchev in his humiliating 'toothache incident', was vital to the Western Alliance. It facilitated an on-going exploration of Soviet motivation and policy on Germany, Berlin and European Security, and the subsequent planning of the Western position for the forthcoming Geneva Conference.

¹¹² See pp.67-68.

Chapter Four

Britain Seeks to Convert her Allies to the Macmillan Initiative January-May 1959

On his return from Moscow, Macmillan organised visits to Paris, Bonn and Washington in order to brief his Allies on his visit to the Soviet Union. He informed his Cabinet on 4 March that he hoped to 'convince his (Britain's) Allies of the wisdom of making a realistic response to the Soviet willingness to negotiate'.¹ His modus vivendi with the Russians would be based on: the status quo on the German question; an adjustment to the status quo on Berlin (on the assumption that Allied rights in West Berlin and access to the city were guaranteed by the Russians); and an area of thinning out of forces and weapons in Central Europe. The Prime Minister had a formidable task in front of him. As a result of his visit to Moscow, his partners had accused him of perfidy and appeasement and they were obviously irritated both by his solo diplomacy, and his ill disguised attempts to assume leadership of the Western Alliance. However, with the Foreign Ministers Conference looming, and the ever present threat of the 27 May Soviet deadline for a peace treaty hanging over them, it was essential for the Allies to present a united front in East-West negotiations. Macmillan hoped he could convert the Americans to his ideas, and they in turn would exert pressure on the French and Germans to compromise.

Meanwhile, from January-May 1959, inter-Allied negotiations on Berlin at Foreign Minister, Ambassadorial and official level, were taking place at the Four Power Working Group Meetings in Washington, Paris and London, respectively, and at the Foreign Ministers Meetings of 31 March, and 29 April 1959. The main questions on the agenda were the contentious issues of contingency planning for Berlin and the preparation of the Western position ready for negotiations with the Russians at a forthcoming Foreign Ministers Conference.

This Chapter will analyse the Prime Minister's visits to Paris, Bonn and Washington in March 1959 and assess whether he was successful in converting his partners to his initiative. It will then discuss the issue of contingency planning, and the contribution of the British delegation to the Four Power Working Group discussions on Berlin. In so

¹ Cabinet Conclusions 14 (C59) Minute 1, 4 Mar. 1959, CAB 128/33.

doing, it will seek to determine to what extent the British Government's ideas on an Interim Agreement for Berlin were incorporated in the Western position prior to the Geneva Conference, and it will evaluate the role of the Prime Minister in this process.

The Prime Minister's Visits to Paris, Bonn and Washington in March 1959

Before analysing Britain's attitude towards her Allied partners with particular reference to the Berlin question, it is pertinent to examine the British Government's long term perceptions of the relative importance of her Allies.² In 1959, a Foreign Office Steering Committee considered that the Anglo-US relationship 'was extremely good and that Britain had extended and consolidated her position as first and most reliable ally of the US'. By contrast, relations between Britain and her European Allies were going through a 'stormy period' as de Gaulle was determined to block Britain's entry into the European Community, and it appeared that Adenauer was supporting France's anti-British stance. However, the report suggested that apart from economic considerations, Britain could afford to be on 'indifferent terms' with France and Germany and remain outside the intimacy of the Common Market countries, provided that 'America attached paramount importance to her relations with Britain'.³ The analysis predicted that Anglo-American cooperation might be strained if France and Germany were at one with the US in preferring rigidity rather than a flexible approach on the Berlin question, and that the British position might deteriorate if their Allies' counsels were preferred. Germany might even supplant Britain as America's main ally if things went wrong, especially as the Americans were unsympathetic to Britain's negative attitude to European integration. Such was the delicate task facing the Prime Minister in trying to convince his Allies of the viability of his initiative.

On 8 March, prior to his visits, the Prime Minister summoned a large party to Chequers, including the Foreign Secretary and his chief advisors, for a 'tremendous discussion' on the outcome of his visit to Moscow.⁴ There was a general consensus that if there was neither a compromise nor a climb down by the Russians, Britain would be faced with the 'alternative of war or if they came near to war but decide not to have one, a diplomatic

² Working Group on Anglo-American Cooperation, 4 June 1959, PUS Planning ZP1/25/G, FO 371/143671.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Macmillan, Riding p.636.

defeat coupled sooner or later with the loss of Berlin.' The Prime Minister therefore considered 'it would be wrong to take the vital decisions except after a meeting of Heads of Government'. He said the agenda for a summit should be a broad one based on a rewording of the proposal for the Heads of Government meeting in the Soviet Note of 2 March, namely 'the problems connected with the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and the question of Berlin'.⁵

The Prime Minister's Visit to Paris on 10 March, 1959

Macmillan's bridge-building visits to Paris and Bonn began on 10 March, against a backcloth of Franco-German rapprochement following the Bad Kreuznach meeting of the French President and the Chancellor on 27 November 1958.⁶ Obsessed by his nightmare that a weak Britain would come to an accommodation with Khrushchev involving some sort of recognition of the hated East German puppet regime, the Chancellor had made an unscheduled visit to Paris on 4 March to discuss his suspicions about Britain and enlist President de Gaulle's support for his Government's attitude on the Berlin question.⁷ According to the French, the Chancellor was preoccupied with the seriousness of the Berlin situation, particularly as German opinion was so divided. Von Brentano, the German Foreign Minister had adopted a more realistic attitude on reunification, recognising that this subject could not dominate discussion at the forthcoming East-West negotiations. The Germans feared that the Allies might succumb, and grant de jure recognition to the DDR and give their support to plans for a zone of disengagement.⁸ Opening with his impressions of his visit to Moscow, the Prime Minister told the French that he believed that the Soviets wanted negotiations and some form of settlement rather than war over Berlin.⁹ In this spirit they had put forward a number of conciliatory points:

⁵ Lloyd to Caccia, 9 Mar. 1959, FO 371/145824 WG/1073/125.

⁶ See H. Tint, French Foreign Policy since the Second World War. (London, 1972) pp. 75-79; and J. Lacouture, De Gaulle: The Ruler, 1945-1970, (London, 1992), p.337. De Gaulle wanted a Three Power Directory of NATO. On 15 Mar. just after Adenauer and Macmillan's visits to Paris, the French withdrew his forces from NATO, and 'dumbfounded the Chancellor who saw the gesture as 'extravagant' and 'disjunctive'.

⁷ On 10 Mar. 1959, the French Government gave the British Government a frank account of these Franco-German discussions. See FO Report, 'The Visit of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary to Paris', 9-10 Mar. 1959'. Doc.2 pp.7-8, CAB 133/294.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ PM Visit Paris, 9-10 Mar. 1959, Doc. 2, pp.2-3, CAB 133/294. This report was only released by the PRO in 1995.

that de jure recognition of the DDR was not necessary, only de facto recognition through an intermediary, presumably Khrushchev himself; that both parts of Germany could maintain their existing alliance systems for the time being; and that the Soviet Government was interested in the British proposal for a zone of 'thinning out' of forces. Selwyn Lloyd emphasised that neither he nor the Prime Minister had discussed the idea of a demilitarised Germany which, he said, was anathema to HMG.¹⁰

During the course of the Anglo-French discussions it became apparent that there was a meeting of minds on the German question, as both powers supported the maintenance of the status quo, and considered that reunification of Germany through free elections was neither feasible nor advisable, though they considered that this should not be admitted in public.¹¹ It was also agreed that increased cooperation and contacts between the two Germanies was desirable. The French President said he had impressed on Adenauer that this was the only way progress could be made, and that there could be no question of any revision of the existing status quo on the borders of Germany. Adenauer had apparently agreed with his last point.

On other questions, there were differences of emphasis rather than substance.¹² The Prime Minister, Michel Debré argued that he could not foresee the British Government imposing contingency plans involving the use of force, unless the Western Allies had first negotiated with the Russians at a summit. De Gaulle agreed 'that if the Russians substituted the DDR for themselves on the routes to Berlin that was not important, the main thing was that no one had the right to stop the Western Powers from going to Berlin'. He believed the only event which would justify war would be an actual physical blockade. Macmillan asked the General point blank whether he had said this to Adenauer and 'he admitted he had not, it would depress him'. The two leaders agreed that a study should be made of the practical measures which should be taken in the event of a blockade. De Gaulle said he was not opposed to a summit in principle, but like the Americans did not think it wise to name a specific date prior to the Foreign Ministers Conference.¹³

¹⁰ Ibid. pp.2-7.

¹¹ Ibid. pp.8-12 and pp.18-24.

¹² Ibid. pp. 18-24.

¹³ Ibid.

Moving on to the Berlin question, Macmillan argued for a new status for Berlin, on the premise that existing Western rights were based on conquest. Allied rights would be brought up to date and a new statute incorporating existing Allied rights would be substituted. The Prime Minister preferred this option to acknowledging the East Germans as agents of the Soviets, as this would cause difficulties for Adenauer.¹⁴ Debré then made a statement which suggested the French might be amenable to compromising over an adjustment of the status quo in West Berlin:

he envisaged the possibility of the modification of our position, including reduction of the Berlin garrison; nor did he think that the Russians need always be the custodian of our rights. The experts should study whether it was better to keep existing rights or to negotiate a new status. We should, however, not lightly change the legal basis of our position, but should carefully discuss details and modifications.¹⁵

Couvé de Murville, the French Foreign Minister suggested some conciliatory gestures such as cutting down on Western espionage and propaganda activities in West Berlin, limiting emigration from Eastern Germany through Berlin, and accepting the DDR as agents.

Turning to the reference in the Anglo-Soviet Communiqué to a zone of 'thinning out' in Central Europe, the Foreign Secretary emphasised that he had told the Russians that British support for a zone of 'thinning out' did not mean the British Government supported a neutral or denuclearised area, which would leave a vacuum in Central Europe. HMG felt that three requirements had to be met in any arrangement. First, the balance of military advantage between the two sides must not be disturbed; second, such a zone should not lead to the break up of NATO; and third it must not lead to the withdrawal of US ground forces from Europe.¹⁶

On 11 March, the Prime Minister told his Cabinet that although the French might want to put some of the odium on to the British, they shared their point of view.¹⁷ The French Government preferred that the problem of the status of Berlin should be dealt with on the basis of the existing rights of the Western Governments as occupying Powers; an

¹⁴ PM Visit, Paris, 9-10 Mar. Doc.5, p.21, CAB 133/294. Macmillan was wary about supporting the Agency Theory, as he feared Adenauer's reaction.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. Doc.5, p.23.

¹⁷ Macmillan, *op. cit.* p.639.

approach which implied that the Western position on Berlin would remain substantially unchanged.¹⁸ However the Prime Minister hoped that eventually the French Government might accept the fact that the Western Powers could not indefinitely expect to base their rights in West Berlin as the victors of war and should be prepared to negotiate a new status for West Berlin. He outlined to the Cabinet his objective regarding Berlin:

to negotiate a settlement on Berlin, based on some modification of the Soviet 'Free City' proposal designed to assure the continued freedom of West Berlin. It might be necessary to describe such a settlement as interim in the sense that it would need to be adjusted in the event of the reunification of Germany. But it would be implicit in a settlement of this kind that the West admitted the division of Germany as a fact which was likely to endure for a long period ahead. It was probably to our own advantage that Germany should remain divided; and the French government were equally convinced of the folly of precipitating a general war for the sake of a reunification of German territory'. As public opinion in West Germany was sensitive on this issue; it would be important so to frame an interim settlement that it did not appear to imply that all hope of eventual reunification must be abandoned. For this purpose various possible forms and methods of federal relationship between West and East Germany might be considered, provided that the attributes of full sovereignty were withheld from any all-German body in the creation of which free elections had not played a part. Other possibilities of enlarging relations and dealings between the two territories might be explored.¹⁹

The Cabinet supported the Prime Minister's general approach, and considered it unwise to seek negotiation of a settlement through the agency of the UN where Britain had insufficient support. However, once a settlement had been reached, the UN could act as guarantors of the City of Berlin. The government had thus laid down its future policy on Berlin. The vital question now was whether the Germans and the Americans would support the initiative.

The Prime Minister's Visit to Bonn 12-13 March 1959

On 12 March the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary arrived in Bonn, well aware that Anglo-German relations had reached an all time low. Relations between the two countries had been strained since the beginning of 1958, when the Chancellor had opposed Macmillan's pragmatic attempts to arrange an East-West summit conference.

¹⁸ Cabinet Conclusions 16 (59), Minute 5, 11 Mar. 1958, CAB 128/33.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Adenauer had particularly disliked Premier Nikolai Bulganin's proposals for the future of Germany, and the Rapacki Pact proposal for an atom free zone in Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. He believed that such proposals would discriminate against the Federal Republic and mean the end of NATO and the US presence in Germany.²⁰ Any plans for limited disarmament which threatened the military or territorial sovereignty of West Germany, such as the Prime Minister's plan for a 'thinning out zone,' were anathema to the Chancellor. Instead, Adenauer supported general disarmament which would not involve discrimination against West Germany, and which was only a long term Allied goal.

In the Autumn of 1958, with the breakdown of negotiations between the nascent European Community and the Free Trade Area, and Bonn's realisation that the British Government might be prepared to give de facto recognition to the DDR, Anglo-German relations deteriorated even further.²¹ Anti-British feeling in Bonn intensified after the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow, which Adenauer perceived as shameless and dangerous electioneering in advance of the general election in the Autumn of 1959. There was also a fundamental clash of interest between the outlook of the two leaders. Macmillan thought Adenauer might threaten any chance of detente with the Soviet Union. Adenauer, for his part, supported the Dulles line of negotiating only from a position of strength, and thought Macmillan was prepared to 'sell out' on Germany's vital interests. The Prime Minister doubted the Chancellor's attachment to German Reunification which produced:

a certain air of unreality because unless you put as Item One in any agenda the Reunification of Germany either amongst ourselves or with the Russians - you would be thought to have betrayed the cause. On the other hand it was quite clear that the Russians were not going to give up the defensive glacis they had built up by seizing Poland and East Germany, certainly not while they suffered from nuclear inequality.²²

Undoubtedly the personal animosity between the two leaders exacerbated basic political and strategic factors. When they first met in 1954, Macmillan had been fascinated by the

²⁰ See NSA Essay, Burr, op. cit. p.34. Eisenhower believed the US controlled stockpile system could meet West German defence demands and bind her into NATO, thereby preventing her from emerging as an independent nuclear power.

²¹ See Horne, op. cit. pp.130-136; and C.Wighton, Adenauer: Democratic Dictator (London, 1963) pp.276-279 for accounts of the strained state of Anglo-German relations.

²² Horne, op. cit. p.134. During their discussions Adenauer suggested to the PM that there could be a five year moratorium on reunification but this idea was not developed in the future.

Chancellor's long rambling discourses on German history but now he soon became bored by these monologues. During the course of 1959, though he still admired Adenauer as a man of great courage, he increasingly saw him as an artful and 'false and cantankerous old man' who was now 'half crazy'. Macmillan's personal prejudices were strengthened, as Germany recovered and became increasingly competitive in world markets.²³ The Chancellor's anti-British prejudices dated back to the time of the Allied occupation, when he had been dismissed from the position of Burgermeister of Cologne by a minor British official on the grounds of incompetence. At that time he had remarked to a journalist that he had three chief dislikes, the Russians, the Prussians and the British! Such was the unpromising background to the Prime Minister's visit to Bonn.

The Anglo-German Conference in Bonn, on 12 March, was at times acrimonious with Adenauer rebutting Macmillan's claim that relations were very good, and attributing the deterioration in relations to inflammatory statements in the British Press about the role of the Krupp family in Germany.²⁴ When the discussion moved on to trade relations, Macmillan became more vehement, emphasising that he was astonished by the forbearance of the British people, especially as they had been 'knocked about by the Six'. The Prime Minister made the point that in contrast to the French, who were withdrawing from NATO and had no troops in the Federal Republic, the UK maintained four divisions in Germany and paid £30 million a year for them. Macmillan said he saw himself as a strong European, but he had to face a strong isolationist movement, and in these circumstances people in Britain were inclined to feel that a war over Berlin would not be a very good result.

The Foreign Secretary, anxious to conciliate Adenauer, emphasised that Britain had not betrayed her Allies, and gave a full account of what had happened in Moscow. In response, the Chancellor launched into a long and pessimistic speech on Russia in general and on the future of Europe.²⁵ In contrast to the British view that Soviet aims were defensive, he asserted that Khrushchev's objectives on Berlin were to gain economic and

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ FO Report, 'The Prime Minister's Visit to Bonn, 12-13 Mar. 1959', Doc.3, pp.10-11, CAB 133/295, released to the PRO in December, 1995.

²⁵ Macmillan, op. cit. p. 639; see Doc.1, p.4, CAB 133/295.

political access to Western Europe, and use it as a launching pad to destroy the US without recourse to war.²⁶

Adenauer described Macmillan's idea of a 'zone of thinning out' as creating a 'sensation' in Germany France and Italy.²⁷ He argued that only by continuing with US planned deliveries of 120 storehouses for nuclear weapons by 1962 could the FRG stave off the enormous Soviet preponderance in conventional weapons. Did the Prime Minister, he asked, want these to be inspected when it would be impossible for the Western Powers to inspect Russian nuclear weapons behind the Urals? In retrospect, Macmillan recalled an hour-long heated discussion, during which he was 'pretty sharp' with the Chancellor to some effect. In reality, he failed to change Adenauer's mind on a zone of inspection, though it emerged subsequently that Heinrich von Brentano, the German Foreign Minister had been perfectly satisfied with the British line.²⁸

The Chancellor agreed in principle with the idea of a summit before any vital decisions were adopted which might lead to war, but he was careful to spell out that 'it was essential to handle the matter most delicately until we were sure of agreement with the US Government'.²⁹ Clearly, Adenauer would not venture to challenge the US Government, should it continue to oppose a summit. Superficially, there appeared to have been a considerable measure of agreement between the two governments on the need for a summit, or even a series of summits. The Germans even agreed to try and persuade the French to fix a date.³⁰

Whilst both parties expressed initial satisfaction with the discussions, the Chancellor's true evaluation of the Prime Minister's ideas emerged on 16 March, in an interview given to the political correspondent of the Christian Democratic Party. Adenauer said that all

²⁶ C. Adenauer, Erinnerungen Deutsche Velags-Anstalt Stuttgart 1967. See p 481 'das Wirtschaftspotential Europas in Russische Hände zu bekommen, weil das die Sowjetunion zur ersten Wirtschaftsmacht der Welt machen würde.....Dann könnte es sowohl den Vereinigten Staaten wie auch Rotchina zeigen, wer zu befehlen hätte und wer nicht. Dazu dürfte es nicht kommen'.

²⁷ PM's Visit to Bonn, 12-13 Mar. Doc.1, p.5, CAB 133/295.

²⁸ Macmillan, op. cit. p.639, Sir Bernard Ledwidge remembered that 'the idea of disengagement floated around Western Department after 1961 (when he was posted back to London from Berlin) as a sort of memory: the idea that we had tried to persuade the Americans to be much firmer with Adenauer about making some sort of reference to disengagement and not to be quite so negative about it'. Witness Seminar on British Policy and the Berlin Wall Crisis at Kings College London, Journal of Contemporary British History Vol. 6, 1992 p.142.

²⁹ PM Visit to Bonn, 12-13 Mar. 1959, Doc.3, pp.7-9, CAB 133/293.

³⁰ Ibid. Doc.3, pp.14; and 19.

the plans he had seen for limitation of arms in Europe would merely endanger Western security.³¹ He was reported to have told some of his colleagues it was high time the British learned that they were no longer the leaders of Europe: 'Germany and France are the leaders in Europe now'.³² The anti-British campaign in Bonn was partly a reaction to anti-German comment in the British press, and in April it culminated in a vitriolic German broadcast attacking Macmillan, and 'the systematically contrived impairment of the British attitude towards Germany'.³³ In his Memoirs, Adenauer stated that the Germans had been opposed to disengagement for years, whether it took the form of a wider safety area, or the Rapacki Plan, on the basis that it would undermine NATO and lead to the withdrawal of US troops from Europe. 'Great Britain seemed to be ready to act on its own initiative.....seemed ready through a disengagement plan to break from the unified Western position and this meant that the Western world would be extraordinarily badly harmed. Heaven only knows what the outcome might be'.³⁴ On his return to London, Macmillan reported to his Cabinet that it now seemed likely that the French and German Governments could be persuaded to accept the suggestion that a meeting of Foreign Ministers should be followed by a meeting of Heads of Government and that a firm date should be fixed.³⁵ The German Government already recognized that Foreign Ministers were unlikely to reach a settlement, and that their meeting would be more fruitful if a date had already been fixed for a subsequent meeting of Heads of Government. De Gaulle had not yet assented to this course though his advisors saw its advantages. However, the Prime Minister thought the US Government would only be convinced about a summit if there was substantial progress at the Foreign Ministers Meeting. In Macmillan's view, the problem about the US approach was that it ignored the dangers of the Soviet Union taking unilateral action which might lead to a peace treaty with East Germany and as a result force the Western Powers to negotiate at a future

³¹ Ed. by G. Barraclough, Survey of International Affairs 1959-60 (London, 1964) p.24; and Macmillan, op. cit. p.640.

³² See Wighton, op cit. pp. 276-279.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ C. Adenauer Erinnerungen Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt Stuttgart, 1967. See pp.480-481, 'Grossbritannien schien zu Extratouren bereit....schien durch einen "disengagement" Plan aus der westlichen Einheitsfront auszubrechen, und dies bedeutete, dass die westliche Welt ausserordentlich stark ladiert wurde. Was daraus ergeben könnte wusste der liebe Himmel'.

³⁵ Cabinet Conclusions 17, (C59) Minutes 2 and 4, 17 Mar. 1959, CAB 128/33.

Foreign Ministers Conference from a position of weakness. In consequence the Prime Minister said that he did not want a reply to the Soviet Note to be dispatched until he had taken the opportunity to discuss the issues with the President on his forthcoming visit to Washington. The following Cabinet statement indicates the strength of the Prime Minister's feeling on this subject: 'If the United States government should decline to defer their reply, we must reserve the right to send a separate reply of our own, which might diverge significantly from theirs'.³⁶

In general the Prime Minister informed the Cabinet that their conversations in Paris and Bonn had been 'reassuring'. Two important points which had emerged had a considerable bearing on the situation. When de Gaulle spoke of the need to resist by force any blockade of West Berlin, what he had in mind was a situation in which the Western Powers were denied physical access, not just the transfer of control of access to the East German authorities. Second, in Bonn, it had appeared that Adenauer was reconciled to the prospect of Germany remaining divided for a further period of years. He would not be unwilling to accept a settlement on that basis, provided that some amelioration of conditions in East Germany was secured and that hope of the ultimate reunification of Germany was not extinguished. The Prime Minister told the Cabinet that on the question of the 'Macmillan Plan for a "thinning out zone", the news was more negative. There were suspicions in Bonn and elsewhere that the Government's plan for a limitation of forces and weapons in an agreed area amounted to disengagement. Therefore 'it was for consideration whether steps should be taken perhaps on the conclusion of the forthcoming discussions in Washington, to clarify the position of the UK Government on this question'.³⁷

Arguably, mutual animosity between the Chancellor and the Prime Minister, and anti-German feeling in Britain threatened Macmillan's chance of converting Adenauer to a modus vivendi with the Russians, as much as political and strategic factors. But outwardly, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary appeared to remain optimistic. On 18 March, the Prime Minister and Selwyn Lloyd told John Diefenbaker, Prime Minister of Canada that there had been no real change in British thinking on Berlin, but a

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

recognition of what was and what was not practicable.³⁸ So, for instance the reunification of Germany through free elections was not realistic, but as de Gaulle had stated in Paris, it was necessary to keep the German desire for reunification alive so they could see some light at the end of the tunnel. The Prime Minister thought the best solution for Berlin was that of the status of a free city for the whole of Berlin, guaranteed by the Four Powers, with a contingent of Allied troops and the introduction of a UN presence. He anticipated that preparations for negotiations would be difficult, as the British might be accused of appeasement.³⁹ The next hurdle for Macmillan was to convert the US Government to his point of view.

The Prime Minister's Visit to Washington

Before his departure to the US, Macmillan was depressed to find that telegrams had arrived from both Paris and Washington indicating firstly, that the Americans were against the British proposal for a summit, and secondly, that the French had 'ratted' and had gone back on what de Gaulle and the others had agreed.⁴⁰ Faced by these setbacks Macmillan was determined that no reply to the Soviet Note should be sent until he had consulted with the President. He viewed the Western reply to the Soviet Note 'as something of a landmark in the history of post-war relations with the Russians' and he hoped to keep the Americans 'fluid'.⁴¹ He therefore reacted with vigour and instructed the British delegate at the Four Power Working Group in Paris 'not to accept any draft reply to the Soviet Note except on our lines', which, for the moment, he knew would mean complete deadlock.⁴²

The Foreign Office produced a Steering Brief on Berlin, Germany and European Security for the Prime Minister's Visit to Washington.⁴³ It described in general terms what the Foreign Office thought should be the Allied position at a conference with the Russians. This was based on the Prime Minister's assessment of the necessary components for any compromise agreement with the Russians, namely that it would be easier to reach a

³⁸ Meeting between PM and Diefenbaker, 18 Mar. 1959. FO 371/145826, WG 1073/165/G.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Macmillan, Riding p.640.

⁴¹ FO to Washington, 5 Mar. 1959, no.1318, PREM 11/2684.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ FO Steering Brief, 16 Mar. 1959, FO 371/145826, WG 1073/160.

compromise agreement on Berlin if it was supplemented by agreements on a zone of limitation of forces and armaments and some form of German confederation or association such as an all-German body. However these ideas, as expressed in the Jebb Report and the Prime Ministerial Directive of 14 February 1959 were modified to accommodate those German reservations on European Security and a German Confederation which had emerged during Macmillan's visits to Paris and Bonn.

The Foreign Office now proposed that: within the zone of limitation there would be no discrimination as regards weapons; no ultimate reunification would be acceptable unless free elections played a part; and the all-German body envisaged would not have the attributes of sovereignty. This report did not tally in every respect with the recommendations of the Report of the Four Power Working Group in Paris (which was expected within a few weeks) but was consistent with the lines of that report. Macmillan had modified his objectives to meet French and German objections and now he had to convince the Americans.

On arrival in Washington, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary visited Foster Dulles who was in hospital suffering from terminal cancer. The Secretary of State was genuinely welcoming to his visitors, but subjected them to a long and inflexible monologue on Communism, Germany and Berlin. He was opposed to a summit, and thought the West 'should stick it out in Berlin'.⁴⁴ In contrast, during the ensuing talks at Camp David, Macmillan found the President 'very reasonable and anxious to help him'. The talks were conducted in a spirit of relative optimism, owing to Livingston Merchant's (Deputy Secretary of State) report that Khrushchev, at a press conference the previous day had admitted that the West had rights in Berlin but that after fourteen years it was time to end the military occupation and get a new settlement. The President had more good news for the Prime Minister: the German Government had now endorsed proposals for the informal development of contacts with the East German authorities which would not constitute formal recognition. He believed that Adenauer's 'new attitude gave some hope'.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Macmillan, Riding, pp. 644-651.

⁴⁵ PM's Visit to Ottawa and Washington, 18-24 Mar. 1959, Meeting on 20 Mar. Docs. 4 pp. 15-19, and 5, pp.19-23, CAB/133/241. At the author's request, this document was released to the PRO in 1998.

The Prime Minister reviewed his visit to Moscow and told the President that Khrushchev was in total control; that his objective was the status quo in Europe but that he was determined to resolve the Berlin situation. However, Khrushchev considered that it was not in the Soviet interest to resort to war, and in consequence had withdrawn the ultimatum and agreed to a settlement by negotiation. The President agreed with the British definition of objectives for a Foreign Ministers Conference with the Russians, as follows: to reach positive agreements over as wide a field as possible, and in any case to narrow the differences between the respective points of view and to prepare constructive proposals for consideration by a Conference of Heads of Government later in the summer. But Macmillan was disappointed that the President's agreement in principle to a summit was subject to the following qualification: 'as soon as developments in the Foreign Ministers Meeting warrant holding a summit conference the Heads of Government would be glad to participate'. A joint Western note agreeing to a Foreign Ministers Meeting on 11 May on the above basis was accordingly sent to the Russians on 25 March.⁴⁶ During his ensuing discussions with the Prime Minister, Eisenhower presented the following forceful arguments, which indicate that there was a large measure of agreement between the British and US Governments, even including de facto recognition of the DDR in return for some form of interim settlement for Berlin:

We must accept the fact that Germany would remain divided for many years to come. Our problem was, therefore, to discover means by which the position of West Berlin could be safeguarded throughout that period. In the forthcoming negotiations we should have to seek, not merely a solution of the present crisis, but agreement on some satisfactory status for West Berlin which could endure for some time. If we were to succeed in maintaining something like the existing situation, we should have to be ready to offer some concessions to the Soviet Government. We could not hope to secure a lasting agreement if we did no more than stand on our existing rights. To secure a reasonable breathing space for a period of years it would be worth our while to make some concessions. It would be useful for this purpose if Doctor Adenauer were now willing to accept de facto recognition of the DDR. We should, however study whether there were any other concessions which we might make.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Macmillan, op. cit. pp. 622-651; and 'PM's Visit to Washington', 21 Mar. 1959, Doc. 3, p.15, CAB 133/241.

⁴⁷ 'PM's Visit to Washington', 21 Mar. 1959, Doc.5, pp.21-23, CAB 133/241.

Eisenhower also agreed that at the present time 'a united Germany might hold more dangers than the present situation. It was our interest for the present to try and preserve the status quo'. The Prime Minister argued for a new agreement which, if backed by international guarantees, would in the long run be a more effective safeguard for the people of West Berlin.⁴⁸ Merchant, always hard-line in his views, raised objections. But the President went so far as to admit that 'he could see that a new international agreement might in the long run be better', though a settlement on the basis of an adjustment of the existing arrangements might be easier to negotiate.⁴⁹

The discussions on Germany concluded with Herter's suggestion that at the Foreign Ministers Meeting, Western Governments should initially stand firm on their existing rights. Any new international agreement would be a substitute for their existing rights, and only acceptable if it improved the Western position. The possibility of inter-German cooperation in the form of an all-German Committee, as proposed in the Prime Minister's Directive of 14 February, had become more likely since Adenauer had now accepted in principle the *de facto* recognition of the East German Government. Macmillan said practical working arrangements between the two parts of Germany should be developed, though he emphasised that there was no possibility of a political merger. The President also favoured contacts between the two governments in the 'form of a non-political form of association'.⁵⁰ This left the way open for a possible compromise with the Russians who wanted some form of German Confederation.

During the afternoon meeting, Macmillan moved on to clarify the British position and to allay suspicions about a zone of limitation of forces, as discussed at the Cabinet meeting of 17 March.⁵¹ Macmillan told the President that the British viewed disengagement as not only obsolete but as 'positively dangerous'. Instead, they favoured a zone of limitation as a 'constructive alternative not coterminous with any particular area, and with limitations which would not distinguish between nationalities or types of weapons. Apart from its political advantages, Macmillan said that a zone of limitation, open to inspection would be valuable in gaining acceptance of the principle of inspection, and a useful negotiating ploy in the forthcoming negotiations. In addition, he thought that the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid. 21 Mar. 1959. Doc.6.p.26.

Russians might be interested in limiting forces because of the burdensome nature of armaments.⁵²

Donald Quarles, US Deputy Secretary of Defense queried the usefulness of Macmillan's scheme except in the context of a larger disarmament scheme, on the grounds that with the development of modern weapons, future wars would be begun far behind forward zones. What might happen within them was therefore of secondary importance. But, as Macmillan put it, 'in spite of almost universal disapproval of his military advisors', the President rather liked the idea, as he saw that it was important to have something constructive as an alternative to the Rapacki Plan and disengagement.⁵³ He also thought that the Allies should work out big and imaginative proposals and not always be driven by purely negative proposals', a remark which made General Nathan Twining, Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wince.

The President believed that as a general principle it was desirable to obtain agreement on any mutually satisfactory scheme of inspection, and that such a scheme might have advantages from a psychological point of view. It was therefore most encouraging that the President agreed that the four Foreign Ministers could study Macmillan's idea. Selwyn Lloyd concluded the discussion by remarking that the scheme was primarily a political one, so Foreign Ministers were better suited to study it than soldiers.⁵⁴ The President's qualified approval to at least consider a zone of limitation, meant that the British delegation on the Four Power Working Group could press for its inclusion in the Western negotiating position. Similarly, consideration could be given to an all-German Committee, an idea which implied de facto recognition of the DDR. In negotiations with the Russians, this could be a quid pro quo for Soviet acceptance of an interim settlement for Berlin.

On 21 March, discussions moved on to the controversial question of contingency planning, and General Twining outlined the view of General Lauris Norstad, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, on current contingency preparations.⁵⁵ He emphasised that in the event of DDR obstruction of Allied military traffic, such as the destruction of a bridge, the purpose of a military probe was 'to demonstrate the reality of obstruction and

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Macmillan, Riding p.647.

⁵⁴ 'PM Visit to Washington', 21 Mar. 1959, Doc. 6, p.26, CAB 133/241.

⁵⁵ Ibid.Doc.6, pp.23-26.

to make the Russians and East Germans see that if they persisted, they would face the possibility of thermo nuclear war'. In the past, the British Government had consistently refused to give prior automatic agreement to the use of force, and Macmillan was relieved that the President conceded that an East German request to produce identification papers could not 'properly be made the occasion for a show of force'.⁵⁶ However the Americans still insisted that DDR stamping of documents or examination of the contents of a vehicle could not be permitted.

Macmillan realised that in order to achieve an interim settlement of the Berlin question, an essential component was Western de facto acceptance of East German control of their border because from the East German and the Soviet point of view this would imply acceptance of the status quo in Germany. Eventually, a compromise was agreed: Macmillan accepted Herter's suggestion that the West could announce at the time of transfer of responsibilities, that without prejudice to their rights, the Western powers could accept inspection by the DDR which was limited to identification.⁵⁷

'The Agreed Minute on Contingency Planning for Berlin', issued at the end of the talks confirmed that contingency planning would be carried out on a Tripartite basis under the general supervision of General Norstad as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).⁵⁸ Allied Embassies in Bonn under the supervision of the Tripartite Ambassadorial Group in Washington would continue to consider and plan field measures, and would issue on the spot instructions in the event of a DDR take-over of access to West Berlin. Preparations would be in line with the foregoing Anglo-US discussions and deal with two potential situations, first, the Soviet government declaring the DDR to be their agents, and second, if they did not. In the former case it was agreed that the Agency Theory would come into operation and Western vehicles would be subject to DDR controls at the checkpoints. In the second case, Western military vehicles would not submit to any DDR controls or formalities beyond identification of vehicles, or going beyond what was tripartitely agreed as reasonable to allow the orderly progress of traffic on the autobahn or railroad. If free access was forcibly interrupted, the three

⁵⁶ Ibid. Annex 2, pp.50-51.

⁵⁷ Ibid. As an alternative to stamping, the DOS suggested a plan to provide DDR officials with pre-stamped copies of travel orders. The British reluctantly accepted this compromise in summer 1959. See W. Burr, NSA Essay, op. cit. p.34.

⁵⁸ Meeting, PM Visit to Washington, 6 Mar. 1959, Doc. 6, Annex 2, pp.50-51, CAB 133/241.

Governments would consider what military measures should be implemented. Meanwhile supplementary military and diplomatic measures, including the option of the British preference for an airlift, would be put in place.⁵⁹ Subsequently, the decisions contained in the above Anglo-US Minute formed the basis of an agreed Allied paper on contingency planning agreed on 4 April 1959 which accepted the Agency Theory provided that the Soviets acknowledged that such a relationship existed. It was also agreed that the three powers would jointly approve military measures, drawn up by Norstad's planning group LIVE OAK, aimed at retaining freedom of access to Berlin.⁶⁰

At their meeting on 24 April the British COS Committee discussed Berlin contingency planning and the use of force. They confirmed their previous decision that it was impracticable to open the autobahn for the use of convoys by means of limited action. They said that: no attempt should be made to force access to Berlin by road unless the risk of global war is accepted and all preparations including mobilisation have been made to demonstrate the determination of the West. Such an agreement should only be made with the agreement of all the NATO members'.⁶¹ The British had therefore succeeded in re-establishing the Agency Theory and ensured British control over the implementation of contingency measures.

One further important matter which came up for discussion during Macmillan's farewell visit to Dulles was the stalemate in negotiations with the Russians on a nuclear test ban treaty.⁶² Dulles thought that they should not be too much influenced by the scientific data as 'there was great political advantage to negotiate an agreement with the Russians over tests which would involve opening up the Soviet Union to inspection'. Eisenhower believed that such an accord 'could have important political consequences.' It was decided that they could not let the Geneva Conference fail, and that it would be best to get a statement of agreed differences on outstanding points and try to settle them at the

⁵⁹ Ibid. Doc. 6 and Annex 11, p.50, CAB133/241.

⁶⁰ In April 1959, a tripartite planning staff with the code name LIVEOAK was established by General Norstad. It operated in complete secrecy until the late 1980s. LIVEOAK engaged in studies which did not have the official approval of the other NATO Governments. See NSA Essay, Burr, op. cit. p.35.

⁶¹ COS Meeting, 24 April 1959, DEFE 5/91.

⁶² Macmillan, op. cit. pp.647-648; and Meeting, 'PM Visit to Washington', 22 Mar. 1959, Doc.11, p.43, CAB 133/241.

Summit. Again this attitude was conducive to hopes of a compromise deal with the Russians based on a modus vivendi on Berlin and disarmament measures.⁶³

The British Contribution to Allied Planning for Negotiations on Berlin with the Soviet Union January-April 1959

In January 1959, the Four Power Working Group on Germany and Berlin which had been established in the years prior to the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958 (to co-ordinate and negotiate on the Western position for a potential summit conference with the Russians) was reconvened. From January-March 1959, the British Delegation to this Four Power Working Group in Washington, led by Peter Hancock Head of Western Department of the Foreign Office, endeavoured to convert the other Allied delegations to the pragmatic ideas of the Macmillan initiative. These were the establishment of a zone of thinning out of forces and weapons in Central Europe, as envisaged in the British Draft Plan on European Security of 1958; the establishment of a Mixed German Committee to promote contacts between the FRG and the DDR, and an interim settlement for Berlin, which recognised the Soviet Government's determination to regularise the Soviet position in Berlin, with some consequential adjustment in the status of Berlin (possibly a new Quadripartite Agreement involving UN participation).⁶⁴ Intrinsic to the British approach was a belief in the status quo in Europe, not only because in the pursuit of detente, they wanted to meet the Russians halfway, but also because German Reunification was not in Britain's interests.

The task of the British delegation was a difficult one, given the intransigence of the FRG on the German question and the fact that the French usually supported their continental ally and were prepared to sit tight and call the Russians' bluff. The US Delegation tended to swing between the two extremes, appreciating the importance of the strategic position of the FRG to the NATO Alliance, yet understanding that the West could not simply bury their heads in the sand and await the impending crisis on 27 May. Initially, even Dulles had been prepared to compromise on questions like the Agency Theory and German Confederation, until persuaded otherwise by a panic stricken Adenauer.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ In 1958, the British COS, Joint Planning Committee considered a plan for disengagement put forward by the FO, 'Plan for European Security', 10 Mar. 1958, COS(58) 22, Min. 1, DEFE 4/89.

The first remit of the Working Group, to produce the Western reply to the Soviet Note of 10 January, was relatively uncontroversial. On 16 February, on the basis of their unqualified right to remain in Berlin, representatives of the Western Powers proposed a Four Power Foreign Ministers Conference to discuss the entire German problem 'in all its aspects and implications'.⁶⁵ Allied agreement on the place and timing of the meeting would be hammered out in the future. As a concession to the Russians, 'German advisors' (from both the DDR and the FRG) were invited to attend, thus acknowledging Moscow's case that reunification was a matter for the two German states. The British Delegation supported this move as a first step in encouraging their partners to consider de facto dealings with the DDR.⁶⁶

The Four Power Working Group's initial Report on Germany, European Security and Berlin of 12-13 February, outlined the main elements of the general Western position: free all-German elections; freedom for an all-German Government to decide its own domestic and foreign policy, including free choice of alliances; negotiation of a peace treaty with the all-German Government; no new security in Europe without progress towards reunification; an offer of security measures, accompanied by progress towards reunification; and an undertaking that, if Germany joined NATO, she would not take military advantage of the withdrawal of Soviet forces from the Soviet Zone.⁶⁷

The Western proposals were based on two fundamental principles, free all-German elections and the freedom of an all-German Government to choose its own policy. The British delegation were well aware that the Soviet Government would oppose them on the two fold assumption that: free all-German elections would lead to the defeat of Communism; and that a united Germany would join NATO and pose a threat to Soviet security.⁶⁸ During the course of the discussions, the British Delegation assured their Allies that Britain would stand firm to the point of war should the Soviet Union attack Western access to Berlin. Having allayed Allied fears on this count, they persuaded their partners to meet the Soviet Union halfway by exploring (in a questionnaire which would

⁶⁵ SIA 1959-160, p.18.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Working Group Paper on 'German Reunification, European Security and Berlin', 13 Feb. 1959, FO371/145818 WG 1073/70. Point 1; Macmillan received this Report before he left for Moscow and considered it was within his remit to explore Soviet reaction to these ideas.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

be submitted to the individual governments for further consideration at the March meeting of the Four Power Working Group) British proposals for a zone of thinning out, a Mixed German Committee, and an Interim Agreement on Berlin. Hancock informed Sir Anthony Rumbold, Head of Western Department that he had successfully resisted the argument put forward by the other delegations that individual consideration should not be given to the Berlin problem because the right and eventual solution to the Berlin problem lay in a resolution of the German question as a whole.⁶⁹ The British delegation had thus ensured that a detailed section on Berlin would be included in the questionnaire to be considered by the delegations, and he noted that the general sentiment was that interim Berlin proposals must be made at any conference with the Russians and that such proposals must include UN participation in some form.

The Four Power Working Group Report Paris March 21 1959

On 21 March, the Working Group in Paris produced their report. It described the chief Soviet objective as follows: 'to eliminate the Allies from Berlin and to obtain confirmation of the division of Germany' thereby reinforcing the Soviet Bloc and the Pankow regime. This would undermine the Federal Republic and detach her from existing alliances.⁷⁰ If successful, a divided Germany could be neutralised and Soviet domination could be extended over the whole of Germany. To achieve these ends, the Soviet Government sought the denuclearisation of the Bundeswehr and the withdrawal of US troops from Europe. Whilst the British agreed that the denuclearisation of the Bundeswehr and the recognition of the status quo in central Europe were prime Soviet objectives, they considered that Soviet aims for Berlin were more limited and defensive. The Report defined Western objectives as follows: they were to secure if possible, confirmation of Western rights in Berlin, pending an acceptable settlement of the German problem; and should the Soviet Government fail to appoint the DDR as its Agent, they should demonstrate to the international community that everything had been done to achieve a conciliatory agreement. To attain these goals the West would consider which

⁶⁹ Hancock to FO, 16 Feb. 1959, FO 371/145818, WG/1073/70.

⁷⁰ Report of Four Power Working Group, Paris, 9-12 Mar. 1959, FO 371/145827 WG/1073/166.

Soviet offers might be acceptable, and present a Western Plan with additional 'certain points of interest to the Soviet Union'.⁷¹

From the British point of view, the Working Group Report was not sufficiently radical, but it did provide a basis for further work in tune with such directions as the Working Group would receive from the Meeting of the Four Foreign Ministers, due to take place on 31 March, in Washington. Hancock saw no point in sticking out beyond a certain point for positions which our Allies saw as 'extreme and unacceptable'.⁷² Nevertheless, the Report did contain important elements of Macmillan's initiative and a certain degree of flexibility within the phased interlinked plan for German Reunification and European Security which was based on the Western Outline Plan of 1958.

The Report acknowledged that the division of Germany had resulted from differences between the Four Powers after 1945, and that they alone could put together again what they had allowed to come apart. But the Working Group did concede that 'certain Soviet arguments against free elections as the sole means of reunification should be taken into account'.⁷³ The British Delegation convinced their Allies that two further significant developments on the method of German Reunification should be proposed. One was that the process of reunification would take three and a half years during which time, free all-German elections would be postponed for two and a half years, so that security measures would be in place well before reunification. More importantly, the Phased Western Plan of 21 March, incorporated the Jebb concept: that at the initial stages of the agreement, nuclear warheads and IRBMs would not be allowed in the Special Security Zone (the name given to the Rapacki Zone) and inspection procedures would be agreed a full two and a half years before reunification.⁷⁴ However, the British Delegation did not manage to delink proposals for European Security and Berlin from the issue of German Reunification.

The second proposal put forward by the British which was incorporated into the Report was the establishment of an all-German Committee at the beginning of the second stage of the phased process. It was envisaged that two delegates would be appointed (in theory by the Four Powers, but in practice by the FRG and the DDR, from each of the German

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² FO Minute, Hancock to Killick, 24 Mar. 1959, FO 371/ 145844 WG/1073/149.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Länder), plus one delegate from each part of Berlin, (in all 21 delegates from West German and 9 delegates from East German Länder). This all-German Committee would expand and co-ordinate technical contacts and encourage freedom of movement throughout Germany. It would also arrange Länder Elections to secure representatives to an all-German Council, which in turn would arrange for all-German elections to an all-German National Assembly, and for a provisional central authority. The German people would then have an opportunity to approve this body in a plebiscite, two years after the signature of the initial agreement.⁷⁵

This Plan did much to narrow the gap between the positions of the West and the Russians, in that it attempted to reduce Russian fears of free democratic elections until security measures had been put into effect. The proposed all-German Committee also came nearer to the Soviet concept of some sort of confederation, albeit one without the attributes of sovereignty, that would ensure the continued existence of the DDR during the first two years of the agreement.⁷⁶ It was for this reason that the French seemed averse to this proposal since they considered that all-German elections ought to follow very soon after the establishment of any East-West German body.⁷⁷ During the course of the discussions, the British did not mention Adenauer's suggestion to the Prime Minister during his visit to Bonn, on 12-13 March, that there could be a five year moratorium on reunification. The British took the line that the Germans ought to make the running on any such proposal.⁷⁸

The third element of Macmillan's initiative was the implementation of an Interim Settlement for Berlin. At this stage, the Working Group only agreed on the following principles which they considered should be the basis of an Interim Agreement on Berlin: that a resolution of the problem on a Four Power basis would be preferable to a UN solution; that any settlement should permit Western occupation troops to remain in West Berlin with unlimited access; that the present basis of the Western right to be in Berlin, i.e. the right of conquest, should be maintained; that a Four Power agreement which would modify the present basis would not be satisfactory; and that a certain variant of the

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Draft US Paper on 'Elements of a Western Position at a Conference with the Russians', 12 Mar. 1959, FO 371/145826, WG 1073/161.

⁷⁷ FO Minute by Hancock, 23 Mar. 1959, FO 371/145827, WG 1073 /166 (A)

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Agency Theory could be considered. Nevertheless, all the other proposals made by the national delegations about Berlin were set out in a detailed report for further consideration.⁷⁹

It was a triumph for the British Delegation that the Report proposed that the Agency Theory should be recognised in some form. This issue had been the subject of fierce controversy between the US and British Governments since November 1958. The Report recommended that initially the West should try to maintain the existing position regarding access, and when that failed, should propose two variants of the Agency Theory. Firstly, that the Soviet Government must formally transfer its obligations to the DDR and secondly, that the Soviet Government would notify the three Western Governments of a DDR declaration that it would continue to carry out the existing access arrangements, although not underwriting this declaration. The third course proposed was that, as a fall back position in any interim settlement for Berlin, the West would propose an interim solution for the whole of Berlin whereby the Four Powers would station troops in Berlin (the Soviet contingent being one quarter of the total, as suggested by Khrushchev) in order to guarantee the status of the city and access thereto. This proposal would be based on occupation rights, not on a fresh guaranteed quadripartite status as discussed by the Foreign Secretary in Moscow, and approved by the Cabinet at their Meeting of 4 March 1959.⁸⁰ Hence, faced with opposition to his preferred option, at the Foreign Ministers Conference on 31 March, the Foreign Secretary argued pragmatically for a new agreement which would supplement the existing Western position based on occupation rights.

The British Government's proposal that the UN should have a role in the future settlement on Berlin, one of the suggestions of the Jebb Report, for which Khrushchev had shown some enthusiasm, suffered a setback at the hands of the other delegations, particularly the French. Nevertheless, all options on Berlin were kept open for future consideration by Allied Foreign Ministers as a fallback negotiating position at the Geneva Conference, when it was anticipated that the Soviets would reject the Western Phased Plan.⁸¹ It is

⁷⁹ Four Power Working Group Report, 'Elements of an Interim Berlin Settlement', 21 Mar. 1959, FO 371/145827, WG 1073/166.

⁸⁰ See p.139.

⁸¹ See Working Group Report, 'Fall Back Position on Berlin', 21 Mar. 1959, p.4, FO 371/145827, WG 1075/166(B).

significant, however, that the State Department was becoming more realistic. Their Working Paper admitted: that any bridging of the gap between the positions of the Soviets and Western powers on the issues of German Reunification and European Security was unlikely at this stage; that the Western package was not indissoluble; and that to prevent an irretrievable breakdown in negotiation the Western powers would have to negotiate on those points which interested the Russians. The US Paper stated:

the minimum Western objective in the present Berlin crisis must be the achievement of some sort of modus vivendi which will permit the survival of West Berlin under conditions permitting its continuing development in freedom under the protective influence of the Western Powers.⁸²

The Americans privately accepted the realities of the situation and were prepared, after the Soviets had rejected the Western Package at the Geneva Conference, to enter negotiations for an Interim Settlement for Berlin. Later in April, the French, and eventually the Germans, agreed the US position. Official acceptance of the Working Group Report depended of course, on the approval of the four Western Foreign Ministers, who, as agreed by the President and the Prime Minister at Camp David, were due to meet in Washington on 31 March.

The Western Foreign Ministers Conference of 31 March 1959

In advance of the meeting, which was convened to consider the proposed Western position at the forthcoming Geneva Conference, a series of public statements by Western leaders revealed the divergences which still persisted between Britain and her Allies. On 25 March, in a broadcast to the American nation, the President appeared to assume that a summit would take place, but that it would be voluntary rather than predetermined, and certainly not the result of Soviet pressure on the Allies. Eisenhower also emphasised that the US could not purchase peace by forsaking two million people, or, for the sake of flexibility, accept any agreement or arrangement which would limit the security of the US.⁸³ Clearly this was a reminder of the importance of the FRG to America's nuclear strategy.

⁸² US Working Paper on 'Elements for a Western Position at a Conference with the Soviets', 12 Mar. 1959, FO 371/145826 WG 1073/161.

⁸³ SIA, 1959-60, p.27.

On 25 March, de Gaulle made a public pronouncement on his German policy at a Press Conference in Paris, in which he appeared to withdraw the more compromising statements which he and his Prime Minister had made during the Anglo-French Talks of 10 March in Paris. The President said that France would not allow any claim to interrupt allied access to Berlin, would refuse to recognize the Pankow Regime, and would reject any zone of disarmament that did not extend as close to the Urals, as to the Atlantic.⁸⁴ The only comfort for the British was that the President publicly confirmed that the European status quo on territorial borders should be maintained.

Adenauer, too, had voiced his deep unease about British proposals to David Bruce, the American Ambassador in Bonn. The Chancellor had evidently taken umbrage at hints in the British press that at his Camp David Meeting with the President, Macmillan had suggested a freeze of military forces on either side of the Iron Curtain, whereby West German 'forces were not equipped with nuclear weapons while others had them'. The Ambassador told Herter that the Chancellor was thoroughly disturbed and aroused at this dangerous idea.⁸⁵ These public statements reflected the differences still inherent in the Western negotiating position prior to the Foreign Ministers Meeting.

Bearing in mind the background of acrimonious German comment on British policy, it was not surprising that the Germans dominated the proceedings of the Foreign Ministers Meeting, where they trimmed back the conciliatory concessions to the Soviet view, which the British Delegation had manfully struggled to insert in the 21 March Four Power Working Group Report. Von Brentano, the West German Foreign Minister made it clear that the Federal Government did not expect to make any real progress on German Reunification for the present, because of concerns that if any all-German body were established with executive or legislative powers, it would only give the Russians and East Germans an opportunity for penetration and subversion in West Germany. However, for tactical advantage he said they were quite prepared to contemplate some East-West German Commission charged with the preparation of an electoral law and the promotion of technical contacts. Unfortunately, the Chancellor threw 'a spanner into the works by

⁸⁴ Schick, op. cit. p. 63.

⁸⁵ Bruce to DOS, 24 Mar. 1959, NSA no.1040.

instructing von Brentano to make any progress along these lines, conditional on the USSR accepting beforehand free elections at some stage'.⁸⁶

The Foreign Ministers Report of 2 April, agreed by the NATO Council on 2-4 April instructed the Four Power Working Group, due to convene in London on 13 April, to prepare, as far as possible, an agreed position and a tactical plan for the consideration of the Four Foreign Ministers at their next meeting. This was scheduled to take place on 29 April, in Paris, prior to the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers which was due to begin on 11 May.⁸⁷ As a result of German intervention, the Report proposed that 'providing the principle of free elections is accepted' (i.e. as a precondition for the establishment of an all-German Committee), a transitional period could be proposed during which an all-German Committee responsible for 'certain limited tasks could be established'. With respect to the vital area of German Reunification, it is clear from a comparison of the Foreign Ministers' recommendations with the Report of the Four Power Working Group of 21 March, that the Germans had emasculated British attempts to reach a limited modus vivendi with the Russians. On the vital matter of German Reunification, they had insisted on the principle of free elections prior to negotiations, and severely restricted the brief of the all-German Committee.

On the question of European Security, the other three Foreign Ministers still had reservations about Britain's idea of a zone of inspection or limitation of forces and armaments, and they were still not ready to consider this proposal in isolation from a political settlement involving progress towards German Reunification.⁸⁸ However the Foreign Ministers did recommend that the Four Power Working Group should make a further study linking progress in European Security to German Reunification, and 'consider the possibility of a special zone in Europe (zone of limitation and control or zone of inspection) which would permit the concomitant settlement of political problems without prejudice to the security of the West'.⁸⁹ Whilst this was a concession to the British view, a more detailed study of the recommendations reveals that once again Britain's sails had been trimmed. There was no provision for the prohibition of nuclear weapons in the special zone, as envisaged the 21 March Working Group Report. The

⁸⁶ Lloyd to PM, 2 April 1959, T.182/59, PREM 11/2717.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

British Government had argued from the outset that the Soviet Government's major security fear was the nuclear re-armament of the Bundeswehr but for political and strategic reasons, her Allies opposed this provision.

Turning to the Berlin question, both the French and the Americans recommended that the West should respond to the Soviet challenge with firmness, and Couve de Murville warned that any weakness on the part of the Western Powers would be the beginning of a 'general retreat with unforeseeable consequences'. In his view, the West should define their opening position on which they could not compromise: on the continued presence of the Western Powers and their garrisons; the continuation of the legal basis of the Western position in Berlin, deriving from their role as occupation Powers; and the fact that there would be no *de jure* recognition of the DDR, since that would be tantamount to recognising the division of Germany.

Because of opposition from her Allies to the idea that there should be an 'adjustment in the status of Berlin', Selwyn Lloyd adapted his proposal. He suggested that the Western Powers should not 'abandon their rights' but should devise new 'positive proposals'.⁹⁰ These might enable them to improve their position in Berlin and also give them a tactical advantage in negotiating with the Russians, and in relation to public opinion. Lloyd informed the Prime Minister that he hoped his opinions might have made an impression on the others but they were still reluctant to contemplate any move away from occupation rights. He considered that the British still had a long way to go before their Allies could be persuaded of the realities of the situation. Their partners simply considered that if they appeared tough the Russians would collapse.⁹¹ One consolation for the Foreign Secretary was that the French Foreign Minister indicated that the Western Powers should initially put forward a comprehensive package involving German Reunification. But if there was no agreement amongst themselves, he believed they would 'have to try to negotiate a modus vivendi with the Russians in which some elements of European Security might well form a part'.⁹²

After the meeting, Selwyn Lloyd informed the Prime Minister that a further danger facing the West in trying to formulate a unified but more pragmatic position for the

⁹⁰ Lloyd to PM 2 April 1959, T.182/ 59, PREM 11/2717.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

forthcoming negotiations was that any talk about a fall back position on Berlin and European Security, which was now the main hope of the British Government, might be leaked in advance and end up being the Western Powers' starting point in negotiation with the Russians. Evidently, the Foreign Secretary did not regard all these obstacles as insurmountable, and he was still hopeful that Britain's position would gain support at the forthcoming NATO Council Meeting on 3 April.⁹³ At least no final decisions had been taken on Berlin, and the Foreign Ministers had recommended that a further study should be made on various aspects of the question based on the resolution of the NATO Council of 16 December, 1958, and consistent with the three principles given to the Council in the Working Group Report of 25 March.

Macmillan's reply to Lloyd's missive was most interesting and reflected his concern that Britain would again 'be tarred in public with the brush of either weakness or strength'.⁹⁴ He mentioned the regrettable press coverage of the recent American decision not to send any more high-flying aircraft to Berlin, which was attributed to British pressure.⁹⁵ Macmillan also showed a distinct lack of enthusiasm for the outcome of the Foreign Ministers Conference, and was quick to dismiss the Foreign Secretary's relative optimism, by merely saying that he was glad that he (Lloyd) had made 'fairly satisfactory progress'. He said 'it would be better, now to take the line that we are part of a team; we shall play our part in the joint formulation of policy and then in its collective application. I think that we have had enough of words like flexibility and that it might be better not to use it any more'.⁹⁶ The Foreign Secretary was thus politely but unfairly reprimanded for following his master's line of flexibility to the letter. In the event, contrary to the Prime Minister's advice, Selwyn Lloyd made a long and robust speech defending British policy at the NATO Council Meeting on 3 April.

The NATO Council Meeting of 3 April, 1959

The Foreign Secretary tried to persuade the NATO Council that the Soviet Government genuinely wanted a negotiation on Berlin because they regarded it as a 'centre of

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ PM to Lloyd, 2 April 1959, T.183/59, PREM 11/2717.

⁹⁵ The British considered the DOS' decision on 27 March, to fly to Berlin above 25,000 feet, as provocative. The plane was buzzed by MIGs and a US protest was dispatched to the Soviet Govt. NSA no.656, 28 Mar. 1959.

⁹⁶ Macmillan to Lloyd, 2 April 1959, T.183/59, PREM 11/2717.

espionage and a shop window of the West'.⁹⁷ Selwyn Lloyd reaffirmed well known British arguments in favour of a summit, but said Britain would remain firm on basic principles such as the freedom of West Berlin, and the rejection of any plans to solve the German problem based on neutrality, or so called disengagement. The British regarded these as 'extremely dangerous'. After this attempt to mollify his Allies' concerns, he pleaded for inspection and limitation of armaments in an agreed area which, he said, would give the Western Powers a positive answer to those who favoured disengagement. At this point, Selwyn Lloyd appeared to ignore the Prime Minister's advice of the previous evening, and he made a determined bid to win over his partners on the NATO Council to the British approach.

He argued that the optimum solution was that Berlin should be the capital of a reunited Germany, but that the West should guard against complacency in the present situation.⁹⁸ The Soviets or East Germans could at any time put pressure on West Berlin and cripple the economic life of the city without the use of force, or any action which would justify a Western stand. He then boldly tackled the question which had recently emerged as the most contentious area between Britain and her Allies on Berlin, namely the question of Western rights in the city. Although Western rights of occupation were legally sound, he emphasised that from the point of view of world opinion, it was not reasonable to insist on the right of conquest fourteen years after the war ended, or to maintain that West Berliners should, legally speaking, be the subjects of the sovereign occupying powers. He made a powerful appeal to his audience:

'For these reasons, while not abandoning our present title in any way, we should also consider whether the present situation can be improved and whether by some new agreement we can in fact give greater security to our position and that of the West Berliners. We should also consider the possibility of neutral or United Nations participation, but we must not give up what we hold, seeking rather to superimpose some new arrangement upon it'.⁹⁹

The Foreign Secretary's robust defence of the British position was based on his perceptions of the defensive nature of Soviet aims. He signalled that his Government intended to continue its fight for a modus vivendi on Berlin.

⁹⁷ Lloyd to FO, no. 887, 3 April 1959, PREM 11/2717.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

On 9 May, after his return from the US, the Foreign Secretary informed the Cabinet of the outcome of his discussions in Washington.¹⁰⁰ He reported that three differences had emerged: the first was whether the Western Powers should put forward a new phased plan (worked out by officials) for the reunification of Germany, or continue to support the 1955 Geneva Conference proposals.¹⁰¹ This delay was due to the fact that the German Government had not yet 'defined their attitude to it' (the phased plan). On balance, the Foreign Secretary believed there was a tactical advantage in putting forward new proposals. As regards the British Plan for a zone of limitation of forces and weapons, he stated that the German Government was prepared to consider it 'provided the area was not yet defined by reference to national frontiers and that the plan was put forward in connection with some political initiative for easing international tension'.¹⁰²

Lloyd told the Cabinet that the NATO Council had not resolved whether the opportunity should be taken to negotiate a new international agreement on the status of West Berlin. Those governments which preferred the course of maintaining existing rights had been assured it would be possible to put forward proposals for a new agreement without abandoning them, but the 'German Government were still apprehensive about such an approach and were not at present in a mood to support constructive proposals'. The Cabinet was also informed that officials of the four Governments would resume conversations on 13 April, in preparation for the Foreign Ministers Meeting on 29 April. It was agreed that in these consultations the Government should press for a greater measure of flexibility in the Western position and should in particular urge the German Government to adopt a more constructive attitude towards the forthcoming negotiations. For this, the Cabinet considered that the Government could look for some support from the US Government.¹⁰³

The conclusions of the Foreign Ministers Meeting were undoubtedly a setback for British objectives. But it is important to note that German rejection of the compromise measures which the British Delegation had worked so hard to insert in the 21 March, Four Power Working Group Report, was a matter of great concern not only to the British but also to

¹⁰⁰ Cabinet Conclusions 22 (59) Minute 2, 9 April, 1959, CAB 128/33

¹⁰¹ See Annex to Gen 672/2 and /3, Prime Minister's Visit to Moscow, Feb. 1959, FO 371/145820 WG 1073/98 (A).

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

the Americans, and even to Von Brentano himself.¹⁰⁴ The latter told Herter that he had decided to go back to Bonn to see the Chancellor, as he realized that the Germans could not remain inflexible and tied to the 1955 Western position. He believed something more attractive had to be produced for public opinion. In response, Herter told the German Foreign Minister that the business of formulating a common (Western) line was almost impossible and that it was 'intolerable to prepare plans on certain principles set out after instructions and approval from governments, and then for the German Government at the Meeting (Foreign Ministers Meeting of 31 March) to repudiate all the reports of the Four Power Working Group to which West Germany had agreed'. The German Government, Herter said, were so paralysed and nervous about their own position on reunification that they had cold feet about making any sort of move. Significantly, he remarked, 'if only they would have relations with East Germany and in that way preserve the status quo, it would make the preparation of an Allied position much easier'.¹⁰⁵ Clearly, the US Government was becoming frustrated and irate over the Federal Republic's obduracy, and the new Secretary of State, Christian Herter was increasingly sympathetic to the British arguments for flexibility.

The US Ambassador in Bonn was also losing patience with the German attitude.¹⁰⁶ He told his British counterpart, Sir Christopher Steele, that the US Government would have to convince the Germans that hard decisions about the Western Package had to be taken in the coming weeks and that the German delegation on the Four Power Working Group needed to understand that whether or not progress was made, 'the Berlin situation was with us willy nilly'. Once Russian control was withdrawn from Berlin communications any arrangements had to be based on some kind of relationship and understanding with the DDR, though not of course recognition. In Bruce's view, the French were aware of this but for their own reasons they would fight shy of committing themselves until the last minute. This exchange raised once more the question of whether the French Government heedlessly followed the Bonn approach, or was ready to listen to the more moderate and pragmatic British line. British diplomacy in the weeks preceding the Geneva Conference was engaged in trying to detach the French from Bonn's obstructive stance. At this

¹⁰⁴ Caccia to Lloyd, 4 April, 1959, no. 908, PREM 11/2717.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Steel to Lloyd, 9 April, 1959, no. 404, PREM 11/2717.

juncture, Anglo-French exchanges at Prime Ministerial level on 13 April proved most welcome, as they revealed a surprising and significant degree of agreement.

Anglo-French Discussions on 13 April

On 13 April, during his meeting with Debré, the French Prime Minister, at Downing Street, Macmillan argued that the Russians would inevitably reject the latest version of the Western Plan because it was based on the principle of free elections as a pre-condition for East-West discussions on German Reunification.¹⁰⁷ He welcomed Debré's views on alternative strategies. The French Prime Minister emphasised the importance of keeping German opinion with them, as the 'so called Paris-Bonn Axis was only valid if there was Anglo-French understanding, and the Federal German Government was solidly with the West'.¹⁰⁸

There followed a wide ranging discussion on the whole problem of Berlin, which according to Gladwyn Jebb was an unqualified success. He noted that it was the first time that the Ministers had got down to basics and agreed on the following policies: de facto recognition of East Germany; some kind of discussions between the two Germanies; the presentation of an Outline Plan which would be a tactical exercise designed to wrongfoot the Russians; the necessity of controlling refugees, propaganda and subversive activities, and of negotiating troop numbers in West Berlin, and links between Berlin and the West, in any Interim Agreement on Berlin. Both sides agreed not to seek a new status for Berlin, but if there was any new solution, the new juridical status should be additional to and supplement the existing status. There was also agreement that a zone of inspection, in an area to be determined, was by no means an impossibility but should not be put forward at the beginning of the negotiation. Instead it should be an additional card at the end.¹⁰⁹

This Anglo-French exchange of views confirmed French acceptance of the idea of a summit meeting which was so central to the Prime Minister's objectives. But Debré qualified it by stating that de Gaulle favoured a summit meeting with a wide agenda

¹⁰⁷ Record of Meeting between Macmillan and the French, 13 April 1959, at 10 Downing Street, FO 371/145827, WG 1073/171.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Letter, Jebb to Rumbold, 18 April 1959, FO 371/145828 WG 1073/179.

which would lead to future summits.¹¹⁰ Such an idea was in accordance with both Khrushchev's and Macmillan's concept of the importance of a series of summit meetings in East-West diplomacy. The meeting ended on an optimistic note as both sides considered that the Americans would agree with the suggested French tactics leading to a summit, as would the Germans.¹¹¹ The latter knew that when it came to the point, only Khrushchev could take decisions. Turning to the immediate way forward, both Powers agreed that the present Western Plan had 'fallen to the ground' and blame for this, according to Couve de Murville, had to be placed squarely in the German court. However he still considered the 21 March Working Group Plan could be put up again, suitably amended. This was currently being revised by the Four Power Working Group in London, who would reach a conclusion by the end of the week. The Four Foreign Ministers planned to meet again on 29 April, to make a final decision about the Western position and then consult the NATO Council before the inauguration of the Foreign Ministers Meeting at Geneva on 11 May.

The Four Power Working Group Meeting in London, 13-23 April

The Four Power Working Group assembled in London from 13-23 April, to carry out the directions of the Foreign Ministers Meeting of 31 March. Their brief was to revise the 'Phased Plan for German Reunification and European Security and a German Peace Settlement' and to complete further studies of Berlin and European Security, Draft Principles of a Peace Treaty, and a paper on Tactics for the Geneva Conference. It is significant that there was a degree of optimism, formerly absent, in the Working Group's assessment of the prospects of the Geneva Conference. The general view was that there was a prospect of serious negotiations with the Russians. The British in particular took the view that Khrushchev would negotiate seriously to ensure a summit conference.¹¹²

In accordance with the Prime Minister's advice to the Foreign Secretary, the British delegation agreed with the views of their colleagues to avoid further accusations of appeasement. Martin J. Hillenbrand, Director of German Affairs in the State Department thought the British were unusually reticent at the meeting and was obviously surprised

¹¹⁰ Record of Meeting between Macmillan and the French, 13 April 1959, FO 371/145827, WG 1073/171.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² US Embassy, London to DOS, Working Group discussions, 15 April 1959, NSA no.1153.

that there was no hint of European Security measures which were not linked to the Phased Plan. British proposals for Berlin were also accommodating, so Hillenbrand hazarded a guess that the British would not reveal themselves further in the present session, but would concur in agreed recommendations of the Working Group. He also noted that the French and the Germans were extremely cautious, and suspicious of any proposals regarding contacts with the DDR in the all-German Committee, even though they did not involve executive or governmental powers. The French continued to oppose any UN function for Berlin.¹¹³

For the British, one of the most productive aspects of the discussion was the exchange of views on an Interim Settlement for Berlin. This indicated that after the Russians had, as anticipated rejected the total Phased Package, all the participants were prepared to consider a separate package for Berlin. From the outset, the British thought that the Western powers should not agree on a precise fall back position on Berlin, but should await the course of events in Geneva. The initial US position was that Berlin should be reunited by free elections in the third phase of the Phased Plan. However, if the West was forced into separate consideration of the Berlin question, the US contemplated a series of positions which could be taken in sequence. All involved a change of status for Berlin, earlier ones to improve the Western position in Berlin, and subsequent ones to maintain a situation at least as satisfactory as that now existing.¹¹⁴

The British Delegation favoured an Interim Berlin Settlement in which the Western Powers might try to reinforce their present position with the Soviets by negotiating with them an agreement precisely defining Allied rights and Soviet obligations regarding Allied access. If the Soviets wanted to relinquish their present responsibilities, mutually acceptable arrangements would have to be made for these to be exercised by a third party such as the UN. The DDR was not considered an acceptable third party, unless the Soviet Government expressly acknowledged the DDR as its agent. This proposal was acceptable to the US Delegation if Berlin could not be reunited, or the Western Powers could not exercise the rights relinquished by the Soviet Union. The British then brought up the possibility of a moratorium of five years on reunification, or a five year suspension of the

¹¹³ Ibid. NSA no.1152. The British Delegation later told the Americans privately that they had instructions to accept anything proposed by the other delegations on which there was general agreement.

¹¹⁴ DOS Report on Four Power Working Group, 17 April 1959, NSA no.1169.

second stage of the Western Plan, but this was dismissed by the Germans as extremely dangerous.¹¹⁵ Throughout the meeting, the Germans continued to push the issue of reunification into the background, and to emphasise the importance of discussing Berlin first, before the Phased Plan.

Eventually, the Working Group concluded that reference to Berlin should be made within the Phased Plan, though this too had its dangers. If the Phased Plan was rejected, and the West had to negotiate an Interim Settlement on Berlin, the Russians might consider that they could extricate other elements from the total Western Package for separate consideration. One possibility open to the West (as the Phased Plan envisaged the Reunification of Germany within three years and the consequent restoration of Berlin as the capital of a reunified Germany) was for the Four Powers to simply agree, that during the interim period, they would not alter the existing arrangements regarding Berlin, and access thereto. Alternatively, it might be possible to offer the Russians some satisfaction on specific points about which they had complained.¹¹⁶

The British delegation gained an important victory on the question of negotiating an Interim Settlement for Berlin: it was agreed that negotiation should be on the basis of the Allies existing rights, but they added an important qualification:

this does not mean however that the Western Powers need necessarily refuse to discuss supplementing the agreements which define how their rights and obligations should be exercised. Indeed there might be advantage in negotiating more precise agreements since the existing agreements are vague in many respects

Finally, there was agreement that the principles of access agreements should not be the subject of negotiation as that would jeopardise the whole Western position.¹¹⁷

It should be noted that these were only statements of general principles, and the Working Group asked the Foreign Ministers at their Meeting of 29 April, to decide on the following important questions. Which Berlin proposals should be made within the Phased Plan? In considering secondary solutions, could the Western Powers accept

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ This referred to Soviet complaints about Western use of West Berlin as a centre of espionage and propaganda, a fact which Sir Gladwyn Jebb brought to the notice of the British Government.

¹¹⁷ Working Group Report, 23 April 1959, NSA no.1198.

anything beyond the Agency Theory? And what measures of United Nations participation if any, could the Western Powers contemplate?¹¹⁸

On the subjects of German Reunification and European Security, most aspects of the 21 March Phased Plan were reinstated, and it was clear that the British view prevailed on several important points. Ideally the British, as discussed, would have preferred to European Security measures separate from the Package Plan. But strategically, the Prime Minister had decided to acquiesce with the general view of their Allies, and await events at Geneva, when the Soviets were bound to reject the Western Package Plan. Thus, arms limitations in a designated zone would continue to move hand in hand with the reunification process (as in the 21 March Working Group Report) with German unity and comprehensive disarmament, (as favoured by the French and West Germans) appearing in the ultimate stage.

Adenauer's insistence at the Foreign Ministers Meeting, that the Russians had to make a prior commitment to free elections was dropped. This was a success for the British delegation's argument, but it was recognised that during the first stage of the Phased Plan, a period of two and a half years, during which the all- German Committee would operate, the Russians would need at some stage to recognise the principle of free elections. In addition, certain contentious issues regarding European Security, were left for consideration by the Foreign Ministers. These included the following questions. Should a prohibition against the stationing of IRBMs in a defined area in Europe be included? Could and should the area in Europe in which special security measures would be applied be identified in other than political terms? And should a measure of general disarmament be introduced in the Phased Plan?¹¹⁹

Finally the Working Group recommended tactics for the forthcoming Geneva Conference.¹²⁰ They considered the primary objective of the Western representatives should be to conduct serious negotiations leading to an agreement with the Soviet Government, which would avert the immediate threat to Berlin, without jeopardising the essential principles of Western policy. They must also determine whether and at what stage in negotiations it would be advantageous to engage in a separate discussion of an

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

interim solution for Berlin, without prejudicing their fundamental position that a permanent solution of the Berlin problem can only be achieved by an all-German settlement.¹²¹ At this stage of the Western negotiation all the Allies were privately prepared to admit that this was the key question. It would be at this moment that British ideas would come once more to the forefront, and the Macmillan 'blueprint' would prevail again.

The Foreign Ministers Meeting of 29 April, in Paris.

The Western Foreign Ministers met in Paris on 29 April, one day after the Warsaw Pact Meeting of their Eastern Bloc counterparts. In view of their public differences, there was widespread surprise in the West over the Western Powers Communiqué, which stated that they had come to 'complete agreement on the position to be presented at Geneva'. Selwyn Lloyd informed the Prime Minister on 29 April, that the Foreign Ministers had made rapid progress in a good atmosphere.¹²² The Western proposal on Berlin aimed at producing a positive response to the Soviet proposal for a Free City of Berlin. During the first stage of the Western Phased Plan, the two parts of the city would be united through free elections under UN supervision.

It was also agreed that if the Soviets rejected the Western Phased Plan, the proposals on Berlin within the Phased Plan would be put to the Soviets as an Interim Agreement for Berlin. In general, it was decided that the West would try to keep discussion of fallback positions within the framework of the Phased Plan, until the Geneva Conference had convened. At this stage the Allies would decide which to put forward, and when and what elements of all of them might be combined together. Selwyn Lloyd reported that such decisions would not be made before the Geneva Conference, as much would depend on what the Russians might propose there. Certainly, this would provide an opportunity for the British to discuss their ideas on a zone of limitation in conjunction with an Interim Agreement on Berlin. The French did not bring up their well known doubts about UN participation in an interim Berlin solution at this stage.¹²³

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Lloyd to PM, T.226/59, 29 April 1959, PREM 11/2717.

¹²³ Ibid.

Discussion then moved on to the issue of European Security measures within the Phased Plan. Dr. Wilhelm G. Grewe, German Ambassador to the US, who was standing in for Von Brentano, the German Foreign Minister said that although the Federal Government agreed with the general principle of a security zone, it could not accept a zone restricted to Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and perhaps Hungary, as this would imply discrimination against Germany, as a full and equal member of NATO.¹²⁴ Instead the Federal Government preferred zones of ground and air inspection which covered the whole of Europe, including the Soviet Union. Lloyd considered that acceptance of this suggestion would intimate that the British had abandoned their ideas, so he informed the Prime Minister that he hoped to insert a general paragraph on this subject in the Phased Plan, which would be consistent with the British position.¹²⁵ Analysis of the Phased Plan, shows that he was successful, and the demarcation of the Security Zone was left open for negotiation in the future.

However, the British were not successful in their aim of inserting a clause in the Phased Plan for a nuclear free zone.¹²⁶ The Germans had taken exception to the proposal in the 21 March Working Group Report which prohibited the production of atomic, biological, and chemical weapons in the zone. They also rejected a commitment not to station IRBMs in the Security Zone, and Lloyd reluctantly agreed. They proposed instead, that the future all-German Government be invited to extend to all of Germany, the renunciation of such manufacture accepted by the Federal Republic under the Western European Union (WEU) Protocols.¹²⁷ The British, ever pragmatic, put the cause of Alliance unity before the attainment of all its goals, knowing that it was an Interim Berlin Agreement not the Western Package Plan, which would ultimately dominate the proceedings at the Geneva Conference.

The other main areas on which agreement was reached was the composition of the all-German Committee. Von Brentano had extracted the Chancellor's approval for the establishment of the all-German Committee proposed by the Working Group. But any implication that the all-German Committee might issue directives to the Governments

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid. paras. 27, 28, 29.

¹²⁷ Meeting of the Western Foreign Ministers, 29 April 1959, NSA no.1258.

was deleted from the Phased Plan.¹²⁸ This was to obviate any implication that the establishment of an all-German Committee would result in Western recognition of the DDR, or acceptance of the Soviet proposal for a confederation. However, it was hoped such a committee would show Western willingness to encourage more contacts between Germans from both sides. As a concession to the Russians, the composition of the Committee was raised to 25 for the Federal Republic, and 10 for the DDR, with a three fourth's majority required in voting procedures. This meant that the DDR could not be out voted on this body, but the West had not conceded parity, as desired by the Eastern Bloc.

Christian Herter, the new Secretary of State informed the President that he was gratified by the results of the Foreign Ministers Conference, but he felt some basic difficulties of the British had been swept under the carpet and were likely to reappear at Geneva.¹²⁹ This was the result of a conscious decision by Macmillan to put Alliance unity before the fulfilment of British objectives at this stage of the negotiations. Herter's assessment of British intentions was therefore correct. On 5 May, the Foreign Secretary told the Cabinet, that the West's position at Geneva would be more flexible than in 1955, and:- 'Its formulation was such as to leave it open to us to put forward, as the negotiations proceed, the ideas which we canvassed in earlier discussions with our Allies'.¹³⁰

Conclusion

The British Government's belief that East-West differences in a nuclear age must be resolved by negotiation was the basis of the British approach towards contingency planning for Berlin. During the period January-March, culminating in Macmillan's discussions with the President at Camp David, Britain had been remarkably successful in moderating US policy, and persuading the US and French Governments to adopt her ideas. By April, Britain had persuaded her Allies: to accept the Agency Principle on access to Berlin, provided that the Soviets accepted an Agency relationship; to reject the automatic use of force in contingency measures such as a land probe unless it had the consent of individual Governments; and to consider further the British and French

¹²⁸ Ibid. NSA no. 1234.

¹²⁹ Herter to President, 5 May 1959, NSA no. 1245.

¹³⁰ Cabinet Conclusions 28(59) 5 May 1959, CAB 128/33.

preference for an airlift, in the event of an access crisis. Britain had also retained a veto in the decision making process of 'LIVEOAK', the new secret Tripartite organisation for contingency planning, which General Norstad established in April 1959, in Paris. But, on one issue, there was still no agreement. The British Government, unlike the US Government was prepared to tolerate technical links with the DDR in a non-agency relationship, and accept stamping of documents by DDR guards at the checkpoints.¹³¹

This controversy continued to rumble on and was only resolved later in 1959, when the British reluctantly agreed to a US compromise proposal, whereby DDR checkpoint officials would be provided with pre-stamped copies of travel orders. However in the event of a crisis, Gerard C. Smith, Eisenhower's Policy Planning Staff Director interpreted Eisenhower's position as follows: 'he seemed to be anticipating that we would eventually be pushed away from (no stamping of documents) by our Allies'.¹³²

The British impact on the development of the Western negotiating position for the Geneva Conference, as discussed in the Four Power Working Group from February to April, 1959, was also considerable. The Western Phased Plan agreed at the Foreign Ministers Conference of April 29 was a compromise, embodying the range of opinions within the Western Alliance. However, British influence was a major factor, in that three important ideas of the Macmillan initiative were central to the Western Plan: an all-German Committee, a zonal arms agreement, and most importantly, an Interim Settlement for Berlin. The Western Allies had also recognised at Group and at Ministerial level, the necessity of a fallback plan incorporating those ideas, which Macmillan thought would be of some interest to the Soviet Government. The plan would be based on a new access agreement supplementing existing occupation rights, and addressing Soviet grievances on the Western occupation of the City. As the Geneva Conference approached, the omens seemed positive for the British. The French, in spite of the existence of the Paris-Bonn Axis, showed an unexpected degree of agreement with British policy on the basic principles which might guide an Interim Berlin Settlement. The demise of the Dulles-

¹³¹ See Burr, NSA Essay, op. cit. p.35. In the Summer of 1959, the British reluctantly agreed to the US view that DDR officials at the checkpoints would be provided with prestamped copies of travel orders. Eisenhower was wary of upsetting Adenauer on this issue, but W. Burr considers that in a crisis the President might well have adopted the British view, and considered nuclear war only if the DDR physically prevented access.

¹³² NSA Essay, Burr, op. cit. p. 35.

Adenauer alliance also had an important impact on the possibility of a modus vivendi with the Russians, based on the Macmillan initiative.

At the Foreign Ministers Meeting of 29 April, the Chancellor was thus forced to adopt a more compromising and realistic approach towards negotiations with the Russians. Furthermore, Christian Herter, the new Secretary of State, who was inexperienced in foreign affairs adopted a more pragmatic and sympathetic approach to British policy on Berlin than his august predecessor. At this crucial juncture in East-West relations, Macmillan could reasonably expect, if not to assume leadership of the Western Alliance, then at least to play a dominant mediatory role in East-West relations at the forthcoming Geneva Conference.

Chapter Five

The Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference 11 May -5 August 1959

Previous debates about the Geneva Conference have dismissed as a total failure the British Government's attempts to achieve an Interim Settlement on Berlin, and a summit conference leading to East-West detente and disarmament.¹ But it appears that the Soviet Government perceived the Geneva Conference as a preparatory period of East-West negotiation on Berlin which would be concluded at the summit along with the introduction of disarmament measures. Indeed, the Soviet Government used the final position papers of the Geneva Conference of 28 July 1959 as the basis of their proposals for an Interim Settlement on West Berlin, which was sent to the Western Powers on 9 May, 1960, just prior to the ill fated Paris Summit of May 1960. The Western Powers also used their position paper of 28 July at Geneva, as the basis of Allied discussions on an Interim Agreement for Berlin, from August, 1959-May 1960. Arguably, had the summit proceeded as planned, an East-West compromise on Berlin was at least a possibility in May 1960. This justifies a detailed examination of Anglo-Soviet relations and the negotiations which took place at the Geneva Conference.

This Chapter will analyse the British Government's role at the Geneva Conference, and determine to what extent Britain succeeded in influencing her Allied partners' policies towards an Interim Agreement on Berlin and thereafter a summit conference. It will also attempt to establish whether the British Government was correct in its assessment that the Russians and the East Germans wished to establish a modus vivendi on West Berlin.

Soviet Policy Prior to the Geneva Conference

In March and April 1959, official statements and messages emerging from Moscow broadly supported the view that the main Soviet aim during the Berlin Crisis was the confirmation of the status quo in Germany and Central Europe. Khrushchev's speech of 31 March promised that West Berlin would not be harmed by being a Free City and could keep its capitalist system since 'evidently conditions have not yet ripened for the new

¹ The Geneva Conference only gets a brief mention in Schick, op. cit; p.97; Gearson, op. cit. p.106; and in Trachtenberg's analysis of US policy and the Berlin Crisis, op. cit. p.202.

order.....as the saying goes each vegetable has its season'.² Reporting this speech from Moscow, Llewelyn Thompson, the US Ambassador predicted that there would be a great Soviet effort at Geneva to achieve the process of disengagement by European Security measures, and that by this and the new Berlin arrangement, Khrushchev would obtain for the DDR a general status quo recognition which he had probably realised could not be gained through Western agreement to German Confederation and the peace treaty. Hans Kroll, the FRG Ambassador in Moscow, who of all the Western diplomats had the closest relationship with the Soviet leadership, also reached this conclusion. His conversation with Gromyko on 13 April, established that there were two major Soviet objectives in the Berlin Crisis: international recognition of a line running roughly along the Elbe and Western confirmation of the existence of the two German states.³ Gromyko had indicated that Berlin itself was of secondary importance, and Khrushchev was willing to make considerable concessions in return for his major objective, the maintenance of the status quo in Central Europe. He was also willing for a period of several years to keep a modus vivendi on Berlin, provided DDR controls replaced Soviet controls in and around Berlin, and Berlin was purged as a centre of espionage and subversive activities. Gromyko also made the point that Khrushchev was committed to his Seven Year Plan which could only be carried out if considerable savings were made on armaments. According to Kroll, Khrushchev had given orders that nothing should be done to endanger his objective of securing a summit conference.⁴

Possibly the most interesting development in Anglo-Soviet relations came in April with the beginning of a direct correspondence between Khrushchev and Macmillan, which they had decided to establish during the Moscow talks. Britain's Allied partners, particularly West Germany saw this development as evidence that Britain was risking descending further down 'the slippery slope'. Khrushchev's letter to Macmillan of 14 April, refers to the Prime Minister's conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, Yakov Malik on 8 April, during which they discussed the forthcoming Geneva Conference.⁵ The Soviet leader praised the British Prime Minister's initiative (his visit to Moscow) as being 'crowned

² Thompson to DOS, NSA no. 1078, 31 Mar. 1959.

³ The German Delegation at the Four Power Working Group, in London briefed their colleagues on Kroll's conversation with Gromyko, 17 April 1959, NSA no.1175.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Khrushchev to Macmillan, 14 April 1959, T.207/59, PREM 11/2715.

with success' as Britain's Allies were now also ready for a summit. He also agreed with Macmillan's view that meetings of Heads of Government should be informal and systematic, and not just at moments of crisis. Khrushchev noted from press reports that Macmillan might not have had the support of his Allies 'on questions raised in Moscow', however, he said he was grateful the Western Powers did not 'require specific results from the Foreign Ministers Conference, other than for it to proceed in a constructive way'. Khrushchev had appreciated their 'frank talks in Moscow'. Looking back he said, 'I now feel that their value (was) much greater than it appeared at the time of (their) meetings' and he went on to contrast them with the 'stupid inflammatory statements' then being made by military leaders in the US and West Germany which he saw as an attempt to prepare the American people 'psychologically for war'.⁶

Aware that his Allies might be suspicious, Macmillan later informed Eisenhower about his correspondence with Khrushchev, and admitted that the Soviet leader had undoubtedly tried to drive a wedge in the Alliance: by renewing the offer of a Non-Aggression Pact; by stating that there were certain contradictions within the (Western) Alliance; and by reminding Macmillan that both Russia and England were within the range of ICBMs, and IRBMs.⁷ Nevertheless, Macmillan thought there was a certain element of genuineness in the letter in that Khrushchev had revealed something of his mind. He obviously had a healthy fear of war in Europe, was genuinely anxious for a summit, and would try to make the Foreign Ministers Meeting a success.⁸

In his reply to Khrushchev on 28 April, the Prime Minister acknowledged the importance of the Moscow visit, and their 'frank intimate exchange', and said he had tried to explain Khrushchev's point of view in subsequent visits to Paris, Bonn and Washington.⁹ He tried to reassure the Soviet leader that US generals spoke in terms of capabilities rather than intentions and that war was repugnant to Eisenhower. Macmillan gave a negative response to Khrushchev's offer of a Non-Aggression Pact and said he thought it was no substitute for the removal of misunderstandings and resolving differences, but he told Khrushchev that he was reassured by both his flexibility and his hopes for the Foreign Ministers Conference.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ PM to President, 20 April 1959, T. 212/59, PREM. 11/2685.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ PM to Khrushchev, 29 April 1959, T. 220/59, PREM 11/2685.

One gains the impression both from this correspondence and from the Anglo-Soviet talks in Moscow that the Soviet Government was very interested in Macmillan's willingness to act as a mediator between East and West. A Report by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, submitted to the Central Committee on 22 April, based on MID diplomatic assessments of the British position prior to the Geneva Conference and press reports, also supports this view.¹⁰ This Report is invaluable in assessing Soviet perceptions of Western policy and in particular Britain's position within the Western Alliance. It was remarkably accurate in its appreciation of the position of each of the Four Powers on Western proposals for the Geneva Conference, emphasising the general lack of Western unity and the individual approach of the British Government to the problems in hand. According to the report, from the outset, the British Government had been the most 'flexible' and the French Government had broadly supported the Federal Republic. The US Government had vacillated, though in general it had tended to support the position of the Federal Republic, rather than Britain. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs anticipated that the forthcoming meeting of the Four Power Working Group on 13 April would try to reach an agreed Allied position, but noted that the differences between the Western Powers were more profound than before the Geneva Conference of 1955.¹¹

The British thought that a summit was the only forum which could achieve East-West agreement, and that it should be summoned irrespective of the results of the Foreign Ministers Meeting. The Report contrasted British enthusiasm for a summit with the hostile position the FRG had adopted on this question, and with the American and French attitude, that there should only be a summit if the Foreign Ministers Meeting achieved concrete results. Furthermore, in its preparations for the Foreign Ministers Meeting, the British Government considered that the Western Powers should consider one or two problems in particular, such as West Berlin and a zone of thinning out in Central Europe which would be referred to a summit for resolution. The US Government, which was more flexible than Germany or France wished to discuss these questions, (Berlin and European Security, and a Peace Treaty) in the form of a general package plan of mutually linked subjects directed towards German Reunification. The Report pointed out that

¹⁰ MID. Report for Central Committee, 22 April, 1959 AVP RF Fond 069, Opis 46, Papka 194, Delo 21, pp. 87-104.

¹¹ Ibid.

recently Britain had agreed to adhere to the basic principles of the Package Plan and had for the time being given up her former views. Nevertheless, it was anticipated that at the Foreign Ministers Conference, Britain might well support a separate examination of the subjects of West Berlin and European Security. As yet, the Western Powers had failed to concur on the contents of the Package Plan, but had agreed to adhere to the following principles: that Western troops should remain in West Berlin; that there should be unrestricted access to the City; that discussion of the West Berlin question should be linked to consideration of the German and European Security questions; that a Peace Treaty could not be concluded with two German states and that there should be no recognition, not even *de facto*, of the DDR. These questions were at present under consideration at the Four Power Working Group Meeting in London.¹²

On the German and West Berlin questions the Report noted a wide divergence in Western views. The MID anticipated that the question of German Reunification would certainly be included in the package plan. The FRG's standpoint that reunification could only come about by free all-German elections remained unchanged, and retained the support of the French only because they considered that reunification would never be achieved by this method. Britain had reserved her position and was interested in creating more flexibility for the Western Powers rather than resolving the German question. The British view was that German Reunification should originate from the creation of an all-German Committee (on an inter-governmental basis), with competence to act on questions of trade and culture.

The US, like Britain had been inclined to reassess the position of the Western Powers, an example being Dulles' statement at his 13 January Press Conference that free elections were not the only path to German Reunification. There had also been talk in Congress and the US Press of the expediency of establishing inter-governmental links. The fact that the State Department had not reacted too sharply to these comments was seen by the authors of the Report as a positive sign. The MID envisaged that a common Western line was emerging based on the following factors: that the plan for German Reunification must take place in stages over a long period; that during the first stage an all-German non-governmental committee should be established; and that free elections should take place

¹² *Ibid.*

during one of the stages. It was not yet clear to the MID whether the Western plan at any point during the process envisaged a confederation of the two German states.¹³

The MID considered that Britain's policy was to prevent the West Berlin question developing into a serious international crisis. Nevertheless, the British Government firmly supported the position of the Western Powers on two principles: that they should not agree to the creation of a Free City nor to the removal of Western occupation troops. Accordingly, Britain had proposed a provisional or interim agreement with the Soviet Government (until reunification). The US Government was against any new agreement on Berlin, but wanted to obtain from the Soviet Union a confirmation of the existing situation, based on the DDR exercising control over communications as agents of the Soviet Government, and a Soviet acknowledgement of the Western right to be in Berlin. The FRG Government was opposed to any changes in the existing situation in West Berlin, whereas the French Government believed the West should unconditionally defend her position in the city and agree only to mutual concessions which would not affect Western rights and the status of the city. The Report stated that various proposals were being considered by the Western Powers including the transfer of the whole of Berlin to UN jurisdiction with UN control of communications, and the conclusion of an interim settlement on West Berlin until German Reunification which would protect the city's status.¹⁴ At that point in time the MID were not able to predict which variant the Western Powers would finally support, but they were sure that Britain would not accept any decision which would have the effect of weakening Western rights in West Berlin.

Significantly, the MID drew attention to the fact that the Western Powers were discussing steps which they intended to take if talks on Berlin failed and the Soviet Union signed a peace treaty with the DDR. These included establishing an air lift, the dispatch in the first instance of an unarmed, and then an armed convoy to West Berlin, as a means of communicating their intentions to the Soviet Union. The Report went on to say that according to unofficial sources, the British were discussing the possibility of transferring the question of West Berlin to the UN Security Council, and asking it to protect the status of Berlin and renew talks on the question. By these means, the Report stated, the British

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

could meet Soviet objections, facilitate the summoning of a summit, and ensure that the West, relying on UN support, emerged in a stronger position.¹⁵

The Report then looked at the question of European Security. It reached the conclusion that the Western Powers had decided to reject any Soviet proposal on a Non-Aggression Pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact and to reserve their future position. As regards the creation of a special zone in Central Europe, the Report noted that there was a serious division of opinion amongst the Western Powers. Originally, on the eve of his visit to Moscow, Macmillan considered the establishment of such a zone both viable and desirable, but only the general principles behind the creation of such a zone had been discussed and no concrete plans had been drawn up. According to British thinking, a zone for the limitation and inspection of arms need not necessarily be an atom free zone nor one in which forces of both alliances would be banned, but one in which forces and weapons would be restricted, and subject to international inspection. As to size, the British proposed that the zone could be comparatively small, at first including all or nearly all of the DDR and an equivalent part of the FRG, so that later it could be extended to the East and West. The British also believed that proposals on the zone should not be linked to German Reunification.¹⁶

According to the author of the Report, the FRG Government was opposed to British ideas on the zone as it would confirm the division of Germany and undermine NATO. Adenauer would only accept a security zone if it was sufficiently broad to encompass the Soviet Union at least as far as the Leningrad meridian, and the French held a similar view on this question. The Americans considered the British proposals would endanger their strategic military plans and the military strength of the FRG. During their initial discussions, the Western powers had accordingly agreed that they would not negotiate on the British proposals, but the idea of a separate zone was being discussed again and had been included in the package plan.

As far as the MID knew, the following proposals were under discussion in the Western package plan: any agreement on the zone would be co-ordinated with an agreement on German Reunification; the eastern area of the zone would be much bigger than the Western area, so as to include the DDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

East, and the FRG in the West; the zone should not undermine the military plans of NATO, nor weaken the West militarily and at least some of the following measures should be included. States within the zone should not produce nuclear weapons. States which already possessed nuclear weapons should not transfer such weapons to states in the zone, and medium range rockets should be prohibited within the zone. The Report concluded by stating that the FRG had prevailed on the Western powers to link their proposals on disarmament, submitted to the UN in 1957, to proposals on the German question. The MID repudiated this approach on the basis that such problems could never be resolved simultaneously, and in any case the German question and disarmament were not usually linked in this way.¹⁷

From the Report, it is apparent that Soviet perceptions of the state of Western planning for the Geneva Conference were remarkably accurate and indicate that the Soviet Government was well aware of both disunity in the Western camp, and Britain's individual and flexible approach to the questions of a summit, German Reunification, an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and a special zone of limitation of weapons and forces. In the absence of concrete evidence, one can hypothesise that the Soviet Government hoped Britain would influence her Allied partners to adopt a more moderate stance on these questions, thereby making a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union a possibility. Certainly the above Report suggests that the Soviet Government saw signs of the US moving towards the British position in some areas, whereas the FRG, with the support of the French, was blamed for putting pressure on their Allies not to delink their proposals for the Geneva Conference on Germany, Berlin and European Security. Whilst the Soviet Government praised Britain's flexibility in many areas, it did not anticipate Britain weakening on the all important Western principles of the status of West Berlin and the maintenance of Western troops in the city.¹⁸ This assessment of Britain's position means we can rebut the charge made by some of Macmillan's critics, notably Adenauer that Britain was appeasing the Soviets. Indeed, it has been established from this new Soviet evidence that it was Macmillan's vigorous defence of the basic rights of the West in Moscow that precipitated the famous 'toothache incident'.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

If, as argued in this thesis, Moscow genuinely wanted a modus vivendi with the West, Britain with her more pragmatic approach was invaluable to Moscow in furthering her cause both as the conduit of her intentions (as after Macmillan's visit to Moscow) and as an interpreter of Soviet policies. Arguably, the Soviet Government must have expected to compromise on the questions of the status of Berlin and the presence of Western troops in the City. It is therefore significant that in the Soviet document on an Interim Agreement on Berlin found in Ulbricht's Office, dated 11 May 1960, there is no mention of a change in West Berlin's status to that of a Free City, and provision is made for the stationing of a token Western force in the city. Furthermore, when the Soviet Government became aware during the course of the Geneva Conference that the FRG was adamantly opposed to an all-German Committee, because it smacked too much of the confederal idea, this point was omitted from the Soviet draft document on an Interim Agreement on Berlin of 11 May, 1960.¹⁹ Finally, it appears that the Soviets, as Macmillan had argued, were extremely interested in British proposals for a zone of limitation of forces and weapons in Central Europe, and hoped this topic would be dealt with in later negotiations.

Soviet and DDR Objectives for the Geneva Conference.

On 14 April Ulbricht met Pervukhin, the Soviet Ambassador to the FRG to discuss the situation before the Geneva Conference. He suggested that for the duration of the Geneva Conference a broad campaign should be launched in the DDR and in the FRG in support of a peace treaty, the condemnation of the atomic arming of the Bundeswehr; the peaceful resolution of the Berlin question and the establishment of a German Confederation.²⁰

The official aims of the Soviet Government for the Geneva Conference were set out in the communiqué issued after the Meeting of the Warsaw Pact Countries and the Chinese People's Republic on 27 and 28 April 1959.²¹ Soviet proposals 'on the two most urgent questions of our time: the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and the termination of the occupation regime in Berlin received the 'full unanimity of the Conference', as did the granting of the status of a Free City to West Berlin. The City's 'security and unobstructed communications with the outside world would be guaranteed by the great

¹⁹ See Appendix E.

²⁰ Memo of a conversation between Pervukhin and Ulbricht, 14 April 1959, TsKhSD, Rolik 8905, Listi 4, Fond 5, Opis 49, Delo 174 pp.79-82.

²¹ Press Statement by the Soviet Embassy, 29 April 1959, PREM 11/2717.

powers with the participation of the United Nations'. The participants also acclaimed the readiness of the DDR to respect completely the status of the Free City of Berlin and to take part in the guarantees of its security. The communique condemned the hurried measures taken by countries of the Western Alliance for reviving German militarism and setting up American rockets and atomic bases on the territories of European NATO countries, and drew attention to the 'dangerous line adopted by the Federal Republic of Germany which has now launched vigorous measures to equip the German Army with nuclear and rocket weapons.' It asserted that the West Germans were coming out against any proposals for the relaxation of tension such as the Polish proposal to set up a nuclear free zone in Central Europe.²² Furthermore it emphasised that German Reunification was an inter-German problem which could only be solved by Germans themselves 'through rapprochement and agreement between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany without any outside interference'. There was also a clear warning against linking the three problems of Germany, Berlin and European Security and 'tying them in one knot.' It was not therefore surprising that the main aim of the Soviet Delegation during the early weeks at Geneva was to untie the Western Package Plan. The official Soviet position appeared to be that the Soviet Union and the DDR would guarantee the freedom of West Berlin and access to it, the two essential principles for the West, and certainly this was the view of some Western commentators. Two documents from Ulbricht's Office confirm that this was the case. First, a Soviet document (author not stated) on policy for the Geneva Conference, originating in Moscow was sent to Ulbricht, on 8 March, 1959.²³ The note anticipated Western rejection of the Soviet proposal that West Berlin should become a Free City, and advised the DDR Government to prepare a Declaration for the Conference, stating its dual obligation not to interfere in the internal affairs of the city, and to guarantee its unimpeded communications with the outside world. It advised the DDR to propose at the Geneva Conference that this Declaration could be lodged with the United Nations in the form of an international obligation. Enclosed with the statement from Moscow was a Soviet Protocol on Guarantees for the Free City of West Berlin, evidence of the Soviet Government's

²² Ibid.

²³ Communication from Moscow to Ulbricht, agreeing the position of the DDR at the Geneva Conference 8 March, 1959, (located in Ulbricht's Office, SED Politburo) SAPMO-BArch, DY30, J1V 2/202/128.

intention of protecting Western access to the city. Moscow also expected proposals for the reunification of Germany to be included in the Western Plan for the Geneva Conference, and advised the DDR Government that it was particularly important that there should be a DDR statement at the Geneva Conference emphasising that German Reunification was the task of the two German states, and advocating the case for confederation.

Moscow supported the DDR's proposal to the FRG to hold talks linked to the forthcoming meeting at Geneva, and considered that this proposal would attract more publicity in the West if other questions on confederation, as discussed in the Senate and Government of the DDR were included. On the eve of the Foreign Ministers Conference such a statement would strengthen the Soviet Government's position at the meeting and retain the initiative on the reunification question.²⁴ Thus, we have evidence that the Soviet Government's aims did not include the annexation of Berlin. On the contrary, the Soviets were anxious to reassure the Western Powers that the DDR would respect the freedom of the city and access to it, the two key principles of the Western Powers in relation to West Berlin. Having said that, there was undoubtedly a wide gap between the opening positions of the two sides as regards German Reunification and the status of West Berlin, but as Ambassador Kroll maintained, Khrushchev would be flexible over Berlin if he could achieve his wider aims.

The second key document, a long and detailed Directive for the DDR Delegation at the Geneva Conference would almost certainly have had the approval of the Soviet Government. It gives a clear indication of DDR aims at Geneva.²⁵ It is couched in customary ideological and propagandistic language and is significant because it prioritises objectives and indicates a certain readiness to compromise. Its first two points were the most significant. The Directive stated that the most important political task of the Foreign Ministers Conference was to prepare for the summit meeting....the main aim of the delegation was to find a solution to this task and to find possibilities and understandings on individual questions which bound the participants at the summit.....the central points of the negotiation were the peace treaty with Germany and the removal of the

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Directive for the DDR Delegation to the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference, undated, position in file in Ulbricht's Office, late April/early May, 1959, SAPMO-Barch, DY30/ JIV 2/202/128.

occupation regime in West Berlin. The delegates had to ensure that the agenda was confined to these two items. The delegation were instructed to reject the Bonn position that a peace treaty could only be achieved after the reunification of Germany and agreed by the new government, because the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany would create the ground rules for the German states to come together to form a confederation into a single peaceable democratic state. Bonn's aim of making reunification the central aim of the Western Powers at the Geneva Conference had to be resisted. Moreover, Bonn's plans were seen as attempts to annex the DDR by outvoting it and extending the power of German militarism over the whole of Germany.²⁶

The Directive then dealt with the Western proposal for setting up an all-German Committee, and argued in favour of the DDR Government's proposals of 4 September 1958: that a Committee composed of both German states should be set up on the basis of parity to deal with questions of the peace treaty and those concerning both German states. Turning to the West Berlin question, the delegation were instructed to raise the question of the conversion of West Berlin to a demilitarised, Free City and to deal with it as an independent question. Even though the DDR was not a member of the UN, it was considered important that the DDR delegation should make clear in the name of its Government that guarantees would be provided through the Secretary General of the UN for the maintenance of the status of West Berlin and the free movement of traffic.²⁷

It is most interesting to see that the delegation were empowered to discuss compromise proposals, for example the retention of a symbolic number of Western troops and Soviet troops and the replacement of Western troops by troops from Sweden, Switzerland and India, whose role would be purely symbolic. However, any proposal for a new arrangement for the whole of Berlin had to be decisively rejected, as Berlin was the capital of the DDR. The proposed Free City status for West Berlin was seen as only relevant to the Western sectors because the economic and political arrangements and way of life was different to that of the DDR on whose territory they lay. Finally, the delegation was instructed to discuss questions on European Security, such as: a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact; a zone of limited armaments for reducing tension; measures to prohibit and reduce surprise attacks; and the prohibition of

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

atomic tests. The delegation was instructed to maintain close contact with the Soviet delegation and to seek good relations with the delegates of the three Western Powers and the West German Government.

It is clear from this evidence that the DDR's aims for Berlin were defensive not offensive. Moreover, the Soviet Government intended to ensure DDR compliance with written guarantees for the freedom of Berlin, and access to the city. Arguably, Khrushchev, as Hans Kroll, intimated, might well have been prepared to compromise on an Interim Agreement for Berlin at Geneva, as a summit conference was his most important goal.

The First Phase of the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers 11-26 May - The Western Plan and the Soviet Proposals

The Geneva Conference was opened by the Secretary-General of the UN on 11 May. During the first phase of the Geneva Conference both sides presented their respective proposals, on Germany, West Berlin and European Security. It was largely a propaganda exercise devoted to lengthy prepared speeches, and affording little opportunity for private discussion or debate. On 14 May, Herter put forward the Western Plan which envisaged German Reunification in the context of European Security, as in 1955, but with some new concessions to the Soviet viewpoint.²⁸ In the first stage it offered the reunification of Berlin by free elections and the maintenance of Soviet and Western troops there, pending German Reunification. Secondly, it proposed an all-German Committee comprising 25 members from West and 10 from East Germany which would discuss means of improving contacts between the two regimes and draft an electoral law to be ratified by a German plebiscite. Simultaneously the Plan envisaged a reduction of forces with agreed measures against surprise attack. In the third stage, all-German elections would produce a government free to control its internal and external affairs within two and a half years, and this would be followed by the creation of a zone of controlled armaments on either side of an unspecified line. In the final stage, a peace treaty would be signed with the new government. The Western Powers doubted whether concessions in their above Plan, over and above the 1955 Western Plan, such as the postponement of free elections, the establishment of an all-German Committee and more precise security measures to be introduced concurrently would satisfy the Russians.

The real as opposed to the official aims of the Western Powers were more limited and pragmatic and had been influenced by British thinking in the period of Western negotiation prior to the Geneva Conference. They were summarised by the Four Power Working Group Report, as revised and approved by the Western Foreign Ministers on 30 April in Paris.²⁹

The objective of the Western Foreign Ministers at the Conference is serious negotiation leading to an agreement with the Soviet Government, even if such an

²⁸ Conference of Foreign Ministers at Geneva, 11 May-20 June, and 13 July-5 August 1959, Parliamentary Papers 1959-1960, no. 34, (Cmnd 868), Western Peace Plan, Doc. 56, pp.218-223.

²⁹ US Intelligence Report, 26 June 1959, NSA no.1465.

agreement has as its only result to help make the status quo viable for a period of years in so far as in their exchanges with the Soviet Government at Geneva, the Western Powers would seek to envisage an area of negotiation within which the Western position could be improved. That is to say, the Western Powers should so far as possible 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. As a minimum prerequisite to justify a summit, the Working Group stated 'it would be desirable that the meeting of Foreign Ministers should have brought about the definition of an Interim Berlin solution'.³⁰

In a statement on 18 May, Gromyko opposed the Western Plan as unrealistic and pointless, on the grounds that it envisaged free all-German elections, and European Security measures which would not apply until after German Reunification. Accordingly, he demanded the delinkage of the Western package plan.³¹ He also brought to the attention of the Conference such 'facts' as 'the equipment of the Bundeswehr with atomic and rocket weapons' and 'revanchist pronouncements in West Germany,' and asked how European states and especially those neighbouring on Germany's borders could remain undisturbed if West Germany stated its territorial claims.³² As regards the Berlin question, the Soviet Foreign Minister dismissed the proposals as not even being worthy of discussion, as they not only envisaged the perpetuation of the occupation regime, but its extension to Germany as a whole.³³ In spite of these criticisms, Gromyko signalled that some parts of the Western Plan were worth discussing 'independently from the artificially created package, and that as the Head of the Soviet Government, Mr. Khrushchev had said he would not oppose them'.³⁴ These included the idea of a Four Power Declaration on the settlement of international disputes, and some questions on disarmament and the establishment of a limited armaments zone. Khrushchev, he emphasised believed that prime importance should be accorded to negotiations on Berlin and the peace treaty with Germany.

The Soviet proposals presented by Gromyko on 15 May, took the form of a draft peace treaty with Germany and were basically a repetition of the Soviet Peace Note of 10

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Geneva Conference, Cmnd 868, Doc. 9, pp.34-45.

³² Ibid. p.41.

³³ Ibid. 40.

³⁴ Ibid. p.44.

January 1959, with certain concessions to the West.³⁵ These were: that the two sides would not be required to immediately leave NATO and the Warsaw Pact; that membership of regional economic units could continue; and that a united Germany could make its own decisions as to which it would belong; could conduct research in the peaceful uses of atomic energy and would not be hindered from incurring the rights and obligations of Article 51 of the UN Charter. The Soviet proposals were rejected by the Western Powers.

A British Cabinet review of the opening weeks of the Geneva Conference mainly blamed the Federal Republic for the inflexibility of the Western position which was prejudicing the chances of a Berlin settlement, and reiterated the view that a substantial number of people in Britain would prefer that Germany should continue to be divided, at any rate for several years to come.³⁶ For the moment, the British Government, acutely aware of past Allied accusations of 'softness', was not ready to take an initiative on an Interim Settlement for Berlin, so deadlock continued at Geneva. The first signs of progress came on 26 May, when Herter set out an amplified version of the Western proposal on Berlin, thus signalling that the Western powers were prepared to delink their Berlin proposals from the Western Plan and negotiate on an interim settlement for Berlin.

After Dulles' death on 24 May, there was a conference intermission to allow delegates to attend the funeral. En route back to Geneva from the funeral in the US, Gromyko had his first private conversation with his Western counterparts away from the glare of publicity. For the next fourteen days the Foreign Ministers met privately at each others' villas. This innovation allowed the Foreign Ministers to engage in genuine Four Power negotiation without the presence of the unyielding German delegations. Even the Americans admitted that having the Germans in the conference room was difficult, as the other Western powers had to avoid any question of yielding on recognition of the DDR.³⁷ During this period, the relationship forged between the Russians and the British in Moscow began to bear fruit. The Russians put forward ideas already discussed with the Prime Minister in Moscow, and used the Foreign Secretary to sound out Western reaction.

³⁵ Ibid. Draft Peace Treaty with Germany, Doc. 57, pp.223-237.

³⁶ Cabinet Conclusions 32 (59) Minute 4, 28 May 1959, CAB 128/33.

³⁷ DOS. Intelligence Report, 26 June 1959, NSA no. 1465. All four Foreign Ministers flew to Washington on 27 May, the original date for the expiry of the 'Soviet Ultimatum'.

The meetings were conducted in a friendly atmosphere, and there were 'real discussions, and there was remarkable secrecy about their substance'.³⁸

The Western Proposals on West Berlin- 3 June 1959

On 26 May, Herter signalled that the Western powers were prepared to untie their Berlin proposals.³⁹ Gromyko suggested to Selwyn Lloyd that as there was not much hope of getting agreement on the Western Plan or the Soviet Draft Treaty, the best course would be to concentrate on certain topics one by one, such as Berlin and certain aspects of European Security, on which the Soviet proposals were flexible, and took into account the Western position.⁴⁰ Gromyko said he was happy to give guarantees for the Free City and access to it, and emphasised that his government had no desire to take over West Berlin or change its social system. What really mattered to the Soviet Government was 'the presence of foreign troops and the risk of incidents which this created'. The best solution in his view would be the demilitarisation of West Berlin or alternatively, the substitution of token forces of the Four Powers, or neutral countries.

Initially, Gromyko rejected Selwyn Lloyd's suggestion that the UN could play a role in West Berlin, on the grounds that the DDR would not agree to any infringement of their sovereignty. But this conversation proved to be extremely productive, for on 30 May, Gromyko made a conciliatory statement: The status and social order of Berlin would be safeguarded, and guarantees would be given on access, economic life and so on. The DDR would give similar guarantees either as a signatory to the agreement or by making a separate declaration or declarations. It would also be possible for the UN to take part in such guarantees. Exactly how this could be done was a matter for discussion.⁴¹ Gromyko admitted that Western rights existed, but should be replaced by a new contractual agreement, a position which the British Government had originally discussed in Moscow. He was also reassuring about Western fears that the DDR might interfere with their access to West Berlin. In that case, he said it would be the joint responsibility of the Four Powers to restore the situation.⁴²

³⁸ Memo by Lloyd on the Foreign Ministers Conference, 13 June, 1959, c.(59) 102 CAB 129/98.

³⁹ UK Del. Geneva to FO, 26 May 1959, no.110, PREM 11/2717.

⁴⁰ Conversation between Gromyko and Lloyd, 26 May 1959, PREM 11/2717.

⁴¹ UK Del. Geneva to FO, 30 May 1959, no. 124, PREM 11/2717.

⁴² *Ibid.*

On 1 June, Selwyn Lloyd reported to the Prime Minister that the Geneva Conference was in an ‘exasperating state’ over these issues, with the Russians saying the occupation status must be ended but that they were prepared to give guarantees about the freedom of Berlin, including access, and the West saying the present status has to be maintained pending reunification.⁴³ In the Foreign Secretary’s view, the Western Powers should seek to improve the existing state in West Berlin by fixing a ceiling for Western troops and limitations on their equipment. This would reassure the Russians that they had no military value but were present in Berlin as symbols to ensure that Berlin was not used as a source of political activity against East Germany and to ensure a more complete agreement about access.⁴⁴ The Foreign Secretary informed the Prime Minister that Britain’s relations with her Allies were ‘excellent’ and ‘they (the Allies) were coming along quite well so far as dealings with the DDR over access were concerned’. In his view ‘the dangers of war were not anything like as great as they were six months ago.’ For the moment, he was deliberately not pushing himself forward but he was clearly ready to reconsider this cautious position if nothing happened within the next forty eight hours.

Gromyko stood by the ‘Free City’ proposal but introduced the idea of a Four Power Commission with East German participation to supervise access, obviously a move to relieve Western anxieties.⁴⁵ Furthermore, he accepted that any solution must take into account the existing social order in East and West Berlin, and the interests of the DDR. He moderated the former Soviet position by conceding that the presence of Western troops in Berlin was not illegal but ‘obsolete.’ The Soviet Government, he said, did not expect the Western Powers to recognize the DDR Government, but to be realistic about Berlin’s problems.⁴⁶

On 3 June, the Western Foreign Ministers broke the deadlock and delinked their Western Package Plan. At a private meeting with Gromyko, they submitted a Western Paper on an Interim Settlement for Berlin, based on five main points: a statement on the juridical position or Western rights, by which it came to be known; an undertaking not to increase the number of Western troops in the City; the avoidance of illegal and clandestine

⁴³ Lloyd to P M, 1 June 1959, T. 283/59, PREM 11/2717.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Lloyd to PM, 2 June 1959, T.286/59, PREM 11/2717.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

activities in the greater Berlin area; and a modification of the procedures regarding the present access arrangements. The fifth point stated that the various arrangements which might be agreed should continue until the reunification of Germany. Herter made it clear in his statement that there could be no modification of the rights of the Western Powers in Berlin on the basis of which various agreements had been concluded with the Soviet Union. Among these rights were the right to maintain troops there, and the right of unrestricted access to Berlin.⁴⁷

Initially Gromyko refused to accept the paper as a basis of discussion, but then he proceeded to discuss it for two hours, paragraph by paragraph.⁴⁸ He made two very interesting points which, from the British point of view, possibly contained the basis of a compromise. He said he did not want to reaffirm Western rights but he did not object to the Western Powers reaffirming them. He also suggested a quadripartite guarantee on access, a unilateral declaration by the DDR, and an agreement between the USSR and the DDR. This seemed to suggest an Agency type agreement between the Soviet Union and the DDR which might well have been acceptable to the West.

At this point Macmillan, sensing that there had been some movement on the previous day, and anxious to maintain the momentum in negotiations, again took the initiative and sent 'some thoughts in the bag' to the Foreign Secretary on a possible compromise to break the impasse. In Macmillan's view, the Berlin problem seemed to have 'resolved itself into a discussion about occupation in fact or as of right.' He suggested a preamble in the Interim Agreement prefacing an acceptable plan which might get over the contentious question of rights. Each side would maintain its own judicial point of view, but would agree on Cooperation in practical arrangements on Berlin. If the arrangements were to be guaranteed by the Four Powers, a Committee could be formed on the lines of Gromyko's suggestion, which would discuss the technical problems of co-operation between the two Germanies on economic and other matters.⁴⁹

Most importantly, to meet Soviet objections to an Interim Agreement lasting until German Reunification, Macmillan proposed a moratorium of five years for an Interim Agreement, as a quid pro quo for ensuring Western rights. In addition, he was ready to

⁴⁷ UK Del, Geneva to FO, 3 June 1959, no.146, 1959, PREM 11/2717.

⁴⁸ Lloyd to PM, 3 June 1959, T.291/59, PREM 11/2717.

⁴⁹ PM to Lloyd, 4 June 1959, T. 295/59, PREM 11/2717.

meet Gromyko halfway by resurrecting the Western idea of a mixed German Committee. Ideally, Macmillan hoped that Russia would make the first move. He advised Selwyn Lloyd that 'after all the suspicions and stories of earlier weeks, a further British initiative is not desirable but may become necessary to avoid a breakdown'. Judging from a recent letter from the President indicating that that there should be no change in Berlin's status until after German Reunification, Macmillan was doubtful about getting US support. However this pessimism was not justified, for Herter gained the President's agreement to take Berlin out of the Western package.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, at private discussions in Geneva, the Four Foreign Ministers tried to narrow their points of difference to establish if there was any basis for a compromise. In a private talk with Selwyn Lloyd, Gromyko explained that the West had got it wrong, they did not want recognition of the DDR, (Lloyd interpreted this as meaning both *de facto* and *de jure* recognition) they only wanted the West to accept the fact that the DDR existed and had rights. As regards Western concerns about a separate peace treaty, Gromyko suggested that a peace treaty was one way of solving the Berlin difficulty, but an agreement which all parties carried out was another way.⁵¹ The Soviet Foreign Minister suggested that there could be a joint paper or communique in which they would not mention the question of rights but just specification of points on which agreement had been reached. Pressed further, Gromyko said nothing either positive or negative would be said about rights; they would neither be reduced nor extended, but he refused to say that Western rights would subsist. Broadly speaking, this was the Prime Minister's position, but it was unacceptable to Herter, who said that Western rights were the main question. Nevertheless, Selwyn Lloyd was left with the impression that 'the Soviets are genuinely feeling about for something which they could accept as a satisfactory agreement'.⁵² As the Soviet side appeared to be warming to the Western Paper of 3 June, Selwyn Lloyd worked hard on the theme of 'improved arrangements for Berlin without prejudice to the validity of rights'.⁵³ As predicted by Macmillan, these initial exploratory conversations led to a new set of Russian proposals on 9 June.

⁵⁰ PM to Lloyd, 4 June 1959, T. 296/59, PREM 11/2717.

⁵¹ Lloyd to PM, 4 June 1959, T. 297/59, PREM 11/ 2717.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Lloyd to PM, 6 June 1959, T.300/59, PREM 11/2717.

The Soviet Proposals on Berlin 9 June 1959

On 9 June, Gromyko put forward a new set of proposals for a Berlin Agreement: an all-German Committee should be set up for one year to settle problems of reunification and a peace treaty; meanwhile Moscow would accept temporary maintenance of Western rights in Berlin as long as the West accepted the Free City plan.⁵⁴ The West would also be expected to stop hostile propaganda, and clandestine operations against the DDR; the Western Powers would reduce their armed forces and armaments in Berlin to symbolic contingents; and agree that there would be no atomic or rocket installations in West Berlin. If there was consensus on these points, then the Soviet Union would undertake to maintain communications with the outside world, and all agreements would be registered with the UN. Finally, a supervisory body consisting of representatives of the Four Powers would be set up to deal with questions of access, to examine any violations of the agreement with regard to West Berlin, and to see that the arrangement would be fulfilled without encroaching on the sovereignty of the DDR. In his closing statement, Gromyko stated that 'if the Western Powers would not accept these proposals, the Soviet Government would not confirm its consent to the continuation of the occupation regime in West Berlin, and would be forced to sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR'.⁵⁵

This was perceived by the West as a threat, and Herter said the US would never negotiate under deadlines, threats or duress. He accused Gromyko of shifting from his stance of the previous day on an Interim Berlin Settlement, to the 'extraordinary proposals' which he now made. Selwyn Lloyd agreed that the proposals were quite out of keeping with the spirit of their talks and smacked of a threat. Defending his new proposals, Gromyko said that a time limit was necessary to ensure that the all-German Committee did not drag out the present situation, and he pointed out that the Western Powers had themselves advocated a mixed German Committee for a period of two and a half years, in the initial Western Plan.⁵⁶ This was indisputable, but the Western Powers rejected these new Soviet proposals because they refused to accept that the maintenance of their rights in Berlin depended on the success or failure of such a committee. They also feared that they would be forced into *de jure* recognition of the DDR.

⁵⁴ Statement by Gromyko on the 'Question of West Berlin and an all-German Committee', Geneva Conference Proceedings, 9 June 1959, Cmnd 868, pp.235-237.

⁵⁵ UK Del. Geneva to FO, 9 Jun 1959, no. 205, PREM 11/2718.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 10 June 1959, tel. no.215, PREM 11/2718.

However, one important new piece of evidence found in Ulbricht's personal Office provides invaluable insights into Soviet motivation, and shows that the Soviet Government did not intend their 9 June proposals to be an ultimatum. Most importantly, it emphasises Khrushchev's desire to reach an agreement and to gradually end the Cold War. On 10 June Ulbricht sent a letter to the East German Politburo from Riga stating that he accepted the Soviet proposals to the Western powers. He then outlined Khrushchev's latest thoughts on the situation at Geneva.⁵⁷

In his letter, Ulbricht quoted the Soviet leader as stating: that tension had to be reduced by gradual rapprochement; that no ultimative demands should be made on the West; that the Western powers should be allowed to save face; that Gromyko should propose that the Commission had one and a half years to complete its work until approximately 1961; and that the Soviet Union and the DDR would only conclude a peace treaty if the work of the Committee of the two German states had been exhausted without achieving a result. During this period, Khrushchev said, Western troops in the city would have to be reduced and espionage activities ended. As the DDR guarantee for West Berlin had not proved to be sufficient for the Western Powers, the Four Powers could take over the guarantee and the DDR could supply an additional declaration. Significantly, Khrushchev emphasised that central importance would be given to the proposal that atomic weapons and rockets would be given up by the two German states, and the Soviet side would continue their quest for a treaty between the two German states on disarmament. As outlined by Ulbricht, Khrushchev concluded his thoughts with an exhortation: our policy must be aimed at 'gradual dismantlement of the Cold War'.⁵⁸ This letter provides clear evidence that Khrushchev was very keen to reach a modus vivendi with the West, and a settlement on West Berlin.

The Western Response to the Soviet Proposals of 9 June

However, what was perceived as the 'ultimative quality' of Soviet proposals elicited a strong diplomatic response from the West. In a private note to Khrushchev, dated 15 June, the President said that events at Geneva could threaten a settlement of US-Soviet problems and that if there was to be a summit, both sides had to abjure threats.

⁵⁷ Letter from Ulbricht in Riga to SED Politburo, 10 June, 1959, SAPMO-Barch, DY/30 2/202/128.

⁵⁸ Ibid

Eisenhower informed Khrushchev that the Foreign Ministers had to have accomplished enough 'to give us reason to believe that the Heads of Government would be able to reach agreement on significant issues'.⁵⁹ Privately, Herter and Couve de Murville agreed to take the latest Soviet proposals more calmly and not to regard them as a reason to end the Conference. It appeared the President was prepared to accept a situation in which the Western Powers made a unilateral declaration of their rights and the Soviet Government kept quiet. Arguably this concession brought the possibility of a compromise somewhat closer.⁶⁰

The Foreign Secretary flew to England on 13 June to give the Cabinet a detailed account of the state of the negotiations in Geneva.⁶¹ He made it clear that there was no prospect of agreement on the German situation as a whole, unless the immediate problem of Berlin could first be resolved. On the juridical position, he outlined the Prime Minister's ideas on a possible compromise, based on a statement that the Western Powers would maintain their rights which could not be undermined by unilateral action by the Soviet Union, but that both sides would agree on certain improved access arrangements for West Berlin, which by agreement should continue until the reunification of Germany. The Foreign Secretary said that at the beginning, the other delegations were far from this British position but 'now they had come some way towards it'.⁶² Regarding the question of Western troops in Berlin, the Foreign Secretary told the Cabinet that he had sought agreement on the basis of Western troops remaining there with a possible ceiling of 7,500 troops, which might be acceptable to his Western counterparts, and perhaps with some limitation on their armaments, for example nuclear weapons. Figures had not yet been put to Mr. Gromyko, but he thought the latter would probably be prepared to back down on the question of a Soviet contingent, if the question of status could be presented in a way acceptable to the Soviets. He told the Cabinet that there was already agreement in principle on a reciprocal declaration on this matter, and perhaps on some quadripartite body to hear complaints. This had the agreement of the US delegation.

⁵⁹ President to Khrushchev, 15 June 1959, NSA no.1405.

⁶⁰ Lloyd to PM, 10 June 1959, T.313/59, PREM 11/2718.

⁶¹ Cabinet Conclusions 35(59), Minute 2, 15 June 1959, CAB 128/33. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Foreign Secretary, C. (59) 102, CAB 129/98, reporting on the situation in Geneva.

⁶² *Ibid.*

The Foreign Secretary also told the Cabinet that HMG ‘had not been at all moved by questions as to who stamps what documents’, and accordingly would be prepared to accept East German operation of the control system, provided the USSR guaranteed Western rights and accepted the ultimate responsibility.⁶³ His US and French colleagues were aware that ‘no one was going to fight or even risk war on that sort of question.’ He was optimistic that provided the West did not have to either make these agreements with the DDR, nor submit complaints to the DDR (but alternatively involve the DDR by some separate declaration), there would not be any difficulty from the US or France. Even the West Germans had kept fairly quiet.

For the Foreign Secretary, the crux was ‘whether the Soviet Government could present such an agreement as a change in status in West Berlin, and the West could present it as a maintenance of their rights’. Until Gromyko presented the new Soviet proposals on 10 June, he had been optimistic about an agreement on these lines, but the new Soviet plan ‘pocketed’ all the Western concessions on Berlin, of 3 June, whilst claiming that the modified arrangements could only last for twelve months, during which time the DDR and the FRG had to negotiate the reunification of Germany in a manner prescribed by the Soviets. He reported to the Cabinet that after a warning from Herter that the West could not negotiate under threat, Gromyko rapidly climbed down in private, and rather less graciously in public.⁶⁴

The Cabinet were also informed that the rigidity of the US and French, and recent events, meant that decisions needed to be taken on the following questions: should the talks be adjourned for a month; should further action be taken to save the talks, and if so what; and what action should be taken about the summit? In discussion, the Cabinet concluded that: public opinion would regard a long adjournment of the Geneva Conference as a failure which would weaken the West’s negotiating position; that there was no point in taking up other important issues such as European Security, which might widen disagreement; that the latest proposals of the US delegation were still rigid and would require modification if they were to have any success; and finally, that agreement on practical arrangements for Berlin could be presented as sufficient progress for a summit. The Prime Minister emphasised the need for any Western Plan, to be put forward within

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

the next week or ten days to be 'demonstrably practical and sensible'. In the event of further deadlock the Allies would have to consider the next steps, but the British Government was ready to envisage a summit even if the Geneva Conference ended in failure.⁶⁵ At this stage, the initial optimism of the Government that progress was being made in the direction of a modus vivendi on Berlin had evaporated and urgent diplomacy was required behind the scenes to restart negotiations.

The Prime Minister together with his coterie of advisors pondered on the advisability of taking yet another initiative. De Zulueta interpreted Gromyko's remark that a time limit was negotiable, to mean that Russia would at least agree on an Interim Agreement lasting for perhaps three years and without prejudice to the legal position. If Selwyn Lloyd achieved such an agreement, it would fulfil the President's condition of progress for a summit.⁶⁶. Macmillan felt that the Western Powers had become unnecessarily bogged down on the question of occupation rights and he told the Foreign Secretary:-

if we are to have any kind of agreement, whether now, or at a summit, we must either blur the question of occupation status or deal with it as we have so often suggested by each side stating its position as a matter of principle in the preamble and then going on to practical arrangements.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, there was a flurry of inter-Allied and East-West diplomatic activity aimed at avoiding a total breakdown at Geneva. Macmillan in a somewhat desperate mood, sent a message to the President suggesting that should negotiations break down, an informal Heads of Government meeting should be held as a face saving gesture.⁶⁸ Indeed, whilst the President was sympathetic to the Prime Minister's need for a summit for domestic political reasons, his reply was very discouraging. He was actively considering inviting Khrushchev over to see him alone, to prevent the Prime Minister once again seizing the initiative.⁶⁹ At a White House Conference with Caccia and Dillon, on 16 June he emphasised the importance of the unity of the Western Allies, and reiterated his views on the agreed Camp David formula of March: that a summit 'would certainly have to take place in an atmosphere in which neither side was posing a threat to the other, and on the

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Minute, de Zulueta to PM, 20 June, 1959, PREM 11/2718.

⁶⁷ PM to Lloyd, 16 June 1959, T.326/59, PREM 11/2718.

⁶⁸ PM to President, 16 June 1959, T.326/59, PREM11/2718.

⁶⁹ President to Dillon, 16 June 1959, NSA no.1417.

bases of such preparatory work by our Foreign Ministers as could give us reason to believe that the Heads of Government would be able to reach agreement on significant subjects'. He insisted that he would not be bludgeoned into a summit meeting and that he would rather be 'atomised than communised'.⁷⁰ One of the reasons why the Americans were trying to prevent a precipitate break up of the Conference was because it would leave Western forces in serious disarray and risk giving Gromyko the British split for which the Americans believed Gromyko had been working.⁷¹ The Prime Minister was spared this dilemma by new developments in Geneva, which in his estimation were due to Selwyn Lloyd's efforts. The latter had successfully forged agreement among the Western Allies to revised Western proposals on Berlin.⁷²

The Western Paper of 16 June on an Interim Agreement for Berlin

In response to the 9 June Soviet proposals, the Western Powers presented a Western Paper on 16 June, which was basically a revised version of their 3 June proposal.⁷³ This included an arrangement limiting troop levels to the existing figure of 11,000 men 'if developments in the future permit'. As a concession to the Soviets, and in response to the Soviet proposals of 9 June, the Western paper also stated that West Berlin garrisons would only be armed with conventional weapons. This was a triumph for British policy which had always been mindful of Soviet security fears. Free and unrestricted access to West Berlin would continue for all persons and goods. In addition, the Four Powers would restrict propaganda and subversive activities which might disturb public order or seriously affect their rights and interests, or amount to interference in the internal affairs of others. This interim arrangement was to be changed upon the reunification of Germany. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of this Western Paper was that it did not mention Western rights, an important victory for British pragmatism and Selwyn Lloyd believed 'the other delegations had come a long way to meet the British view, perhaps further than they at present realised'.⁷⁴ The Prime Minister was fulsome in his praise of the Foreign Secretary on this latest Western paper which he considered was an 'immense

⁷⁰ Memo of White House Conference, Dillon and Caccia, 16 June, 1959. NSA, no.1442.

⁷¹ Dillon to Herter in Geneva, 17 June, 1959, NSA no.1420

⁷² Cabinet Conclusions 36 (59) Minute 4, 17 June, 1959, CAB 128/33

⁷³ Joint Western Paper on Berlin, 16 June 1959, Cmnd 868. pp.237-238.

⁷⁴ Lloyd to PM, 16 June, 1959, T.329/59, PREM 11/2718.

improvement', and a 'great achievement for him'.⁷⁵ The NATO Council was also impressed and firmly behind Britain's more 'reasonable approach.' Henri Spaak Secretary General of NATO could not understand the French attitude which seemed even more rigid than the Germans.⁷⁶ Unfortunately the new Western terms were unacceptable to Gromyko, who rejected them on the grounds that there had been no substantial change in the Western position, based as it was on the indefinite prolongation of the occupation regime, and leaving the garrison intact. Nevertheless, it was significant that for the first time Gromyko mentioned numbers, and said he would regard 3-4,000 troops as representing a 'symbolic presence', as long as it was implemented in connection with the question of the status of Berlin as a Free City⁷⁷

Khrushchev's reply to the President's message, dated 17 June, also stressed the need to end Western occupation rights in Berlin which were 'abnormal and a cause of tension'. In his view, prolonged negotiations over Germany would only allow the Federal Republic to continue its military build up.⁷⁸ He emphasised that the current problems were beyond the powers of the Ministers: 'such a nut can be too hard for them,' and went on to endorse Macmillan's proposal in Moscow that an initial summit might just mark the beginning, and several meetings of Heads of Government would be required to achieve success. Khrushchev's message then became strikingly moderate in tone: he said that he had empowered Gromyko to take all possible measures to ensure the success of the Geneva Conference. He acknowledged that the work at Geneva had a 'certain positive significance' and had 'permitted positions on both sides on a number of questions to be better clarified, to define the degree of the existing agreements, and to try in some measure to draw nearer the viewpoint of the sides on separate aspects of actual international problems'. The Soviet leader concluded by saying 'once an agreement in principle exists between our Governments in relation to the necessity for a conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, and a solution of the question of West Berlin, the way can and must be found to work out a concrete formula of agreement on these questions'.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ PM to Lloyd, 17 June 1959, T.338/59, PREM 11/2718.

⁷⁶ UK Del. NATO Paris to FO, 18 June 1959, no.212, PREM 11/2718.

⁷⁷ UK Del. Geneva to FO, 17 June 1959, no 243, PREM 11/2718.

⁷⁸ Thompson to DOS, 17 June, 1959, NSA no.1426.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Meanwhile, in accordance with the Prime Minister's instructions, Selwyn Lloyd attempted to prevent a total breakdown of the discussions, by engaging in a series of important private conversations with Gromyko in Geneva. Clearly, the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow had put the British in a unique position to act as intermediary between East and West, and this was invaluable as a mechanism for sounding out the positions of the two sides. Going over the events of the past weeks, Gromyko asked whether the new Western proposals constituted a perpetuation of the occupation regime.⁸⁰ In response, Selwyn Lloyd said that, in his opinion, the Western Powers did not require from the Soviets a direct and specific endorsement of that regime. He thought the matter had been dealt with very tactfully from their point of view and they (the Soviets) could accept these new proposals without seeming to abandon their position, in any case, surely they should stop arguing about the juridical basis and concentrate on practical matters.

Soviet Proposals on an Interim Settlement for Berlin of 19 June 1959

On 19 June, after probing Western intentions, Gromyko invited the Western Foreign Ministers to a meeting at his villa and submitted a new paper on Berlin which attempted to address Western anxieties concerning the Soviet proposals of 9 June.⁸¹ These proposals extended the time limit for an Interim Agreement from one to one and a half years, and provided for a resumption of the consideration of the Berlin question by the Four Powers during or at the end of the period.⁸² In response to Western anxieties that the Soviet Union would liquidate Western rights at the end of the Interim Agreement, Gromyko told the Western Powers that the Soviet Government had not touched upon the rights of the Western Powers in their proposals, so the Western conclusion that they would have no rights at the end of the one and a half year period was 'of an arbitrary nature'.⁸³ Moreover he stated that should discussions resume after the expiry of the time limit 'such discussion should undoubtedly be conducted with due regard for the situation obtaining at that time'.⁸⁴ These new Soviet concessions did not satisfy the Western

⁸⁰ Conversation between Lloyd and Gromyko, June 22 1959, PREM 11/2718, (WG 1015/316)

⁸¹ Soviet Paper handed to Western Foreign Ministers ,19 June 1959, Cmnd 868. Doc.60, pp.238-239.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Statement by Gromyko, British Parliamentary Papers, 1959, Vol. 34, Cmnd 868, 19 June 1959, Doc. 43, pp.175-177.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Powers, particularly as they coincided with one of Khrushchev's typically hostile, televised speeches to a DDR Delegation visiting Moscow.⁸⁵

When the text of his speech is subjected to scrutiny, it reveals that the Soviet leader had tried to soften the impact of Gromyko's recent proposal imposing a time limit on an Interim Settlement. Khrushchev stated that it would be a 'misunderstanding or deliberate distortion', to characterise the Soviet one year period as an ultimatum. He stated that the one year period was negotiable, and not the main question, though he still insisted that if no agreement was reached on Berlin, the Soviets would sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR. He told the delegation that the Western Powers insisted on maintaining their rights in Berlin because they wanted to continue the Cold War. In Khrushchev's view, if the Geneva Talks failed, it made a summit all the more necessary. To try and break the logjam, the Western powers suggested a Conference recess until 13 July to which the Soviet side readily agreed.

The Geneva Conference Recess 19 June -13 July 1959

Reporting to the Cabinet on 23 July, the Foreign Secretary seemed relatively optimistic. He believed that the latest Soviet proposals meant that 'we might be able to obtain a moratorium, under which the existing position would be maintained for a further period'.⁸⁶ The juridical issue would in effect be postponed for a period, and this respite might be secured at the cost of agreeing that representatives of East and West Germany should meet to discuss the possibilities of political as well as economic co-operation. (This was a reference to the Soviet proposal for an all-German Committee with wide powers). He believed there was 'a real possibility of compromise' between the latest proposals of the Western Powers and those of the Soviet Union. The Government's task in the adjournment would be to try to narrow the gap further and persuade the US Government to support a compromise proposal, and to hold a summit later in the Summer. The Prime Minister endorsed this approach, and said a number of important points such as troop numbers in Berlin, and the duration of the Interim Settlement could be reserved for a summit meeting. The Cabinet approved this course of action and

⁸⁵ UK Del. Geneva to FO, 19 June 1959, no. 253, PREM 11/2718.

⁸⁶ Cabinet Conclusions 37(59), 23 June 1959, Minute 1. CAB 128/33.

suggested that further subjects for discussion at a summit could be nuclear testing and general disarmament.⁸⁷

By 25 June, the State Department still had no definite comment on Macmillan's idea of a moratorium, though Herter said they were developing draft proposals in that direction. The Secretary of State had become amenable to British ideas at Geneva, but on his return to Washington, he evidently found the prevailing mood in the State Department more hard-line. He frankly admitted to Caccia, the British Ambassador that 'account should at least be taken of those who had not been in Geneva and therefore might have another perspective'.⁸⁸ Caccia's general assessment was that Herter was trying to influence the administration to adopt British ideas, and if this went right for Herter, it would be good for his authority in the future. But if he lost against the hawks in the State Department then the British would have to take urgent decisions at short notice, possibly including a proposal for a visit by the Prime Minister to the US.⁸⁹

However, British hopes for a modus vivendi with the Russians shortly suffered a further setback, following Khrushchev's meeting on 25 June with Averell Harriman, the Governor of New York and Thompson, the US Ambassador in Moscow. Exuding confidence, the Soviet leader issued his usual bombastic threats, saying he would reply to force with force. He then expounded on his ideas for a settlement. In response to Khrushchev's demand that the Ambassador should state what was wrong with the Soviet proposals, Thompson said that they would lead to the DDR absorbing West Berlin. Thompson also emphasised that the West had made its maximum offer, though various combinations of its essential elements were possible. Khrushchev said he had 'carefully studied the Western proposals which contained constructive elements' and 'were not bad' except that they included one entirely unacceptable point, namely that they were to last until German Reunification. He proposed that 'we should all work for an interim arrangement, leading to a peace treaty, in such a way that it would avoid any appearance

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Caccia to Lloyd, 25 June 1959, no.1465, PREM 11/2719.

⁸⁹ Caccia to Lloyd, 25 June 1959, no.1474, PREM 11/2719. The DOS envisaged the following worst case scenario: that Russia would sign a peace treaty with East Germany; that East Germany would impose unacceptable conditions on traffic and that a probe would be ordered to determine if the Soviet side would use force.

of an ultimatum'. Although the language used by the Soviet leader in the initial section of his speech was intemperate, his message did not rule out a compromise.⁹⁰

On 29 June, Gromyko made a long statement in Moscow on the Geneva Conference which contained positive elements and was seen as an attempt to mollify the West. He described the exchange of views at Geneva, as of 'definite benefit', especially in the second phase of the Geneva Conference, when on 19 June, the Soviet side put forward proposals which were an attempt to meet the West's point of view. He said the time limit was negotiable, and Western allegations that the Soviet Union intended to take unilateral action and to absorb West Berlin were belied by Soviet willingness to negotiate a guaranteed interim status for Berlin and to resume joint discussion of the problem if an all-German Committee failed to reach agreement. The Soviet Union had a hopeful view of the outcome of the Conference and he advised the West to use the recess for realistic assessment.⁹¹

Meanwhile, in Washington, a more pragmatic Western assessment of the situation, closer to Macmillan's ideas on a moratorium was gradually emerging. Herter told the British Ambassador, on 1 July, that the President had approved Macmillan's ideas, but did not want to produce a paper as it was essential to deny that there was any new Western paper before the Geneva Conference resumed on 13 July.⁹² The President recommended taking Gromyko's final remarks 'in order to see whether we could make out of all these elements a remit of proposals, such as the duration of the agreement and the number of troops in Berlin, for final decision at a summit', which was the view adopted by the British Cabinet on 23 June. The President admitted that from the US point of view, the most difficult decision was the acceptance of a moratorium agreement for a strictly limited number of years. He was ready to do this, but he emphasised that he would need to sell it to his people.

This conversation represented a victory for Macmillan's realistic approach. The Foreign Secretary told Caccia that the Prime Minister was very glad to see that his thoughts and the President's were so similar. Caccia was also instructed to tell Herter that since they (the British) wanted the Americans to play the hand they were prepared to let them play it

⁹⁰ Reilly to Lloyd, 27 June 1959, no.962, PREM 11/2719.

⁹¹ Reilly to Lloyd, 29 June 1959, no.967, PREM 11/2719.

⁹² Caccia to Lloyd, 1 July 1959, no.1504, PREM 1/2719.

in their own way, as it would be easier to bring the French and Germans around to their way of thinking in the stress of negotiation.⁹³

The Geneva Conference Final Session 13 July-5 August 1959

On 13 July, at the first plenary session of the reconvened Geneva Conference, Gromyko outlined the Soviet attitude on the lines of his Moscow statement of 28 June, emphasising that his Government was not threatening unilateral action. He proposed that the Geneva Conference should resume at the point it had broken off, that is to say with the Soviet proposals of 19 June, which Gromyko considered were not far apart from the Western proposals of 16 June. He said:

Any agreement based on these proposals would be for a fixed period of time. During that time an all-German Committee, or some such form of association acceptable to both German States, would discuss a peace treaty and other matters. If the Committee reached no agreement, then the Four Powers would resume discussions on West Berlin when the fixed period had expired.⁹⁴

As the Soviet Government thought that neither the DDR nor the FRG should impose its will on the other, Gromyko emphasised that parity was of great importance. He was supported by Dr. Bolz, DDR Foreign Minister and Head of the DDR Delegation who attacked West German militarism and Adenauer's policy of liberation of the Eastern Zone. Gromyko then made a concession. He stated that it was not the Soviet intention to abolish Western rights at the end of the 18 month time limit, and that the length of time was negotiable.⁹⁵ In response, Herter reviewed the proceedings of the Conference to date. He said the positions of the Soviet Union and the Western Powers were so far apart that without a change of approach, agreement seemed impossible. Selwyn Lloyd, on the other hand emphasised the common ground between the two sides and recommended a serious evaluation of the Western Proposals of 16 June and the Soviet Proposals of 19 June.⁹⁶ After this Session, Gromyko took the Foreign Secretary aside and gave him a letter from Khrushchev.⁹⁷ The Soviet leader wrote that it was the sincere desire of the Soviet

⁹³ Lloyd to Caccia, 3 July 1959, no. 2944, PREM 11/2719.

⁹⁴ UK Del. Geneva to FO 14 July 1959, no. 267, PREM 11/2719.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Lloyd to PM, 16 July 1959, T.378/59, PREM 11/2719.

Government to reach a solution by negotiation, either at the present conference or at a summit, but if this was not forthcoming, they would be driven to sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR. This, he said was not meant to be a threat, but would be an inevitable outcome, because regarding interim arrangements for West Berlin, as at Stalingrad, the Soviet Government 'had water behind them,' and 'no room for manoeuvre or withdrawal'.⁹⁸ Possibly this implied that Khrushchev was under pressure from the DDR or China over the Berlin question. This may explain why the Soviets had made several concessions to the Western view, but were totally committed to one all important point that Western occupation rights could not carry on in perpetuity. This was the main stumbling block in the negotiations. Selwyn Lloyd rejected Gromyko's belief that there would be a summit whatever happened at Geneva, as it would be unwise to hold such a meeting in an atmosphere of rancour. He told the Soviet Minister that 'a limited agreement on Berlin, together with a general discussion and agreement about the forum for the next disarmament talks, would be a good beginning'. Selwyn Lloyd saw this confidential exchange of views as a tribute to improved Anglo-Soviet relations.⁹⁹

There were other indications too, that the Soviet Government wanted a negotiated settlement on Berlin. It is significant that when the British Ambassador in Moscow called on Vasily Kuznetsov, Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, they referred several times to a possible time limit of two rather than one and a half years and said that the Soviet Union would only sign a separate peace treaty as a last resort after all possibilities of negotiation had been exhausted.¹⁰⁰ Reporting on this exchange to the Foreign Office, Sir Patrick Reilly concluded that the Soviet Government would neither recognize Western rights in Berlin, nor a provisional arrangement for Berlin without a time limit, though in the latter case, he thought it might only be a date for the resumption of negotiations during which Western rights would continue. Ultimately he thought the Russians would agree to two years, and he advised that an 'unsatisfactory arrangement' of this kind was probably the best the West could get, though they should not pay too high a price for it, as the Russians were reluctant to sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR. The Ambassador wryly commented that the Russians engaged in some vigorous wedge

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Reilly to FO, 9 July 1959, no.1010, PREM 11/2719.

driving, with some appreciative remarks about the Prime Minister's role in the first stage of the conference, and criticisms of the Americans and West Germans.

Macmillan was very anxious about the situation, and put forward radical ideas to break the deadlock. He thought the bargain would be some form of all-German Committee in exchange for a continuation of a moratorium at the end of the interim period, however long that might be. If the Russians were not able to give the DDR any real hope at the end of the interim period, they no doubt felt they had to give them something now, whereas the Western Powers, on the other hand, would be no worse off at the end of the interim period than they were now. Macmillan assumed the President would call a summit immediately to forestall the Russians.¹⁰¹

However, the Prime Minister's Allies were in no mood to entertain such a radical stance and the negotiations at Geneva at the 20 July Session became deadlocked over the question of an all-German body. Herter rejected the Soviet proposal for an all-German Committee, on the basis that it was linked with the Berlin question, and would therefore perpetuate the division of Germany and end any possibility of German reunification based on free elections. The US feared such a linkage would allow the Soviets to blackmail the Allies into making concessions on all-German affairs by threatening action against Berlin, if there was no agreement on Berlin at the end of the moratorium.¹⁰² Gromyko and Bolz rejected Four Power intervention in all-German problems as unhelpful, and suggested that as an alternative to the all-German forum, the existing talks in Geneva should be continued elsewhere. However, faced with firm Allied opposition, Gromyko gave way on this question of linkage, and on 23 July, he said they were prepared for talks on Berlin and all-German questions to be continued in parallel but separately. It appeared that the Soviet Government was keen to prevent a breakdown of negotiations. As Selwyn Lloyd argued, the Soviet side had shown flexibility even in their paper of 19 June by conceding that if at the end of the agreed period no agreement was reached within the framework of the all-German Committee or otherwise, then the participants of the Geneva Conference should resume consideration of the West Berlin question.¹⁰³ It appears that the Soviet goal was to gain Western acquiescence to all-German talks, thus achieving Western

¹⁰¹ PM to Lloyd, 18 July 1959, no.382, PREM 11/2719.

¹⁰² Lloyd to FO, 23 July 1959, no.336, PREM 11/2719.

¹⁰³ Statement by the British Foreign Secretary, 16 July, 1959, British Parliamentary Papers, 1959, Vol. 34, Cmnd 868, Doc. 69, pp.266-268.

recognition that German reunification was not a Four Power matter. By these means, Khrushchev's ultimate goal, the continued existence of two German States, and the status quo in Europe would be confirmed.

Meanwhile, there were hopeful signs that the Americans were moving towards the British position on a modus vivendi on Berlin. On 23 July, Herter informed the Foreign Secretary that following a long battle with the US delegation on the question of Western rights, he had won the day. The US had now agreed to accept the British formulation of 16 June on Western rights on the lines of the third sentence: 'the Four Powers recognise that for blank years, the existing situation could be modified in certain respects'. Accordingly, Herter agreed that if Gromyko sent a satisfactory answer, the draft report could be sent to the Heads of Government. Herter thought Couve de Murville would agree to this wording, because he was under pressure from Adenauer to get an agreement limited to Berlin which would give the Chancellor a breathing space.¹⁰⁴ This significant remark made the British objective of an Interim Agreement on Berlin potentially viable. Remarkably, Adenauer was so opposed to any discussion of the all-German question that he now appeared ready to negotiate on a separate settlement on Berlin.

Developments on Macmillan's quest for a summit were more disheartening. On 1 July during the course of a visit to the US, Frol Kozlov, Soviet Deputy Prime Minister had proposed to the President that he should meet Khrushchev.¹⁰⁵ Subsequently, on 3 July, Murphy of the State Department gave Kozlov an offer from the President for an exchange of visits. Unfortunately Murphy forgot to mention that the invitation for Khrushchev to visit the US was based on 'progress' at Geneva.¹⁰⁶ The Soviet leader's reply of 21 July expressed both his keen desire to exchange visits and his belief in the usefulness of meetings at Head of State level.¹⁰⁷ Eisenhower had thus successfully seized the initiative from the British, and dashed Macmillan's hopes of an early summit.

During this period, the US approach to East West relations was somewhat contradictory. The President had issued an invitation to Khrushchev, yet simultaneously US policy at Geneva had become even more rigid on the question of rights. On 23 July, the President told Macmillan that as a result of what he perceived as 'the abrupt reversal of the Soviet

¹⁰⁴ Lloyd to PM, no 4 03, 23 July 1959. PREM 11/2719.

¹⁰⁵ Kozlov/ Harriman Interview, 1 July 1959. NSA. 1519.

¹⁰⁶ Letter from Murphy to Kozlov, 3 July 1959, NSA 1521.

¹⁰⁷ Conversation between the President and Kozlov, 1 July 1959, NSA no.1527.

attitude' at Geneva, his minimum criterion for a summit meeting would be a Soviet assurance of Western rights in Berlin, and a programme which could be presented by the Foreign Ministers to Heads of Government for study and discussion. Otherwise a summit 'would be a fraud on our people and a great diplomatic blunder'.¹⁰⁸ The President was evidently backing down on Herter's assurance to the Foreign Secretary, on July 3, that there would be a summit in Quebec in early September, and on Herter's more flexible interpretation of the question of Western rights.

This volte face in US policy and pessimism about a summit naturally elicited a strong response from Macmillan. During the plenary session, Selwyn Lloyd showed Herter a draft message to the President, in which Macmillan made it clear he was being sidelined as a result of the President engaging in bilateral talks with Khrushchev. Herter told the Foreign Secretary that he was not convinced that progress had been made, and he did not think they could fix a date for a summit until Khrushchev had actually been to the US, as the visit was meant to constitute the necessary progress. Herter obviously resented Lloyd's remark that the Prime Minister was being left out of things, and he pointedly reminded the Foreign Secretary that the President had not complained about the Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union in March. The Foreign Secretary pointed out that as negotiations had started, people would think it seemed very odd that intimate bilateral talks had taken place between the President and Khrushchev.¹⁰⁹ Eventually, Selwyn Lloyd accepted Herter's advice that the Prime Minister should not dispatch the telegram, and a somewhat more measured message was sent to the President on 27 July.¹¹⁰

Macmillan said he understood the President's anxieties about whether Western rights would remain unimpaired by any interim agreement, and suggested that the President should link Khrushchev's visit to the US with a summit conference. Macmillan again reiterated Britain's more pragmatic approach to Western rights, in metaphorical terms, reminiscent of his Soviet counterpart.¹¹¹ 'My concept of a moratorium is like a period that sometimes elapses between the acts of a play- "2X" years pass and when the curtain rises again the negotiation is resumed with us all, including the Russians, in the same position as we are today'. The Prime Minister argued that, as compared with the Soviet

¹⁰⁸ President to PM, 23 July 1959, T.398/59, PREM 11/2719.

¹⁰⁹ Lloyd to PM, 27 July 1959, no.412, PREM 11/2719.

¹¹⁰ PM to President, 27 July 1959, T.410/59, PREM 11/2719.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

Ultimatum of 27 November, 1958, the outline of an Interim Agreement had emerged which justified the claim that sufficient progress had been made at Geneva to summon a summit conference. Macmillan believed that the other two contentious areas of East-West disagreement on Berlin, the length of a moratorium, and discussions on the all-German problem during a moratorium, could be left for discussion at a Heads of Government meeting. The Prime Minister said that from his point of view, the best date for a summit having regard to the President's plans and his own preoccupations, would be the end of August or at the latest, 1 September, or otherwise postponed until the end of September, or the beginning of November. His aim was to exclude the possible period for a General Election. Macmillan preferred the earlier date, so that a summit would predate Khrushchev's visit to the States, thus ensuring for Macmillan, an electoral victory on the basis of a foreign policy success. He suggested to the President that the summit should be preceded by a meeting of Foreign Ministers in Paris ten days before the summit, and he assumed that after dealing with the German question, a substantive discussion on disarmament could take place.¹¹²

Whilst this superficially polite, but basically acrimonious exchange of views on a Summit proceeded, there had been no progress at Geneva on an Interim Settlement, and particularly on the questions of Western rights, the duration of an agreement and on troop levels for the Berlin garrison. On 27 July the Foreign Secretary had a one hour confidential conversation with Gromyko prior to a private meeting of the Foreign Ministers, at which they tried to resolve their differences.¹¹³ Gromyko said unless there was agreement on troop reductions it was futile to discuss anything else: the present Western position that they would maintain existing levels, only considering reductions in future, was not acceptable. Lloyd told Gromyko that this question of Western rights could be left to a summit, but it was obvious that this was an important point for the Soviets. However the Foreign Secretary had ascertained from the East Germans that they considered 7-8,000 as a possible figure.¹¹⁴ The Americans had also finally agreed with the French that they could reduce troop levels from 11,000 to 8,000, though this was kept

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Record of conversation between Lloyd and Gromyko, 27 July 1959, PREM 11/2719 WG/1015/341.

¹¹⁴ Letter from R. Powell, MOD to T. H. Bligh, 31 July 1959, PREM 11/2719.

up their sleeve for future bargaining. Thus, it appeared that there was a potential compromise.¹¹⁵

During the course of the discussion, the Foreign Secretary told Gromyko that he recognised Soviet unwillingness to include in any agreement a positive statement that our occupation rights continued in perpetuity, but equally the Western Powers could not accept a statement or implication that their rights had been extinguished, and it was therefore necessary to find a formula to satisfy both sides. Selwyn Lloyd then read out the following words, which he considered adequately protected Western rights, as a possible preamble to an agreement: The Four Powers recognise that the existing situation and the agreements at present in force can be modified in certain respects: (a) (b) (c) etc.¹¹⁶

Selwyn Lloyd also said they could cover the duration of an agreement by the following formula: 'while the new arrangements would in principle remain in effect until reunification, in the absence of reunification, the Foreign Ministers would meet at the end of ---period to review these arrangements.' For Gromyko the word reunification was inadmissible, to which Lloyd responded that to him, it was not strictly necessary, and they could simply state, 'The Foreign Ministers would meet at the end of---period.' Gromyko agreed this was 'sensible' and that the Soviet proposal had been deficient, in that they had not said that the Ministers would meet at the end of eighteen months. Later he seemed to object to the words, 'these arrangements' and preferred the term 'existing situation'. The Foreign Secretary explained that they wanted the term, 'these arrangements' to safeguard traffic arrangements, a point of fundamental importance. Gromyko then confirmed that the Soviet position was that 'everything that happened under those agreements would continue, there would be no modification'. Therefore it was not necessary to include 'these arrangements'. In spite of this discussion, the sole result of the ensuing meeting was that both sides agreed to produce papers summarising their respective positions for 28 July.

¹¹⁵ Lloyd to PM, 31 July 1959, T.428/59, (PRO, see after no 423 in file).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

The Western and Soviet Papers of 28 July 1959

An analysis of the Western and Soviet Papers of 28 July indicates that there was considerable agreement on the two cardinal Western principles on which any agreement on Berlin should be based.¹¹⁷ These were: freedom of Western access to the City of West Berlin, and the freedom of the people of West Berlin (non interference in the internal affairs of other states). The Soviet Paper included these two points. Moreover, both sides agreed that a Four Power body, (called a Committee in the Western Paper and Commission in the Soviet Paper) would supervise the implementation of the agreement. There was also agreement on the prohibition of atomic weapons in West Berlin, and on the curtailment of subversive and propaganda activities. On the question of troop levels: the Soviet Government mentioned a figure of 3-4,000, and the Western Powers promised to maintain existing levels with a gradual reduction. However, it should be remembered that the Soviet Government had already compromised on its original demand that the occupation regime should be terminated. Furthermore, the Western Powers were prepared to envisage a figure of 8,000 in the garrison, and intelligence sources had indicated that the East Germans were also discussing a figure of 8,000. Arguably, a compromise was possible given the President's view that a reduction of 3,000 would not make the ' slightest military difference'.¹¹⁸

One of the areas of disagreement, on which it appeared that one side or the other would have to give way, was the Soviet proposal for an all-German Committee or some such similar institution to deal with all-German affairs. The British Government had been prepared to compromise on the establishment of such a body, but under pressure from the FRG, this had been dropped. The other major obstacle to a compromise on the Berlin issue was the question of the duration of an agreement and the position of Western rights when it terminated. The Western powers recognised that their opening position, namely that the agreement should last until reunification, was not tenable. Privately the Prime Minister and the President had mentioned a figure of three years, and Khrushchev had appeared flexible on this question. As to the question of rights, the Soviet Paper did not mention the subject and merely stated that at the end of the agreement if no agreement

¹¹⁷ See Appendix A. Western and Soviet Papers of 28 July 1959, Lloyd to FO, nos. 358 and 359, 28 July 1959, PREM 11/2719.

¹¹⁸ Lloyd to PM, 1 August 1959, T.438/59, PREM 11/2719.

had been reached the states concerned would meet again to negotiate on West Berlin. This was in accordance with Macmillan's original suggestion that the whole question of Western rights should not be mentioned in the agreement.

On 1 August, the Prime Minister told the Foreign Secretary that he felt that Gromyko had said 'as much on this subject, the Interim Agreement as we could reasonably expect from him'.¹¹⁹ For instance, on 22 June, he had stated: 'during an Interim Agreement and during the negotiations between the participants in this Conference for renewed consideration of the West Berlin problem, the Soviet Union would not take any unilateral action'. This was confirmed in Gromyko's conversations with Herter on 29 July, and with Couve de Murville on 30 July, when he said:

the parties would meet again to discuss the question of West Berlin. In the course of the negotiations no unilateral action would be taken by the Soviet Union on any aspect, including access. The Soviet Union had bound themselves for the period of negotiations: So far the West had said nothing.

Macmillan could not understand the unwillingness of the Western Ministers to accept the Soviet position, as Gromyko had virtually said, that at the end of the Interim Agreement and during the ensuing negotiation, we would all be in the same position as at the beginning of the Geneva Conference. In his view, the Western Ministers should stop worrying about rights. He felt it was unwise for French and Americans to go on pressing so hard, unless they wanted the Russians to say that they will recognise Western rights in perpetuity, which was unrealistic, and would make all talk of an Interim Agreement or a moratorium absurd. The Russian 'capitulation would then be complete'.¹²⁰ Nevertheless negotiations to try and bridge the gap between the two position papers continued until 5 August, when the Geneva Conference adjourned.

Cabinet reaction to the distressing turn of events at Geneva reflected, amongst other factors, the importance they attached to public opinion prior to a probable Autumn election. On 29 July, the Cabinet stated that 'it was difficult to reconcile the rigid attitude of the US delegation at Geneva, with the invitation to Khrushchev to visit the United States'.¹²¹ It would hardly be possible to present this as a purely social visit, and there would be a widespread belief that the United States intended to negotiate with the Soviet

¹¹⁹ PM to Lloyd, 1 August 1959, T.436/59, PREM 11/2719.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Cabinet Conclusions C.49(59), Minute 1, 29 July, 1959, CAB 128/33.

Government without reference to their Allies. They also agreed that 'the Soviet Government had not been unreasonable in the negotiations and that some progress had been made'.

It was essential, in their view, that as soon as the Geneva Conference was adjourned, there should be an announcement that the Western Heads of Government would meet in Paris, before the end of August, and that it should be firmly understood that at that meeting, a decision would be taken to hold a summit before the end of the year. It followed therefore that the adjournment of the Geneva Conference should not be presented as a failure, and that the Foreign Ministers would report to their Heads of Government that the results were sufficiently encouraging to justify the continuation of negotiations in other ways, including the meeting of the Heads of the Western Governments, with the ultimate aim of reaching a negotiated settlement. Significantly the Prime Minister added that the latter programme should be presented as the logical development of the Government's policy in encouraging our Allies and the Soviet Government to work for a negotiated settlement.¹²²

Macmillan made one last attempt to persuade the President to 'announce a summit in November, now'. In his letter of 29 July, once again he pointed out the rigidity of the US position. 'If we are asking for a moratorium, we cannot expect that our rights should be guarded beyond the end of renewed negotiation. That surely is what a moratorium means'.¹²³ Eisenhower's reply justified Macmillan's worst fears. The President suggested a conclusion to the Geneva Conference during the coming week, unless Gromyko accepted, as a minimum requirement for a summit, the Western position on rights of 16 June, with provision for a reasonable moratorium of two and half years.¹²⁴ The President considered that to go to a summit without progress would lead to 'grave risk of spectacular failure or unthinkable capitulation'. He was also against Macmillan's suggestion that they should announce a sudden date for the summit. Instead he said that he intended to go to Moscow in October, following Khrushchev's visit to the US, to pave the way to a summit in November, or early December.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ PM to President, 30 July 1959, T.424/59, PREM 11/2719.

¹²⁴ President to PM, 29 July 1959, T.423/59, PREM 11/2719.

In Geneva, Lloyd made it clear to Herter that the President's unwillingness to link his invitation to Khrushchev to conditions concerning negotiations at Geneva, 'had pulled the rug from under our feet.' He believed that Gromyko's 'toughness' in the last forty eight hours was probably due to the fact that he knew about the President's invitation to Khrushchev.¹²⁵ In Lloyd's view, 'Khrushchev now knew he need not pay anything for a trip around the US.' Later, the Foreign Secretary confessed to a sympathetic Prime Minister, the feelings of intense disappointment and frustration he was experiencing at his inability to conclude a concrete agreement.

At the last Plenary Session of the Conference, both the British and Soviet Foreign Ministers expressed similar optimistic sentiments about a resumption of the Geneva Conference. Gromyko stated that the results of the Geneva Conference must be reported to Governments, and agreement must be reached on a date and place for resuming the Conference as at present constituted. The Foreign Secretary said that the Geneva Conference might continue in being in order to facilitate consideration of the German problem. Gromyko, like Selwyn Lloyd, was anxious that the communique summarising the Geneva Conference should reflect its positive achievements. He believed that the fact that the Four Powers had met after such a long period of interruption and had engaged in a frank exchange of views represented progress, and that the two German States were represented reflected a more realistic approach to German problems. On Berlin, there had been a tangible rapprochement in that all accepted that an agreement on West Berlin should cover Western force levels, non-location of nuclear weapons and the control of subversive activities, and there should be a time limit. Moreover, Gromyko emphasised that as the Western Powers had expressed concern on access arrangements, the DDR Government had stated that during the Interim Agreement communications 'would remain as they are now'. He pointed out that this concession was an improvement on Herter's earlier suggestion in the Western Proposals. He hoped that the Western Powers would reconsider their proposal that an Interim Agreement should last five years as the Soviet Government could not accept this, and he reaffirmed that an Interim Agreement on West Berlin was naturally connected to all-German questions. He concluded by contrasting 'circles' in West Germany who wanted to continue the Cold War, with the

¹²⁵ Lloyd to PM, 3 August 1959, T.448/59, PREM 11/2719.

contacts forged by the Prime Minister in Moscow, and the agreement of the President and Mr. Khrushchev to exchange visits.¹²⁶ In his Annual Report for 1960, the new British Ambassador to Moscow, Sir Frank Roberts, assessed that the Soviet Union was 'fairly satisfied' with the Geneva Conference: the admission of the DDR representatives on the same basis as the FRG was an important gain; so was the acceptance of the principle of the limitation of Western rights in Berlin.¹²⁷

On 5 August, the Foreign Ministers issued a final communique which stated that the positions of both sides had become closer on certain points and that their discussions would be useful 'for the future negotiations which are necessary to reach an agreement'. Gromyko ended on a particularly positive note. He said a 'great many misunderstandings had been cleared up..... and the Conference was 'valuable in itself for facilitating a further examination of areas of disagreement'.¹²⁸ It could hardly be questioned that the Conference had made 'good progress towards a realistic approach to the settlement of questions relating to West Berlin'. He noted that the participants had agreed that the Interim Agreement would be limited in time, a question of fundamental importance for the Soviet Union. However, he emphasised that the length of duration of the provisional arrangement was from the Soviet point of view 'neither a major one nor one of principle'.¹²⁹

Conclusion

The British Government played a crucial role at the Geneva Conference by converting her Allied partners to the feasibility of an Interim Agreement on Berlin. During this period, both the Prime Minister, and the Foreign Secretary played an important mediatory role in East-West relations. Clearly their discussions on the Berlin question during their visit to Moscow had made an important impression on the Soviet leadership and this bore fruit at Geneva. Personal correspondence between Macmillan and Khrushchev, and private meetings between Gromyko and Lloyd at Geneva enabled compromises on important issues such as Western access to West Berlin, to be hammered out prior to the meeting. Even though the President had, in Macmillan's words 'inadvertently sabotaged the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Reilly to Lloyd, Annual Report for 1959-60, 18 Jan. 1961, FO 371/ 15908.

¹²⁸ Statement by Gromyko, 5 August 1959, Cmnd 868, Doc. 84, pp.317-324.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Conference' by inviting Khrushchev to America, arguably, Macmillan helped to persuade the President that only direct contact with the Soviet leader would lead to real progress on Berlin. If the President became convinced, as indeed Macmillan had, after his Moscow visit, that the Russians seriously wanted detente and a modus vivendi on Berlin, possibly, the Americans would be less intransigent on the question of Western rights in Berlin.

As the British Cabinet stated on 29 July, an impartial observer analysing the final position papers of the Allied Soviet Governments at the Geneva Conference would reach the following conclusions: that Western Governments had been 'more rigid' in negotiation than the Soviet Government, and that 'sufficient progress had been made to justify a summit conference'. Indeed, at the beginning of July, when the President and Mr Herter appeared to be veering towards the more flexible British view on the rights question an agreement had seemed feasible but hawkish elements in the State Department and in the FRG had prevailed.

In the Prime Minister's view, the Russians had shown their desire to reach an agreement by compromising on the two basic Western principles fundamental to Western policy in Berlin: first, they were prepared to draw up an access agreement which enshrined a variation of the agency principle, and second, they appeared ready to allow more than token Western occupation troops to remain in West Berlin the City during an Interim Agreement, thus guaranteeing the freedom of Berlin. Even the President had remarked that the number of troops was irrelevant. The Russians were also prepared to be flexible about the duration of an Interim Agreement. Arguably, at a successful summit in the future they might have been prepared to compromise with the Western figure of five years by conceding a three year term for an agreement.

The most controversial question was the Soviet proposal to link an Interim Settlement on Berlin to the establishment of an all-German Committee, which was anathema to the West Germans. At any future negotiations on Berlin, much would depend on whether the Soviets would compromise on these issues. Perhaps as Macmillan had suggested in July, there might be a trade off on Western rights and the Soviet proposal for an all-German Committee.

For the Soviet Government it was clearly an achievement that the representatives of the FRG and the DDR had participated in questions concerning Germany. This was the first time that the Western Powers had sanctioned the presence of the DDR at an international

conference and a step, albeit an initial one towards achieving Khrushchev's major foreign policy objective, the de facto recognition of the East German regime and of the status quo in Europe. Macmillan, discussing the Geneva Conference with Lloyd, took the view that it may have been that Khrushchev had no intention of making an agreement on anything except at a summit.¹³⁰ His opinion is borne out by Khrushchev's speech on foreign affairs in Dnepropetrovsk, on 28 July, when he stated that he was confident that the problems being discussed at Geneva could be solved not by the Foreign Ministers but by Heads of Government at a summit.¹³¹ Gromyko's positive assessment of the achievements of the Geneva Conference also suggest that the implementation of an Interim Agreement on Berlin was the major objective the Soviet Union now sought at a summit.

¹³⁰ PM to Lloyd, 4 August 1959, T.455/59, PREM 11/2719.

¹³¹ NSA, 30 July 1959, no.1600.

Chapter Six

East-West Negotiations on an Interim Agreement for West Berlin September 1959 until the Paris Summit Conference May 1960

The British Government's efforts to achieve an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and to improve East-West relations by a series of summits had ground to a halt at the Geneva Conference. Two issues, the question of Western rights at the end of an Interim Agreement, and the Soviet proposal for an all-German Committee prevented a successful conclusion to negotiations. The aim of this Chapter is to examine British and Soviet policy on an Interim Agreement on Berlin from the Geneva Conference of 1959 until 1 May 1960, when the Central Office of Intelligence (CIA), U-2 spy plane was downed over Sverdlovsk.

The Background to the Camp David Agreement

Macmillan was frustrated by the US failure to agree to a summit conference, and he felt upstaged by the President's statement on 3 August that he had invited Khrushchev to visit America. Nevertheless, publicly, he welcomed Eisenhower's initiative on the basis that the President had at last accepted the British argument that it was essential for Western leaders to meet Khrushchev in person to assess his true objectives. However, in his Diary he observed that the President was now trying to 'substitute jollification for discussion', which was 'odd diplomacy'.¹ The Foreign Secretary impressed on Herter that British public opinion would find it utterly incomprehensible if the President invited Khrushchev to the US, and returned this visit, and yet still said that the time was not yet ripe for a summit meeting.²

Although the President made it clear that he was not empowered to negotiate unilaterally with Khrushchev on behalf of the Western Alliance, both Britain and France were apprehensive in case the visit might mark the beginning of a new era of a two power

¹ Macmillan, Pointing p. 82.

² Ibid. p.83.

world directorate by the US and the Soviet Union. This would have negated Macmillan's chosen role as mediator between East and West. With the General Election looming in early October, the Prime Minister also feared a humiliating setback to his hopes of achieving an early summit, so he was greatly relieved to find that both the British and world press attributed the President's invitation to Khrushchev to his own pioneering efforts in Moscow 'to break the ice'.³

On 24 August, in preparation for his talks with Khrushchev, Eisenhower began a series of informal visits to Allied European capitals but he found little enthusiasm in Paris and Bonn either for a summit or further talks on Berlin. The President was delighted by his reception in London where he was feted as a hero by the British people. Macmillan seized this public relations opportunity to stress his long standing friendship with the President and the excellent state of the 'special relationship'. Unfortunately, he failed to reverse Eisenhower's view that some promise of 'fruitful results' must be held out to him by the Soviet Prime Minister, before he would feel able to go to the summit.⁴ On 29 August, Macmillan reported to his Cabinet that during the course of the Chequers talks, the President had said that he expected the Western powers to discuss four subjects with Khrushchev at the summit: a modus vivendi or moratorium for West Berlin; nuclear tests and wider disarmament, and contacts between the Soviet Union and the US. On the problem of Germany, Eisenhower said that he had pressed Adenauer to adopt:

a more flexible attitude and to consider new methods of ending the existing deadlock. He had warned him that the Western Powers could not expect to be able indefinitely to maintain the existing position in Berlin and that, even if agreement could be reached on a moratorium, this must lead eventually to some new arrangement. He had also urged him to accept some system of increasing contacts between East and West.⁵

This significant statement marked a return to the more flexible approach which the US Government had adopted towards Berlin in late 1958 and January 1959.⁶ In the interim, the Chancellor's intransigent attitude towards the German question and a compromise on Berlin, had forced US policy to become more hard line. The focus of negotiations on

³ Macmillan, Pointing pp.78-81.

⁴ SIA 1959-1960, p. 41.

⁵ Cabinet Conclusions 50(59) Minute 1, 1 Sept. 1959, CAB 128/33.

⁶ See p.88 and p.95 for Dulles' views on the Agency Theory and German Confederation.

Berlin now switched to bilateral US-Soviet discussions, and as Macmillan observed, everything depended on Khrushchev's visit to the United States which began on 15 September 1959.

The Camp David Meeting

Asked at a Press Conference on 5 August, what place the question of Berlin and a German Peace Treaty would occupy in his talks with the President, Khrushchev stated that although the question of West Berlin had become acute it was not the main issue.⁷ He said his government was 'primarily interested and concerned with liquidating the vestiges and consequences of the Second World War which was a Gordian knot. It was necessary to proceed from the fact that two German states now existed, and it was therefore necessary to establish a peace treaty with Germany (on the basis of a confederal Germany) or the two German States, and if this fact was addressed then the West Berlin question would be easily settled'. The Soviet leader likened the situation (in Germany and Berlin) to a 'powder keg', which might cause a sudden explosion. Furthermore, he said, if this firebrand was extinguished it would be the greatest contribution towards strengthening the peace⁸. This statement reaffirmed the Soviet position adopted at the Geneva Conference, and reflected both Khrushchev's commitment to the DDR, and his abiding fear of a nuclear holocaust.

On 5 September, a Labour Party delegation, led by Hugh Gaitskell visited Moscow. Gaitskell's talks with the Soviet leader in Moscow, on 5 September, were extremely revealing as regards the Soviet leader's aims prior to Camp David. Khrushchev was very 'tough' and threatened to sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR, and he made it quite clear that German Reunification was completely out of the question.⁹ He also said his offer to withdraw Soviet forces to the Soviet Union was conditional on the withdrawal of US forces from Europe. In response, Bevan warned Khrushchev that the Labour Party would never accept the incorporation of West Berlin into the DDR. One positive outcome of the meeting was Gaitskell's impression that it should be possible to reach an

⁷ Reilly to Lloyd, 6 August 1959, no. 1141, PREM 11/2675.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Reilly to Lloyd, 5 Sept. 1959, no. 1280, FO 371/143430, NS/1051/45.

Interim Agreement on Berlin. Indeed, when pressed by Bevan on the question of Western rights at the end of an Interim Agreement, Khrushchev appeared to accept Selwyn Lloyd's own statement of the position on Western rights as quoted at the Geneva Conference. One of the most interesting insights was that Khrushchev agreed that the proposal for a zone of limitation of forces, as discussed with the Prime Minister in Moscow should be pursued.¹⁰ On the eve of his visit to America, Khrushchev enunciated his aims in foreign policy in an article in Foreign Affairs. He emphasised the importance of detente and the removal of misunderstandings about the Berlin Crisis, and said that he expected the US to accept nuclear parity, recognise the DDR, leave West Berlin a Free City, and alter its commitment to Bonn. These policies, he believed, would result, but only after many visits and summits, not just in detente but in an entente between the two main enemies of the Cold War.¹¹

In Burlatsky's view, it is important to understand the psychological basis for the Soviet leader's motivation and erratic behaviour. For instance during the Anglo-Soviet talks in Moscow, he over reacted to Macmillan's warning on Berlin which he perceived as a threat and this led to the infamous 'toothache incident'.¹² Similarly, public enunciations during Khrushchev's preparations for the US visit revealed the depth of isolation and inferiority felt by him personally, and by his country towards the West, and the importance he attributed to a successful outcome to the visit.¹³ In his Memoirs, Khrushchev confessed his fears that the Americans might be tempted to put him in his place. As a result, the subsequent recognition by the US of the parity of the Soviet Union, as expressed in the protocol adopted for the visit, acquired a personal and symbolic significance for him. In retrospect, he admitted that once he had realised the prestigious nature of the Camp David talks, he felt 'ridiculous and ashamed'. Soviet accounts also reveal that Khrushchev felt worried about the prospect of one to one talks with Eisenhower without Gromyko at hand, so he assiduously prepared arguments and discussion of the complex issues so that he could defend the Soviet position without

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Nikita S. Khrushchev, 'On Peaceful Coexistence' Foreign Affairs 38, (October 1959), pp.1-18.

¹² Burlatsky, op. cit. p.157.

¹³ Ibid. pp.160-161 for an account of the meeting.

humiliating himself or going too far. Stalin, he said, missed no opportunity to convince his colleagues that they were ‘good for nothings’ who would let the imperialists ‘trample all over us’.¹⁴

Khrushchev arrived in Washington on 15 September 1959, for a ten day tour of the US which was to be followed by three days of talks at Camp David with the President. On 15 September, an initial meeting took place at the White House to prepare the agenda for the Camp David talks. Eisenhower agreed with Khrushchev that the Berlin situation was ‘abnormal’ and that the question of Western rights was ‘largely symbolic’, but he emphasised that the US would not give up its Berlin ‘responsibilities’ until there was a ‘reasonable settlement’.¹⁵ Khrushchev observed that his main interest was not in ‘Berlin as such’ but in concluding a ‘peace treaty in order to terminate the state of war with Germany’. He wanted to work out a ‘common language allowing both sides to recognise the ‘facts of the German situation’ and establish that neither will try to use force to alter the situation. The Soviets, he said, were prepared to find a way which would not threaten the prestige of either power. As his tour around the US progressed, the Soviet leader received a warm welcome and a promising atmosphere developed for the official Soviet-US talks at Camp David which began on 26 September.

During the opening session at which the two leaders’ advisors were present, the President told Khrushchev that he ‘did not want to perpetuate the present position in Berlin’ and keep US troops there forever.¹⁶ He said that Berlin was a symbol and that Khrushchev’s statement that he was prepared to take unilateral action had alarmed the American people. If tension on this could be removed it should be possible to make progress. In response, Khrushchev stated that he did not attach any strategic importance to Berlin whether the West had 10,000 or 100,000 troops there, but for him too, the question of prestige was involved. The Soviet leader reassured the President that the West could avoid giving Western recognition to the DDR by the following mechanism: the US could sign a peace treaty with West Germany; and the Soviet Union could sign peace treaties with both

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Camp David Meeting, 15 Sept. 1959, NSA nos. 1653 and 1654.

¹⁶ Camp David Meeting, 26 Sept. 1959, FRUS Crisis in Berlin 1958-1959 Vol. 1X, 13, pp. 36-37.

Germanies. However, they should try to come to terms on a period of time during which both Germanies would be encouraged to reach agreement. Khrushchev believed that none of the Allies including de Gaulle and Macmillan wanted German unity. When the President replied that he had no objection to a peace treaty between the DDR and the USSR provided US rights in Berlin were not affected, Khrushchev's response was that this was an impossible condition and prejudicial to the Soviet's moral position. But he emphasised that as his Government wanted to achieve their objectives peacefully, it was prepared to 'agree some period which might take the edge off the Berlin question so that there would be no injury to US prestige'. Khrushchev believed that 'agreement could be reached on disarmament and both sides could avoid extremes and work out a document (on Berlin) which would neither set out a definite time limit nor be formulated in such a way as could mean that a perpetuation of the occupation regime was endorsed'.¹⁷

The next session of talks on 27 September, was a private occasion with only the leaders' interpreters present.¹⁸ Khrushchev, who had staked his reputation on the talks was anxious that agreement should be reached on a communiqué. Eisenhower suggested a formula on the lines that the 'US was not trying to perpetuate the situation in Berlin' and Mr. Khrushchev was 'not trying to force the Western Powers out of Berlin'. Khrushchev told the President that 'the question of the time limit was not one of principle but they needed to solve the German question by a peace treaty and by doing away with the vestiges of war'. He then put forward his own somewhat obscure formula for the communiqué. The statement should not be such 'that could be understood to mean that the Soviet Union and the US were in favour of prolonging the occupation regime there and that the two countries were giving up the idea of a peace treaty'. The two leaders also believed disarmament was the principal problem and felt that if an agreement were reached both of them would be noted in history. In this area, unlike Germany, 'rigid positions' had not been adopted, so there was more room for manoeuvre.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Camp David Meeting, 27 Sept. 1959, FRUS Crisis in Berlin op. cit. 14, pp. 42-44.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Until Camp David, Eisenhower had been unyielding on the question of a summit, but he now became more flexible and told Khrushchev that he was willing to go to such a meeting if there was some progress. In his view, a 'situation where he would not have to act under duress, could be regarded as progress...his feeling now was that duress no longer existed and he would be willing to go to a meeting at the highest level'. The two leaders believed that an 'agreement could be reached on disarmament and....both sides could avoid extremes and work out a document (on Berlin) which could neither set out a definite time limit nor be formulated in such a way as could mean that a perpetuation of the occupation regime was endorsed'.²⁰ Khrushchev concluded his remarks by telling the President that the 'situation had changed on the basis of what both sides had said in the talks'.

After the meeting Eisenhower briefed his advisors.²¹ He told them he had made Berlin a catalyst i.e. he would be ready to negotiate on disarmament if there were negotiations on Berlin. Khrushchev had then agreed that : 'without regard to the date the Soviets would negotiate to get a solution to Berlin which would be acceptable to all concerned'. The President said that his concession was that the West did not seek a perpetuation of the situation in Berlin. He did not believe they (the Allies) contemplated fifty years in occupation there. At the time, some commentators suspected that Eisenhower made a secret deal at Camp David that the US would actively pursue a solution to the Berlin question in return for Soviet withdrawal of their Ultimatum. The FO noted that no proper record of the talks was kept, and those that were made were brief considering the length of the session. Moreover, the leaders were alone for much of the time.²²

A joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of the visit stated that disarmament dwarfed every other problem; that an exchange of views had been held on Germany; that they agreed to settle disputes 'not by the application of force'; and that a visit by Eisenhower to Russia would be arranged in the Spring.²³ As regards the vital negotiations on Berlin, 'an understanding was reached, subject to the approval of the other parties directly

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid. 15.

²² FO Minute by E.E. Tomkins, 2 Oct. 1959, FO 371/145709 WG/1015/364.

²³ Schick, op. cit. p.101.

concerned, that negotiation would be reopened with a view to achieving a solution which would be in accordance with the interests of both parties'. The President came to an arrangement with Khrushchev that he would announce the formula for breaking the impasse on negotiations on Berlin at his 28 September, Press Conference. Accordingly, on 29 September, Tass news agency released Khrushchev's statement affirming the Camp David formula: 'That these negotiations should not be prolonged indefinitely but there could not be a fixed time limit on them'. This was interpreted by the US as a withdrawal of the Soviet Ultimatum of 27 November, 1958. The President informed assembled journalists that Khrushchev had given an oral assurance that the Soviet Union did not intend to threaten Berlin. In reply to a question as to whether any solution must still guarantee allied rights and the freedom of Berliners, he was disarmingly frank. He said:

I can't guarantee anything of this kind for the simple reason I don't know what kind of settlement may finally prove acceptable, but you must start with this. The situation in Berlin is abnormal. It was brought about by a truce, a military truce, after the end of the war, an armistice, and it put a number of free people in a very awkward position. Now we've got to find a system that will be really acceptable to all the people in that region including those most concerned, the West Berliners.²⁴

The White House, worried about the President's public admission that the situation in Berlin was 'abnormal', hastily intervened to say that the President did not mean that Allied rights could not be maintained, but merely that he could not predict the outcome of the negotiations. Herter, in a report to Congress said nothing had changed except that now further conferences could be held without an element of duress intervening.²⁵ However, the situation was not quite as simple as that. Eisenhower had spontaneously moved closer to the British position, both on the desirability of a summit conference and on reaching a formula close to that recommended by Macmillan during the Geneva Conference, i.e. an Interim Agreement on Berlin which would avoid mentioning points of principle important to both sides such as Western rights and a time limit for Allied occupation of the city. Instead it would be based on practical provisions important to both sides, such as Western access to the city and the prohibition of subversive activities.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. p.101.

The Camp David Summit thus committed the two sides to a negotiated settlement and issued in a new phase in East-West relations. The possibility of East-West Detente which had been in the air from 1953-1956, depended on whether the spirit of Camp David could be maintained until a future summit and on whether the US and the SU could convince their reluctant allies, Germany, France and China respectively of the desirability of a summit conference and a modus vivendi on Berlin.

Another crucial result of the Camp David Talks, bearing in mind Khrushchev's preference for personal diplomacy, was his new personal relationship with, and assessment of Eisenhower. During the 1955 Geneva Conference, Khrushchev noticed Dulles passing notes to Eisenhower which he read 'like a dutiful schoolboy taking his lead from his teacher'.²⁶ Compared to his formidable Secretary of State, Dulles who was 'hated but highly respected in the Kremlin', Eisenhower was perceived by the Soviets as a 'mediocre leader and a weak President'.²⁷ But after Camp David, Khrushchev revised his former opinions and frequently referred to the President as a man of peace. This led to shock waves in the Chinese Camp.

The Impact of Camp David on Soviet Relations with the West

On his return from America, Khrushchev was cheered by the Moscow crowds, who 'acclaimed and thanked Mr Khrushchev for his great and successful mission of peace, and his dignified and proud representation in the US of the Soviet people and their Leninist cause'.²⁸ According to his biographer, Khrushchev believed he had become the greatest Soviet statesman since Stalin and had wreaked his personal revenge on Molotov, who had challenged his authority in 1957.²⁹ The British Ambassador testified to Khrushchev's great popularity after the visit and the growth of his personal authority with the Soviet

²⁶ Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers p. 397.

²⁷ Dallin, op. cit. p.509.

²⁸ Adzhubei ghosted the account of the visit in 'Face to Face with America: The Story of the Voyage of N.S. Khrushchev to the United States', (Moscow, 1959) p.44. Although this must be one of the greatest panegyrics of all time, it nevertheless revealed the impact and the popularity of Khrushchev's move towards detente with the US.

²⁹ Ibid. See also Zubok and Pleshakov, op. cit. pp.201-202. Khrushchev's policy of detente with the West was challenged at the Party Congress of 1957. Molotov was one of the members of the anti-Party group who had attempted an unsuccessful coup against Khrushchev in 1957.

people emanating from the 'spirit of Camp David'. 'By the end of the year, he was a front page story every day, and his policy of detente had won him a popularity which he had lacked hitherto'.³⁰

After the Camp David talks, the Soviet Government continued to emphasise the importance it attached to its twin goals of detente and peaceful coexistence.³¹ Indeed, the President told General Nathan Twining, Chairman of the JCS that during their discussions at Camp David, Khrushchev had placed great emphasis on the tremendous cost of defence, returning to this subject time after time.³² On 31 October, addressing the Supreme Soviet, in a bid to prepare the Russian people for serious negotiation, Khrushchev stressed the 'great value' of his talks with the President and recalled the important contribution to an improvement of the international situation made by his earlier talks with Mr. Macmillan. He told the assembled gathering, 'the hand of the barometer is moving towards fair though not as quickly as we should like it to go'.³³

The Soviet leader stated in several different ways that the 'principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems means the need for mutual concessions, compromises, adaptations if you like on both sides, in the domain of inter-state relations, in the solution of mature practical questions, in the interest of maintaining and strengthening peace'. Khrushchev said the priorities for the summit conference would be disarmament, and then Germany and Berlin. He appealed to the powers to do nothing which might create new difficulties or could create distrust and suspicion. This might have been an oblique reference to U-2 intrusions. He then appealed for an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons; the banning of nuclear tests; the creation of a European area of control and inspection; the limitation of forces (Macmillan's idea) and

³⁰ Reilly to Lloyd, Annual Report on the USSR, 1959, 18 January, 1960, FO 371/151908 NS/1011/1.

³¹ SIA1959-1960, pp.44-50. It is significant that disarmament also dominated the Soviet agenda at the Fourteenth Assembly of the UN, September-October 1959. On 17 October, Selwyn Lloyd had proposed a comprehensive disarmament solution, envisaging the abandonment of the link between disarmament and a political settlement. This plan was regarded as unwieldy and was superseded by a Soviet proposal calling for immediate and comprehensive disarmament within four years. A break-through in East-West negotiations eventually came about in March 1960, when the Soviet Union made a major concession on inspection and control.

³² Ambrose, op. cit. p.494.

³³ DOS Memo, Davies to Kohler, 25 Nov. 1958, NSA 1757.

the creation of an atom free zone in Europe.³⁴ The Americans noted that he spoke of the need for 'mutual concessions' five times in the space of two pages. Later, in December, after his meeting with Khrushchev in Moscow, Averill Harriman, the former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union and a presidential advisor, reported to the US Government that the Soviet leader favoured disengagement in Germany and was prepared to withdraw Soviet troops to within the Soviet frontiers but that he had not elaborated on the conditions necessary for this step.³⁵

The other dominant theme of Soviet statements in this period was anticipation of a settlement of the Berlin question. The Soviet publication 'Face to Face with America' by Adzhubei, states that 'though at Camp David no definite understanding was reached on this score, the entire course of developments climaxed by Mr. Khrushchev's United States visit has put it (a German Peace Treaty) on the agenda...effort is now being made in many world capitals to work out concrete suggestions'.³⁶ In a letter to de Gaulle in October, the Soviet leader again expressed optimism about a Berlin settlement. He said that 'as part of the process of putting an end to the Cold War there was no reason why some agreement should not be reached on Berlin, but if this were not possible the Heads of Government could provide general directives for further study which would improve the atmosphere and enable decisions to be taken at a later meeting'.³⁷ Perhaps the most definite indication that some agreement of greater substance was achieved at Camp David can be found in Khrushchev's exchange with Ulbricht in November 1959. Apparently Khrushchev told Ulbricht that at Camp David he had worked out an Interim Agreement on Berlin with Eisenhower, based on a version of the Interim Agreement on Berlin discussed at the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference of 1959 which would have recognised the status quo in Berlin and committed the two Germanies more firmly to negotiating a peace treaty during the period of the agreement. 'This was our concession to Eisenhower in order to save his prestige and not to create the impression that we had chased him from Berlin'.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ A. Harriman, Peace with Russia (New York, 1982).

³⁶ Adzhubei, op. cit. p. 453.

³⁷ Gladwyn Jebb, British Ambassador in Paris to Lloyd, 21 Oct. 1959, no. 308, PREM 11/2900.

³⁸ J. Richter, Khrushchev's Double Bind (Baltimore, 1994). p.120; see also p.131 and p.141.

Anglo-Soviet exchanges during the Autumn of 1959 centred on the questions of disarmament and Berlin, and on Soviet fears of the nuclear rearmament of Germany.³⁹ On 14 October, Khrushchev wrote to Macmillan congratulating him on his election victory, and urging him to discuss and resolve disarmament and other international problems as a way of contributing to the end of the Cold War and creating peaceful coexistence. In a conversation with the Foreign Secretary on 30 November, Yakov Malik, the Soviet Ambassador agreed that it was important to have an early summit to keep the momentum going, and that subsequently it would be advantageous to hold meetings every six to eight months, as discussed in Moscow. Malik emphasised that Khrushchev believed that public opinion would not understand postponement of a summit. Moving on to procedures for the summit, Selwyn Lloyd suggested that it would be better not to have a formal agenda but an understanding about the topics to be covered, such as East-West relations, disarmament and the 'German problem, and in particular Berlin'. He told Malik that in his view, they had the makings of an Interim Agreement at Geneva and they had reduced things to four or five issues which the Heads of Government could deal with in a morning. The Foreign Secretary also reassured the Ambassador that the Germans had not been given permission to manufacture inter-continental ballistic missiles, or to have nuclear weapons under their own control. Malik then begged him 'to realise the importance which the Russians attached to this question of German rearmament and of maintaining the restrictions of the Paris Treaties'.⁴⁰

A Soviet Foreign Ministry Report on 'Anglo-Soviet Relations after the General Election', sent to the Central Committee on 15 December, confirmed the importance the Soviet Government accorded to detente and disarmament, and their hopes for an early summit and described the role it anticipated Britain would adopt in relation to international problems and the German question.⁴¹ It stated that the General Election had taken place at a time (presumably after the Geneva Conference) when Western policies had reached a 'blind alley', but Khrushchev's visit to America, which was aimed at securing peace and

³⁹ Conversation between Lloyd and Malik, 28 Oct. 1959, FO 371/143431, NS/1051/52.

⁴⁰ Record of conversation between Malik and the Foreign Secretary, 30 Nov. 1959, FO 371/143431 NS/1051/57.

⁴¹ MID Report for the Central Committee on 'Anglo-Soviet Relations after the Parliamentary Elections', AVP RF Fond, 069, Opis 76 Papka 153, Delo 11, pp.88-98.

security for all countries and a reduction in international tension had met with a warm response in Britain. All the parties had fought the election with the watchwords of peace, the need to reduce international tension and to normalise East-West relations. Macmillan's personal association with the relaxation of tension had strengthened his position. Furthermore, pre-election campaign promises made by the Conservatives emphasised that they would strive for flexibility and a further reduction in international tension. The Report expressed more pessimism as regards British policies. Recently, for instance, the government had been moving away from its pre-election support for an early summit, (one of the reasons for Macmillan's electoral victory) and was now prepared to postpone it until the Summer of 1960. Given the developments in the international situation, and the fact that the 'historic visit' of Khrushchev to the US had not only improved US-Soviet relations but undoubtedly emphasised the 'useful influence of Britain's position on international problems', the MID anticipated that the new Government would nevertheless adhere to its policies of the recent past, as stated in the Anglo-Soviet Communiqué of 3 March 1959. Macmillan's mediatory role was obviously appreciated by the Soviet Government.⁴²

The Report then addressed various questions in more detail. On important international questions such as the summit conference, Germany and disarmament, the MID believed that the British Government was making concessions to France and Germany in an effort to improve its relations with them. Hence in the recent talks between Lloyd and de Gaulle in Paris, and Macmillan and Adenauer in London, the question of a summit had been given short shrift by the British. Malik intended to use the Tass statement of 24 October, and Khrushchev's speeches to the Supreme Soviet on 31 October, and at Budapest on 1 December, to emphasise to the British people the importance to the Soviet Government of an early summit. According to the Report, Britain had been taking active steps in the Western European Union to facilitate West German production of weapons which were forbidden in the Paris Agreements. As noted by the British press, this had resulted in Macmillan agreeing with Adenauer's demand that the problem of Berlin

⁴² Ibid.

should be dealt with at the summit as an intrinsic part of a general German settlement, and other international problems including disarmament.⁴³

Malik informed the MID that Macmillan had supported the Chancellor's negative position on a zone of reduced military strength and conventional and nuclear weapons in Europe, which was mentioned in the Anglo-Soviet Communiqué of 3 March, 1959 as a mutually acceptable goal. Macmillan, he said, had always appreciated the interest of the Soviet Government in such a zone, and tried to convert his Allies to the viability of this idea, which was anathema to Adenauer. In discussing disarmament, the authors of the Report considered that the British Government had not openly opposed the Soviet plan for general and full disarmament because of the strength of public opinion. However, in his talks with the Ambassador, Lloyd had agreed to enter into bilateral talks with the aim of clarifying the position and discussing the practical possibility of disarmament.⁴⁴

Although accurate in assessing Britain's main aims, the Report failed to identify Britain's true position, for behind the scenes, Britain continued to promote an early summit and an Interim Agreement for Berlin, leaving it to the Americans to take any necessary public initiatives which the Government fully intended to support. Soviet evidence suggests that the Soviet Government genuinely sought detente and disarmament but was disillusioned with Britain's lukewarm approach towards an early summit at which the Berlin problem would be dealt as an independent issue.

The Impact of Camp David on Sino-Soviet Relations

Khrushchev's commitment to detente was confirmed during the course of his stormy relations with China. Although it was the Soviet leader's detente policy which was mainly responsible for the Sino-Soviet showdown, the relationship had been subjected to further strains during the period after the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. According to Dr. Li, Mao's doctor, the Chinese leader never forgave Khrushchev for attacking Stalin, partly because he feared that any relaxation of relations with the West would

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid.

threaten his control over his country at a time of socialist reconstruction.⁴⁵ As leader of the most populous Communist country, Mao was ready to make a bid for the leadership of world Communism, posing as the true revolutionary in the world movement against the revisionist Khrushchev. The latter felt that he had made a genuine effort to improve relations with China after Stalin's death, so when Mao visited the Soviet Union in 1957, he expected to be rewarded with gratitude. Instead he was dismayed to find that the Chinese leader was nationalistic, condescending, and 'reserved and even a bit cool' with him. In response Khrushchev described the Chinese leader in decidedly racialist overtones, accusing him of 'Asiatic cunning' and of considering himself as God, with 'no equal on earth'.⁴⁶

In 1958, Mao lurched ideologically to the left and embarked on 'the Great Leap Forward'. From the Soviet point of view, the Chinese leader added insult to injury by resisting any of Moscow's attempts to increase Chinese dependence on Moscow. Roy Medvedev describes the friction which developed between Moscow and Peking on a range of matters.⁴⁷ During Khrushchev's brief visit to Peking in August 1958, Mao treated with contempt Soviet proposals for a joint fleet to match the US' Seventh Fleet, and to allow a Soviet radio station to be built on Chinese territory. Khrushchev, in his Memoirs, recalls 'the anti Soviet attitudes of the Chinese leadership in that year and Mao's rebuttal of 'our efforts to cooperate in military matters'.⁴⁸ This visit certainly exacerbated the already testy personal relationship between the two leaders.

Unquestionably, the nuclear question was one of the main reasons for the decline of the Sino-Soviet relationship. In March 1958, the Government of the PRC announced that it fully supported the decisions of the Soviet Government to end nuclear testing, and (according to the Soviet Government) 'took a number of steps in the spirit of the agreed policy of the fraternal states including proposals for collective security in the Far East and the establishment of a nuclear free zone'.⁴⁹ But, later in the year, the Chinese adopted a

⁴⁵ W.Taubman, 'Khrushchev V. Mao: A Preliminary Sketch of the Role of Personality in the Sino-Soviet Split', in CWIHP Issue 8-9, pp.243-248, 1996-1997.

⁴⁶ Zubok and Pleshakov, op. cit. p.220.

⁴⁷ Medvedev, op. cit. p. 33.

⁴⁸ N. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers p.470.

⁴⁹ O.B.Borisov and B.T.Koloskov, Study of Sino/Soviet Relations (Moscow, 1971) p. 153.

new 'rigid' course at a time when the Soviet Union had adopted the Leninist cause of peaceful coexistence. The Chinese rejected what they saw as Khrushchev's revisionism, particularly on key issues such as the change in the nature and destructiveness of nuclear war, which had in the Soviet view, led to a change in the nature of imperialism where 'sober circles strove to avoid war'. In contrast, Chairman Mao's attitude towards the consequences of war were cavalier to say the least. In his Memoirs, Khrushchev recalled Mao's belief that the atomic bomb was a 'paper tiger', and the Chinese leader's rejection of the arguments he had put forward against war. Mao had virtually accused him of being a coward.⁵⁰ The most significant evidence linking the Soviet Government's attitude to nuclear proliferation in the case of both Germany and China was a statement in *Pravda* on 21 August, 1963:

It would be naive to say the least to assume that it is possible to conduct one policy in the West and another in the East - to fight with one hand against the arming of West Germany with nuclear weapons, against the spreading of nuclear weapons in the world and to supply those weapons to China with the other hand.⁵¹

In September 1958, shortly after Khrushchev returned to Moscow, the Chinese began shelling Quemoy and Matsu, thereby risking US nuclear retaliation. Khrushchev was not against Mao indulging in nuclear brinkmanship as a means of achieving Chinese reunification, as long as the policy was co-ordinated with the Kremlin, and the Soviet Government was allowed to help build, and retain some control over the nuclear bomb. But he was totally opposed to the fact that China asserted her independence from Moscow by shelling the off shore islands without consulting with the Soviet Union. This was in contravention of the terms of the Sino-Soviet Treaty.⁵²

The Soviet decision to end nuclear cooperation with China in 1959 exacerbated the existing tense state of relations. When the tactical nuclear bomb was about to be shipped to China, Khrushchev convened the Party Praesidium and argued that the Soviets should not act as 'docile slaves' committed to the Sino-Soviet agreement while the Chinese

⁵⁰ Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston 1971) p.470.

⁵¹ Gittings, op. cit. p.46; Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Party Congress in January 1959, also emphasised this point.

⁵² Borisov and Koloskov, op. cit. p.153; Khrushchev was in Peking in August 1958, so this lack of consultation is particularly significant.

violated the very spirit of the alliance.⁵³ On 20 August, 1959 the Kremlin leaders sent a letter to Peking informing the Chinese that they would not send them a prototype bomb. Mao was made to feel the inferior partner in the alliance, and this blow to China's nuclear ambitions exacerbated the conflict, originally caused by China's opposition to Khrushchev's attempts at the Twentieth Party Congress of 1956 to denigrate Stalin, and embrace the doctrine of peaceful coexistence with the West.⁵⁴ Mao's fierce attack on Tito's revisionism during the course of 1959-1960 was in essence a veiled attack on Khrushchev's revisionist policies, and an added cause of conflict was Khrushchev's neutral stance in the Sino-Indian conflict. This resulted in a fiery debate between Khrushchev and Foreign Minister Chen Yi during Khrushchev's Peking visit of September, 1959, when the depth of antagonism between the two powers was revealed.⁵⁵

Ahzhubei described Khrushchev's visit to Peking, immediately after the lauded Camp David meeting as a diplomatic disaster.⁵⁶ The Chinese colleagues did not hide their dislike of the emerging detente between Moscow and Washington, nor the fact that Khrushchev arrived one week late to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the 1949 Revolution. Adzhubei described a comic scene which was clearly designed to put Khrushchev in an inferior position. Mao suggested they swim in his pool whilst they discussed world problems. Khrushchev, a non swimmer had to suffer the humiliation of bobbing about in an old car tyre trying to keep up with Mao, a powerful and regular swimmer in the mighty Yangtze.

On a more serious level, the Chinese evidence suggests that the meetings, held behind closed doors, were extremely acrimonious, as Khrushchev put the forthcoming East-West Summit before all other considerations. According to one Chinese source he demanded that the PRC leadership accept 'two Chinas', and declared it 'unimportant' whether the Indians penetrated five kilometres into China or not, a statement which outraged the

⁵³ Zubok and Pleshakov, *op. cit.* See Chapter 7 in general, and pp. 238-235. The authors have used recently declassified Soviet sources, and in the words of J.L. Gaddis this book 'is certain to influence the writing and re-writing of Cold War history for years to come'.

⁵⁴ China was also discontented with the terms of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1950 as a result of which she felt a junior partner. See CWIHP Issue6-7, Winter 1995-96, 'The Cold War in Asia'.

⁵⁵ Zubok and Pleshakov, *op.cit.* p.230.

⁵⁶ Interview with Adzhubei, in Khrushchev's former apartment in Moscow, 10 Sept. 1991; see Zubok and Pleshakov, *op. cit.* p.231; they share Adzhubei's opinion on this point.

Chinese. Inevitably, given Khrushchev's fiery temperament, the argument descended into a shouting match between Khrushchev and the Foreign Minister, Marshall Chen Li. They refused to shake hands, and Khrushchev screamed, 'don't you try to spit on us from up there, Marshall, you haven't got enough spit'.⁵⁷ The Soviet leader was genuinely furious that he had received more respect in the US, than from his Allies to whom he considered he had been so generous. On the way back to Moscow, Khrushchev muttered, 'It's hard to make an agreement with an old boot. He can't forgive us for Stalin'.⁵⁸

During 1959-1960, Khrushchev continued to try and 'mend fences' with both the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and the US who were close to war over Matsu. Retrospectively, the Soviet Embassy in Peking noted that in 1959, the PRC did not take any steps to improve relations with America, whereas in the US, 'the voices advocating the necessity of changing the unrealistic course towards the PRC and ways of establishing contacts with China became more distinct'.⁵⁹ The problem was that whatever Khrushchev did in the West had immediate consequences in the East. Whenever he spoke about detente at Camp David, or in Moscow, 'Khrushchev felt the icy blast of the Maoist revolution at his back'.⁶⁰ Inevitably this Sino-Soviet clash on foreign policy, no doubt exacerbated by the U-2 Incident culminated in an open clash at the Bucharest Conference of June 1960 and the subsequent withdrawal of experts from China in July 1960.

The Impact of the Camp David Meeting on negotiations within the Western Alliance for an Interim Agreement on Berlin

After the successful bi-lateral East-West Summit at Camp David, there followed a period of protracted negotiations amongst the Western Allies as to the advisability, timing and agenda for a future East-West Summit. There had been a sea change in the President's attitude to the Berlin question as a result of his meeting with Khrushchev at Camp David. He now felt in a position to strike a bargain with Khrushchev if he were to try to do so,

⁵⁷ Ibid. pp. 201.-202

⁵⁸ See Volkogonov, op. cit. pp.229-233, for an account of Khrushchev's relations with Mao. When Khrushchev denounced Stalin in 1956, at the Twentieth Party Congress, he did not clear it first with the Chinese.

⁵⁹ See Zubok. and Pleshakov, op.cit. p.231.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p.229.

but he knew his Allies would not accept unilateral action.⁶¹ On 30 September, briefing Antonio Segni, the Italian Premier, on his meetings with Khrushchev, the President said that the Russian leader wanted the West to remove their garrisons from Berlin, as their presence there meant that any attempt to use force would mean war.⁶² It was clear to Eisenhower that East and West Germany were not going to be reunified for a long time, so, in his view, it was time to 'put all our heads together to see what we could accept in way of a solution'. To tie the question of Berlin to the reunification of Germany was not a 'realistic approach'. Eisenhower believed that reduced garrisons attached in some way to the UN might be acceptable, as long as the agreement was consistent with the freedom and security of the West Berliners. Berlin, in the President's view, was a 'can of worms', and there had to be some 'new arrangement' between the 'extremes of war and surrender'.⁶³ This was precisely the British Government's argument.

After a long period of procrastination, the Americans, were at last convinced, (as were the British after the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow), that Khrushchev wanted serious East-West negotiations. Ignoring his past reservations about such a course, the President began to take the initiative to achieve his goals. In early October, he sent messages to de Gaulle and Adenauer urging them to agree to a summit with the Russians to negotiate on an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and to attend a preliminary Western Summit preferably in October, to decide on Alliance policy on Berlin.⁶⁴ The President's enthusiasm was rebuffed by his continental allies who remained sceptical about the chances of any East-West agreement at a summit. Although he said the FRG was prepared to forego participation in the summit conference, Adenauer warned that Germany would not accept a settlement contrary to her interests. Anxious to avoid any concessions on Germany or Berlin, the Chancellor proposed that disarmament should be the first and only topic on the summit agenda.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Memo of conversation between Caccia and Herter, 16 Oct. 1959, NSA no.1724.

⁶² Discussions between Eisenhower and Segni, 30 September 1959, NSA no. 1678.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Eisenhower to de Gaulle, 9 and 16 Oct. 1959, NSA nos.1692; and 1708; and Eisenhower to Adenauer, 16 Oct. 1959, NSA no.1707.

⁶⁵ Steel, GB Ambassador to Bonn to Lloyd, 28 Oct 1959, no. 244, PREM 11/2990.

De Gaulle, piqued by Macmillan's unilateral visit to Moscow, and Eisenhower's bilateral diplomacy was determined to postpone the summit. In his reply to the President on 9 October, he stated that he did not think that sufficient progress had been made at Camp David to justify a summit, and he himself wanted to visit the President prior to any East-West Summit. The real reason for his stalling tactics was that in his determination not to be side-lined, he too wanted bilateral talks with Khrushchev before any summit. De Gaulle suggested 19 December as the date for a Western Summit, and some time later in April for an East-West Summit. Macmillan was frustrated by the constant delays and feared that Khrushchev might get impatient, turn nasty and start sending ultimatums about Berlin. If this happened, through the folly, first of the Americans and then of the French, he would have lost all the ground which he gained by the Moscow visit.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, an exchange of views between the State Department and the Foreign Office on an Interim Agreement on Berlin revealed that suddenly there was a remarkable meeting of minds. On 9 October, the day after Macmillan's overwhelming election victory by an overall majority of 107, the President wrote to the Prime Minister informing him that although Khrushchev had not altered the substantive position of the Soviet Government there was 'sufficient indication of a change of tone to lead me to believe that further exploration would now be advisable'.⁶⁷ Eisenhower proposed a summit meeting of the four Heads of State in the course of December with a preliminary Western summit to ascertain whether they had a similar evaluation of the possibility of 'reaching a modus vivendi on Berlin, to which they should give priority consideration at a summit'. He believed that elements of an agreement, and the position of the two sides had been clearly revealed in the 28 July Geneva proposals, though he admitted that no progress had been made on the question of Western rights at the end of the interim period.⁶⁸

On receipt of this missive, Lloyd suggested to the Prime Minister that a summit in December should conclude an Interim Agreement on Berlin and lay down guidelines on disarmament and general European Security on the following basis: the agreement on Berlin would last three years; Western troops would be reduced to 8,000 without atomic

⁶⁶ Macmillan, Pointing pp.95-96

⁶⁷ Eisenhower to Macmillan, 9 Oct. 1959, T.549/59, PREM 11/2990.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

weapons; some formula about propaganda would be agreed; the USSR would guarantee free access; and both sides would agree to resume negotiations at the end of three years if no new agreement about a statute for Berlin was reached in the meantime.⁶⁹ Accordingly, on 16 October, a telegram was sent to the President proposing that the summit should try to reach an 'Interim Agreement on Berlin by December, on the lines of that which was being negotiated when the Geneva Conference ended'. Macmillan told the President that he thought Khrushchev would agree in December to something on Berlin 'palatable' to the US and accepted 'under protest by the Germans'.⁷⁰

The British had every reason to be encouraged by the President's welcome initiative, as Caccia, the British Ambassador had sent an optimistic estimate of US intentions. Eisenhower was convinced that the Russians could not accept the indefinite prolongation of occupation rights as the basis of a free West Berlin, and considered that they were more interested in the status of East Germany than in the exact nature of the new arrangements for the freedom of West Berlin. Herter had even mentioned to Caccia the possibility of a new negotiated statute for Berlin lodged with the UN, under which Western troops would continue in West Berlin as guarantors for the UN.⁷¹ Immediately after the Camp David Meeting, Eisenhower discussed the abnormality of the Berlin question with Gordon Gray, his Special Assistant. He said :

he felt there must be some way to develop some kind of Free City which might be somehow part of West Germany which might require that the UN would become a party to guaranteeing freedom, safety and security of the city which would have an unarmed status except for police forces. He reiterated that the time was coming and perhaps soon when we would simply have to get our forces out.⁷²

At a further White House Conference, on 16 October, the President was keen to keep the momentum going and discuss innovative ideas on Berlin. He challenged Herter's view that they should merely buy time and pursue a moratorium on Berlin. Instead he said he was ready to consider 'new measures on Berlin and Germany' on the grounds that if the West were to stand on the status quo, there was no reason for a summit meeting.⁷³

⁶⁹ Minute, Lloyd to PM, 12 Oct. 1959, PREM 11/2990.

⁷⁰ PM to President, 16 Oct 1959, T.563/59, PREM 11/2990.

⁷¹ Caccia to Lloyd, 11 October 1959, no. 2156, 1959. PREM 11/2990

⁷² Memo of White House Meeting on 1 Oct. 1959, NSA no.1681.

⁷³ Conference with the President, 22 October 1959, NSA 1719.

Eisenhower's aim was to find a solution which was acceptable to Adenauer while Germany remained divided, but as Livingston Merchant, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs emphasised, the Chancellor's rigidity was the real problem. Even Couve de Murville, he said, had been driven to suggest that the US, Britain and France should discuss together the problem of German intransigence.⁷⁴

After the Camp David Meeting, as a result of his discussions with Khrushchev, the President was also anxious to pursue disarmament. The President pressed his administration to consider force reductions in Europe and defended his readiness to address new ideas by arguing that the Western Powers should consider where they should be in 10 years time.⁷⁵ He felt that as East Germany could easily stop all economic connections with West Berlin, the West now had to find a way to pay for the mistakes of 1944-5. In the President's view it was 'unrealistic and impractical' to be thinking merely of a moratorium. Interestingly, in view of the speculation over the content of his private discussions with his Soviet counterpart at Camp David, the President told his advisors that he thought he could 'strike a bargain with Khrushchev' but he knew that his Allies would not accept unilateral action.

Responding to the President's 'wish for new ideas', in October and November, the US administration debated a range of options for West Berlin, even moving beyond the 28 July Western proposals at the Geneva Conference.⁷⁶ A study of the Soviet Free City proposal was undertaken within the State Department to see if elements of the proposal could be incorporated along the lines of a 'guaranteed city'. This exercise was a serious attempt by the administration to provide the Soviet Union with a way out of the impasse on Berlin without sacrificing Western interests. Simultaneously, as a result of a request from the Americans, there was an exchange of British and American memoranda, on the proposals they both envisaged for a future modus vivendi on Berlin.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid; see NSA nos. 1737, 30 Oct. 1959, and 1740, Nov. 1959 for discussions in the White House on the Norstad Plan. General Norstad, SACEUR wanted to discuss force reductions with the Soviets and emphasised the importance of an arms control agreement with the Soviet Union.

⁷⁶ Memo by Hillenbrand, DOS expert on German Affairs, on US Draft and British Memo on Berlin, 23 Oct. 1959.NSA 1721. (There is no copy of the British Memo in the relevant file in the PRO.)

⁷⁷ Ibid.

The US draft Four Power declaration for a modus vivendi on Berlin, shown to the President at this time, was a rearrangement of the Western proposals of 28 July, which provided that disputes would be settled amongst the Four Powers, not by the UN. The declaration would remain effective for three years after which any of the four Powers could propose a change. In that event, discussions would be resumed on the understanding that the existing responsibilities of the Four Powers on Berlin and access to the city were not affected or impaired by the declaration.⁷⁸

The British Memorandum of 21 October did not draft precise terms for an Interim Agreement but noted the two points likely to cause most difficulty, Western rights at the end of the agreement, and the role to be played by the DDR in negotiations during the period of the agreement.⁷⁹ The Foreign Office envisaged that matters such as force levels, nuclear weapons, subversive activities access and some form of quadripartite supervision were not likely to cause insuperable difficulties. On the question of rights, the British considered it would be impossible to get the Soviets to agree that Western rights would never be altered. Instead the British were prepared to accept a Soviet statement that 'they do not intend to take unilateral action purported to end Western rights at least until after the negotiations after the end of the interim period for a more lasting settlement had broken down'. As regards the DDR role in the settlement, instead of the 20 July proposal at Geneva that the Geneva Conference should remain in existence, the Foreign Office suggested a formula providing for a Four Power Commission which would meet during the Interim Agreement, to consider all aspects of the German problem including the question of a peace treaty, and de facto contacts between the FRG and the DDR.⁸⁰

Initially, the State Department had reservations about the British proposals. They thought they were over optimistic about agreement being reached on all the points, and that it was unlikely that Adenauer would agree to any undertaking instructing the two German States to reach agreement.⁸¹ Nevertheless, this US-British exchange of ideas on Berlin during the Autumn of 1959 demonstrated the President's remarkable flexibility and pragmatism

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

following the Camp David accord and his readiness to take the initiative. As a result, his administration engaged in a debate of the ideas which Macmillan had been promoting since the onset of the Berlin Crisis. Like Macmillan, after meeting Khrushchev at Camp David, Eisenhower became convinced of the Soviet leader's good faith in wanting to end the Cold War and achieve disarmament. He was therefore prepared to enter into negotiations with the Russians on an Interim Agreement for Berlin.

Anglo-French and Anglo-German Conversations on Berlin November 1959

The Prime Minister still hoped that an early date for a summit could be fixed at the meeting of Western Heads of Government, which was due to take place in December, as he thought US policy was now 'very sensible' on the questions of Germany and Berlin. For the time being, he was content to let the Americans 'make the running on all of this', and was anxious not to alarm his continental Allies or make them suspicious.⁸² Nevertheless he attempted to build bridges with Germany and France through personal consultations with Adenauer and de Gaulle and through ambassadorial channels. At meetings in Washington, on 4 and 10 November, Selwyn Lloyd met the French and German Ambassadors to discuss plans for the summit. However, there was no progress as the French and Germans considered that disarmament should be given precedence over the Berlin and German problems at the summit and that the 28 July Western proposals at the Geneva Conference, 'had taken the Berlin problem as far as it was safe to go'.⁸³

On 11-12 November, when the Foreign Secretary visited Paris, existing differences on Berlin and on the Macmillan proposals for a zone of limited armaments in Central Europe surfaced once again. De Gaulle was sceptical of Khrushchev's sincerity on the Berlin question and East-West Detente, and challenged Selwyn Lloyd's opinion that the Soviet leader genuinely wanted to end the Cold War and the constant drain of resources to the arms race.⁸⁴ The meeting merely confirmed that de Gaulle would continue to support

⁸² Macmillan to Diefenbaker, Canadian PM, 10 Nov. T.601/59, PREM 11/2977.

⁸³ State Dept. to US Embassy, Paris, 14 Nov. 1959, NSA no. 1749.

⁸⁴ Record of conversation between de Gaulle and Lloyd, 12 Nov, T 601/59, PREM11/2990.

Adenauer's aim of maintaining the status quo on Berlin in return for the Chancellor's support for a Continental European bloc excluding Great Britain.

Anglo-German talks on the summit, Berlin and the Common Market which took place in London on 17 November continued to be acrimonious. The Americans were already aware that Germany had reneged on their support for the 28 July Western proposals at Geneva.⁸⁵ In his Diary, Macmillan noted that the British were still apprehensive about the Germans and Germany's nuclear rearmament. He had been irritated by the Chancellor's 'unpleasant remarks and innuendoes about himself during the last year, so on the second day, he got 'down to brass tacks' and was pretty 'tough' with Adenauer. Lloyd reported to Herter that this was a 'good thing', and was welcomed by Adenauer's entourage.⁸⁶ The Chancellor was still hostile to Macmillan's ideas on zones of limitation and stressed the need to avoid concessions on Berlin, so the talks were inconclusive. However, a formula was agreed that the summit discussions should include the subject of 'Germany including Berlin.' Macmillan would have to wait for the Western Summit in December to urge his Allies to reach agreement on an Interim Agreement for Berlin at the forthcoming East-West Summit.

The Western Summit 18-22 December 1959

On 19 November, in preparation for the Western Summit in Paris, on Alliance policy on Berlin, the Test Ban Treaty and general disarmament, the Prime Minister organised one of his brainstorming sessions at Chequers, attended by the Foreign Secretary, Sir Norman Brook, the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Roger Makins, Joint Permanent Secretary of the Treasury and Sir Frederick Hoyer-Millar.⁸⁷ It was agreed: first, that Macmillan should try and convince Eisenhower of the importance of reaching agreement with the Russians on a system of inspection and control at the Geneva Test Conference; and second, that the Prime Minister should ascertain de Gaulle's views on NATO, and on the Russians,

⁸⁵ Herter's views on Von Brentano's letter, of 10 Nov. 1959, NSA 1745.

⁸⁶ Macmillan, Pointing pp.98-99; and Visit of Dr. Adenauer to London, 17-19 Nov. 1959, PREM 11/2714.

⁸⁷ Macmillan, Pointing p.100.

Germany, and Berlin. Given the abysmal state of Anglo-German relations, Macmillan hoped to secure French agreement to a modus vivendi on Berlin, to his concept of a series of summits, and to an arrangement between the Six and the Seven.⁸⁸ At the summit, he planned to achieve this by supporting the General's pretensions to tripartite status within the Western Alliance.

Macmillan was encouraged that prior to the Western Summit, the State Department made it clear that Adenauer and de Gaulle's preference for a settlement based on the status quo rather than a new Interim Agreement was no longer acceptable.⁸⁹ At the summit, the Americans expected that after reaffirming their Western Peace Plan, the Western Powers would rapidly move on to the subject of Berlin, starting with the July 28 proposals. The State Department had prepared new proposals on Berlin, and wanted to discuss force levels and disarmament measures in Europe before the East-West Summit, but for the time being they proposed that these subjects should be discussed just prior to the summit, in the Spring in case there were leaks.⁹⁰ As the British were fearful of being publicly pilloried by the French and the Germans at meetings of the Four Power Consultative Group in Washington, the State Department anticipated that they would follow the American lead at the Western Summit.⁹¹

On 19 December, at the initial session of the Western Summit, Adenauer emphasised the importance of linking Germany and Berlin, and ruled out any *de jure* recognition of the DDR. He argued that: any *de facto* arrangements would 'have to be examined in the light of developments'; that the 28 July proposals represented 'the absolute limit of what was tolerable'; and that the proposed all-German Committee was 'dangerous'. Replying to Adenauer's opening statement on Berlin, the President appeared thoroughly exasperated and was 'very firm almost rude'.⁹² En route to Paris, Eisenhower had told Herter that 'he felt he had committed the US at Camp David to discuss the Berlin and German situations

⁸⁸ The countries of the European Community and EFTA.

⁸⁹ Conversation between Herter and Alphand, French representative on the Working Group, 5 Dec. 1959, NSA. no.1767.

⁹⁰ Memo for President, 2 Dec. 1958, NSA no. 1773.

⁹¹ Memo for President, 10 Dec. 1959, NSA no. 1776

⁹² *Ibid.* For a detailed personal account of the Paris Summit, see Macmillan, Pointing pp.100-115; see also Record of Meetings at the Elysee Palace, and Rambouillet, 19 Dec. 1959, PREM 11/2991.

seriously'.⁹³ He argued that the Berlin problem derived from mistakes of the past, and there was no legal barrier to Khrushchev signing a peace treaty with East Germany. If the Russians blockaded civilian communications with West Berlin it would lead to a drastic decline in the standard of living. The West, he warned, could not go to war on this issue. The Prime Minister supported the President's argument saying that the West only had the legal right to supply troops and this had only been extended to civilians by tacit agreement. Adenauer warned that if the West gave up its present position it would be a symbolic act, and impossible to envisage the consequences on Germany as a whole. He used one of his regular threats: that any doubt about the firmness of the West might lead to a swing to the SPD, and a shift in the balance of power in Europe to the Russians.⁹⁴

President de Gaulle supported the Chancellor, maintaining the position which he had adopted since the onset of the Berlin crisis, that Khrushchev was bluffing and the West just had to stand firm. Macmillan left it to the US to achieve his objectives, stating only that an agreement might have been reached at the Geneva Conference had Khrushchev not decided in advance that such an important settlement should only be established at a summit conference. The Prime Minister repeated his formula that there might be a solution on the basis that at the end of an Interim Agreement on Berlin, the rights of both sides would be preserved, and thus the status quo ante i.e. the provisional arrangement which might last indefinitely. As a result of the President Eisenhower's bullying tactics during the Western Summit, Adenauer 'collapsed and did not speak again'.⁹⁵ One of the President's remarks to his Allies was particularly noteworthy; he said he himself had been studying Khrushchev's Free City proposal to see what could be done if international rights were to be observed.⁹⁶

It was left to the tripartite meeting of the US, Britain and France on 20 December, to decide on the broad Western position at the summit. De Gaulle was obviously gratified that the President, with British encouragement, had proposed the establishment of tripartite machinery operating for discussions on the common interests of the US, France

⁹³ Memo of conversation between Eisenhower and Herter, 30 Dec. 1959, NSA 1788.

⁹⁴ Record of Meeting at the Elysee Palace and Rambouillet, 19 Dec. 1959, PREM 11/2991

⁹⁵ Macmillan, Pointing p.104.

⁹⁶ Meeting at Rambouillet, 19 Dec. 1959, PREM 11/2991.

and Britain, on a clandestine basis in London. Thereafter, there was a remarkable degree of accord. The three leaders swiftly moved on to agree that, at a summit conference dealing with Berlin within the framework of talks on German Reunification and disarmament, the 28 July Western Proposals on Berlin should be the final Western position, and that the Eastern borders issue should not be raised. The preparation of the detailed Western negotiating position was left to the Four Power Working Group which was due to resume its activities in the New Year. The President suggested that they should avoid, or at least not pursue controversial questions at the summit which were likely to worsen relations because of rigid positions.⁹⁷ On 20 December, the Prime Minister wrote to Khrushchev, proposing a summit on 27 April.⁹⁸

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were pleased with the outcome of the Paris Summit. Lloyd wrote to the Prime Minister: 'We have achieved our objectives about the summit. On Berlin, we have not given in to the West Germans, and we have done nothing to discourage constructive US thinking about a new status for Berlin'.⁹⁹ In spite of Adenauer's intransigent opposition during the preceding months, the Western Allies had agreed to pursue an Interim Agreement on Berlin at the summit, based on the Geneva Proposals of 28 July 1959. Macmillan had also supported de Gaulle on the political front, without endangering the 'special relationship' with the US which he had set himself to rebuild since the Bermuda Conference.¹⁰⁰ In return the Prime Minister hoped that de Gaulle would be accommodating to British economic aims in Europe. Most importantly, as regards Russia, Macmillan's main aims had been achieved: the summit meeting for which he had striven for so long was definitely agreed, and it was clear that it would form part of a series of summits. Furthermore, the Western Allies had agreed to negotiate on an Interim Agreement on Berlin.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Macmillan to Khrushchev, 20 Dec. 1959, T. 658/59, PREM 11/2991.

⁹⁹ Minute, Lloyd to PM, M. 59/134, PREM 11/2991.

¹⁰⁰ Macmillan, Pointing pp.112-114.

Soviet Diplomacy, January-March 1960

During the winter and spring of 1960, Soviet diplomacy was characterised by contradictory signals. Khrushchev's intermittent threats that the Soviet Union would sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR, and Soviet attacks on Adenauer's intransigence over Berlin and West German militarism were interspersed with more conciliatory statements imbued with the spirit of Camp David, designed to make the Western Powers optimistic about a modus vivendi on Berlin and disarmament at the summit. The stick came before the carrot. During a New Years Eve banquet at the Kremlin, Khrushchev in exuberant if drunken mood, warned the US and French Ambassadors that if there was no agreement in Paris, he would sign a separate peace treaty.¹⁰¹ He stated that he would not take steps to eject the Western Powers from Berlin and would never attack them, but the treaty would end Western rights and access would be controlled by the DDR. The occupation status of West Berlin had to be ended, but as the Soviet Government realised account had to be taken of Western prestige, they had made the Free City proposal. If Western aircraft tried to evade DDR control, they would be stopped by the DDR who would receive full support from the Soviet forces, though the Soviet Government would not intervene.

Blandishments followed these threats. During his speech to the Supreme Soviet on 14 January, Khrushchev made a warm reference to the President's forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union which was due to take place in June, where 'the noble work begun at Camp David would be continued in Moscow'. He emphasised Soviet disarmament aspirations by suggesting the prohibition of nuclear tests should be a subject for the summit agenda.¹⁰² The Soviet leader said he still regarded peaceful coexistence as the 'continuation of the struggle of two social systems but a struggle with peaceful means', but whereas previously he had argued that aggressive circles controlled US policy, now he believed that 'a sober estimate of the current situation was beginning to take the ascendancy'.¹⁰³ The British Embassy reported that an International Review Lecture held

¹⁰¹ Reilly to Lloyd, 5 Jan. 1960, no.5, FO 371/151919 NS/1022/2.

¹⁰² Chancery, Moscow to FO, 14 Jan. 1960, no. 54, FO 371/151919. NS 1022//7.

¹⁰³ Richter, op. cit. p.128.

in Moscow, referred to Soviet disarmament proposals as a ‘turning point’ in East West relations and concluded by saying that ‘Moscow’s gates would be thrown open to the President’.¹⁰⁴ However, the most positive sign of the Soviet desire for a modus vivendi on Berlin occurred on 13 January, when the Soviet Ambassador to the Federal Republic Andrei Smirnov, handed a Memorandum to Herr Ollenhauer, Chairman of the German SPD Party setting out Soviet proposals on an Interim Agreement for Berlin, based on 28 July Soviet proposals. These were similar to those sent to General de Gaulle before the Paris Summit, on 9 May, 1960.¹⁰⁵

Given the argument of this thesis that Khrushchev’s Berlin policy should be analysed within the context of his ultimate aims of disarmament and detente, it is significant that prior to the summit, there were important new developments in these spheres. On 14 January, Khrushchev announced that Soviet troop strength would be reduced by 1.2 million men. The timing of, and the justification for this decision was probably due to two factors: the deployment of SS 6 intercontinental missiles which would be in place by the time of reductions, and the need for unilateral reductions in defence to improve economic competition.¹⁰⁶ Khrushchev argued that in the face of these reductions ‘not even the most malicious advocates of the Cold War could prove that the step was taken in preparation for war’.¹⁰⁷ It is an indication of Khrushchev’s firm intent that he pressed ahead in spite of opposition within the Army and the Party. Marshals I. S. Konev, Commander of the Warsaw Pact forces and V. D. Sokolovsky, Chief of the General Staff opposed the move and were sacked, and the Party ideologue warned that it would be dangerous to be ‘calm and complacent’ regarding the intentions of the West.¹⁰⁸ Andrei Sakharov testifies to Army resistance to these cuts in military expenditure and the demilitarisation of the economy.¹⁰⁹

At Camp David, Eisenhower and Khrushchev had agreed that disarmament negotiations would be given priority at the summit, and in this sphere too there was evidence of Soviet

¹⁰⁴ Embassy, Moscow to FO, 11 Jan. 1960, (103800), FO 371/151919 NS/1022/6. The Embassy regarded these lectures by Communist Party officials and academics as a reliable source of current Soviet thinking.

¹⁰⁵ Soviet Memo given to Ollenhauer by Smirnov, 13 Jan. 1960, NSA no.1891.

¹⁰⁶ Richter, op. cit. p.121.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Richter, op. cit. p. 123.

¹⁰⁹ Sakharov, op. cit. pp. 210-211.

concessions. On 9 March 1960, the Soviets decided to consider a supervised Test Ban Treaty which meant opening their borders to US inspection teams, a concession they had refused to make in the past. Macmillan saw this step as a complete reversal of the old position and considered it was a conciliatory move towards the Western position prior to the summit.¹¹⁰ He was very optimistic about prospects for compromise at the summit. On 19 March he received a letter from Khrushchev 'which although making no specific reference to the Russian moves at Geneva, was of so friendly a character and expressed so hopeful a view of the Paris Meeting that I felt correspondingly encouraged and almost elated'.¹¹¹

There were also signs of compromise within the DDR, in spite of a series of events in West Germany which caused anxiety in both Moscow and the DDR. In his report to the MID of 18 February on DDR policy and the Berlin question, Michail Pervukhin, the Soviet Ambassador suggested that preparation for a compromise over Berlin at the summit was still going ahead.¹¹² He said that their (East German) comrades were formulating a propaganda plan in connection with the Soviet proposals to give West Berlin the status of Free City. Significantly, he stated that as a result of the Geneva Conference, party delegates and the East German press had adopted a 'positive attitude towards a provisional settlement for West Berlin'. They were planning to develop contacts with West Berlin in connection with the Free City proposal and Ulbricht was considering the possibility of talks between the West Berlin Senate and his Government. Pervukhin reported that ruling circles in West Berlin and Bonn were against any normalisation of the West Berlin question, only wanted to discuss West Berlin at the summit within the confines of the German question, and considered that the 28 July Western proposals on Berlin were not viable. According to the Ambassador, after the Geneva Conference and Camp David, Bonn feared a potential agreement between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers. The Report concluded by blaming West German pressure for the faltering attitude of the West to the summit negotiations.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Macmillan, Pointing p.185; Ambrose, op.cit. p.504

¹¹¹ Macmillan, Pointing p.187. East-West Disarmament talks were taking place in Geneva, see SIA p.53.

¹¹² Report by Pervukhin for MID, 18 Feb. 1960, AVP Fond 5, Opis 49, Delo 186, pp.129-133.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

Concerns about West Germany's perceived nuclear rearmament further augmented Soviet security fears. In late January, 1960, the Defence Committee of the Bundestag approved the purchase of the American Sergeant missile for the Bundeswehr, and on 3 February, Eisenhower said 'he might be prepared to liberalise atomic energy legislation so as to give his allies access to information and possibly weapons withheld from them.' The following month General Norstad said the Allies had tacitly agreed to a proposal to establish a special NATO task force of 2,500-3,000 men which would be equipped with nuclear, as well as conventional weapons.¹¹⁴ Neither of these proposals were implemented, but arguably, at this crucial time, they exacerbated Soviet security fears and led to Ulbricht's announcement on 28 January that the DDR would soon ask the Soviet Union for modern rocket weapons. At the Warsaw Pact Meeting in February, the Soviet Government remained silent on this issue even though Ulbricht's demand received full support from the Chinese Government during a visit by an East German delegation. This led some commentators such as Victor Zorza in The Guardian on 6 and 8 March to suggest a Peking-Berlin axis was in existence.¹¹⁵ On 14 March, Tass protested against the latest US measures on the basis that they were a cover to enable the United States Government to supply nuclear weapons to the Bundeswehr.

Nevertheless, Khrushchev's expectations of the summit were far more positive than Herter's, and during his much heralded visit to France commencing on 23 March, he described Soviet aspirations on Berlin to General de Gaulle.¹¹⁶ Reviving memories of the war, when thirteen million Russians died, Khrushchev put forward a powerful case for his fear of Germany, and his desire for agreement on Germany, Berlin and disarmament at the summit. He said he felt very strongly about Germany and was worried about German provocation leading to incidents in Berlin. He feared that nuclear war might be launched by accident or by a madman. To emphasise his point, he admitted that during the Soviet tests

¹¹⁴ SIA 1959-1960, p.58.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. During February, Northern Department also discussed the deterioration of the Moscow/Peking relationship, with a view to ascertaining whether Chinese anti-detente policy was an important influence on Khrushchev's foreign policy in the run up to the Summit. FO Minute, O'Neill, Superintending Under Sec. Northern Dept. 2 Feb. 1960, FO 371/151920, NS 1022/18.

¹¹⁶ Conversation between the PM and President, at Buckingham Palace, 6 April, 1960. During a later meeting, de Zulueta heard the President describe to Macmillan the content of his talks with Khrushchev. PREM 11/2978. See also, SIA pp.59-60.

in the Pacific a 2,000 mile error had been made on the point of missile contact. Khrushchev accepted the idea of controls on nuclear tests which boded well for the summit, and he told de Gaulle that he hoped agreements might be signed on disarmament in June and on Berlin in July.¹¹⁷

The Soviet leader accepted the idea of a modus vivendi on Berlin and said he would not insist on a peace treaty with Germany until two years had elapsed. When questioned by the French President about what would happen at the end of an Interim Agreement, the most important point for the Western Powers, the Russian leader was not forthcoming. However, although he said he could not accept the use of Berlin as an espionage centre, Khrushchev hinted that the Western Powers would be allowed to maintain a reduced number of troops in West Berlin, a compromise which had been quite acceptable to the West at the Geneva Conference. Macmillan thought it sounded as though the Soviet leader was basing his proposals on the Soviet Proposals of 28 July at the Geneva Conference. De Gaulle agreed.

Khrushchev envisaged West Berlin as a Free City under guarantees, rather than an integral part of West Germany and he spoke not about reunification, but of a confederation of three Germanies including Berlin, each part with its own regime. In the subsequent conversation, he went further and said he would not, in certain circumstances, sign a treaty with East Germany for two years or even more. Nothing new emerged on the subject of Germany's borders though de Gaulle reaffirmed he did not want any revision of the status quo. Both leaders agreed Berlin should be the first item on the agenda at the summit. From the Western point of view this was a good strategy, as Berlin was the area where they hoped to get Soviet concessions in return for an agreement on nuclear tests. Khrushchev promised he would send Soviet proposals on Berlin to the President at a later date.¹¹⁸

In the period running up to the summit, there were further indications that the Soviets were anxious to reach an agreement on Berlin. On 14 April, an authoritative article in *Pravda* suggested that the summit might be able 'to reach an agreement on individual

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* (These Soviet Proposals were sent to de Gaulle on 9 May); see Appendix B.

principles' toward resolving the Berlin question including de facto recognition of East Berlin. It also stated that the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference had produced a realistic prospect for coming to an agreement on the question 'even if only partial and temporary'.¹¹⁹

British Diplomacy January-May 1960

Macmillan's personal diplomacy during the Spring of 1960 was dominated by the Paris Summit, the Berlin question and the Test Ban Treaty. On Berlin, Macmillan's aim was to achieve an Interim Agreement on the lines of that discussed at Geneva, with Soviet acceptance of the principle that nothing would be done in contravention of existing arrangements except by mutual agreement. The success or failure of the Paris Summit, in the Prime Minister's view, depended on whether such an agreement could be concluded on Berlin and disarmament, otherwise a dangerous situation comparable to that of a year ago would ensue.¹²⁰ British efforts to achieve a modus vivendi on Berlin were not in vain, as there were positive signs that the Soviet Government were keen to achieve an Interim Agreement on Berlin, based on their 28 July position, with amendments.

On 16 February, there was an additional breakthrough at the Nuclear Test Conference at Geneva which had resumed in January 1960.¹²¹ Reversing their former position at the Geneva Conference, the Soviets agreed to allow inspections, and to accept the American position on tests above a certain magnitude as long as it was linked to a moratorium. Macmillan was full of hope and immediately telephoned Eisenhower to urge him to pursue a Test Ban Treaty. Subsequently this led to talks between the two leaders in Washington from 27-31 March. Meanwhile, on 19 March, Macmillan had received another warm letter from Khrushchev thanking him for his efforts in the field of international relations and assuring him that 'the Soviet Government hoped that the 'first in a series of conferences of Heads of Government which is to be held in Paris will

¹¹⁹ Richter, *op. cit.* p.128.

¹²⁰ PM to Menzies, PM of Australia, 2 Feb. 1960, T. 60/231, PREM 11/9977.

¹²¹ Macmillan, Pointing p.179.

already constitute an important step in the settlement of the problems to which you and I devoted no little time in the course of our talks in Moscow'.¹²²

However, public expectations of a successful summit were on the decline in Washington, which was in the throes of pre-election politics, and where emotional pressure was building up over potential Soviet proposals. Herter, in direct contravention of the President's Camp David Accord with Khrushchev, implied that the specific question of Berlin was not to be brought up at the summit. On 22 March, Herter expressed his personal belief that East-West problems were too substantial to be resolved at the summit.¹²³ The US Defense Department feared that Eisenhower might be subjected to British pressure to yield to what they perceived as a Soviet trap.¹²⁴

However, when the Prime Minister visited Washington from 27-31 March, to his delight he discovered that the US position on Nuclear Tests had become extremely positive. The joint Anglo-US communiqué envisaged the signing of an agreement banning tests whether atmospheric or underground as soon as possible.¹²⁵ Macmillan viewed this development as a triumph for the President and the State Department over the Pentagon. It emerged that Eisenhower was fully aware of Soviet fears of German rearmament and Eastern revisionist tendencies, as Khrushchev had made strong representations on this point at Camp David.¹²⁶ The President thought this could be explored at the Paris Summit. On the Berlin question, the Prime Minister declared his preference for a Free City arrangement but recognising that such an arrangement was not obtainable, there was no other choice but an Interim Agreement on Berlin. Eisenhower said he had tried to put pressure on the French and Germans, but to no avail. In Macmillan's view, President de Gaulle took a strong stand to avoid being accused of weakness by the Germans, and he anticipated that in the last resort the General might not be so tough. In this he was wrong. In fact, France and Germany continued to oppose the idea of zones of limitation of armaments and forces which the Prime Minister had done so much to promote as a means

¹²² *Ibid.* p. 188.

¹²³ SIA 1959-1960, pp. 58-60.

¹²⁴ Macmillan, Pointing p. 188.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* pp.190-191.

¹²⁶ Conversation between the PM and President, Camp David, 28 March 1960, NSA no. 1856. The PRO is still withholding the FO record of the meeting, PREM 11/2994.

of satisfying Soviet security fears. So the idea was dropped, and the Western Powers lost a potential bargaining counter at the summit.¹²⁷

But it was noticeable that the President's support for Adenauer's general stance on the Berlin and German questions was waning. Although, he said he would not let Adenauer down, he said was ready to negotiate a provisional compromise over Berlin, and hoped that during the two year period of the moratorium which Khrushchev had mentioned, the Chancellor would prove to be more flexible.¹²⁸ The Foreign Secretary said he was hoping for an agreement for possibly three years, but even two years would get the West over the next elections in the FRG, and this was better than the Berlin issue hanging over their heads from meeting to meeting 'like a sword of Damocles'.¹²⁹

The Preparation of a Modus Vivendi on Berlin by the Four Power Working Group and the Western Foreign Ministers January-May 1960

Meanwhile, the Four Power Working Group which met initially on 25 January, and thereafter at regular intervals was preparing the Western position on Germany and Berlin for the Paris Summit.¹³⁰ Perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of this period was the discrepancy between public statements of some members of the US administration and the policy quietly pursued by the Four Power Working Group in preparation for the summit. The former were characterised by hostility to the Soviet Union and played down the summit or any possibility of reaching a modus vivendi on Berlin. Whereas the British and Americans on the Four Power Working Group were very close to agreement on the terms for a settlement on Berlin. But they still had to convince the Germans and the French of the viability of either a new status for Berlin, or if this proved impossible, for an Interim Agreement based on the 28 July Geneva Conference proposals. The British were prepared to let the Americans take the initiative during the next stage.

¹²⁷ Talks between the President and de Gaulle, 4 April, 1960, NSA no.1878.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Anglo/US Talks, Camp David, 28 Mar. 1960, NSA no. 1856.

¹³⁰ A Four Power Working Group had also been set up to deal with East-West relations, and a Five Power Group to study disarmament.

At the first meeting of the Working Group on 28 January 1960, the German representatives, in spite of US pressure, refused to budge from their position that the 28 July proposals were 'the limit to which the Allies should go at the summit', and at subsequent meetings, usually with French support, they even tried to retreat from this position.¹³¹ It seems that the Americans, whilst still floating ideas for a change of status for West Berlin, were 'marking time'. So Lord Hood, number two at the British Embassy in Washington suggested to Sir Anthony Rumbold of Western Department that there was no point in pursuing this line of enquiry.¹³²

The Working Group Report for the Foreign Ministers Conference, which was due to take place on 12-14 April anticipated that the Soviet side would commence by proposing a peace treaty which the West would, for propaganda purposes counter by suggesting the US idea of a plebiscite for an all-German Assembly.¹³³ Discussions would then move on to separate consideration of some aspects of the Berlin question. The Report stated that: the only new acceptable arrangement was one 'which would make minor and procedural arrangements whilst maintaining the essential features of the existing regime'; that the Western proposals of 28 July would remain the basis for an arrangement with the Soviets; and that the fall back position establishing an agency role for the DDR should be simplified. To prevent unilateral Soviet action, the Working Group proposed the establishment of a high level forum of subordinates to discuss these proposals after the summit. In the event of Soviet rejection of the 28 July proposals or other Western fall back positions, and if there was danger of unilateral Soviet action, the Working Group recommended that the West could implement existing agreed tripartite contingency plans, dating from April 1959.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Caccia to Lloyd, 28 Jan. 1960, no.50, FO 371/154083 WG/1074/7.

¹³² Letter, Hood to Rumbold, 25 Mar. 1960, FO 371/154087 WG 1074/153.

¹³³ Working Group Report on Germany and Berlin, 22 Mar. 1960, NSA no.1853. The US Paper, 3 Mar. 1959 on the status of Berlin, discussed the idea of a plebiscite in both parts of Germany to decide whether a German Peace Treaty should be negotiated and signed by an elected government of a reunified Germany or representatives of the DDR and the FRG, see Caccia to Lloyd, 10 Mar. 1959 (no tel. number), FO 371/154086 WG 1074/46.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

The British had reason to be cautiously optimistic. The Foreign Office Brief for the Foreign Ministers Meeting on 12-14 April 1960 noted that the US Administration had even been debating for the last two months whether it was possible to change the occupation status of Berlin and substitute a contractual agreement without impairing the ability to protect the freedom of Berlin. However, in the face of German and French opposition they had dropped the idea.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, although the Working Group Meetings had proved rather unproductive, the Foreign Office prognosis for the summit was extremely encouraging:

It is coming to be more and more accepted in Paris and Bonn as well as here and in Washington that the summit could end in an agreement on some sort of Geneva type interim solution for Berlin or at any rate, agreement about principles - details to be decided at another conference at a lower level. There have been indications that the Russians themselves would regard this as a satisfactory outcome.¹³⁶

The Foreign Office Brief also predicted that Khrushchev would prefer not to sign a peace treaty, and might well be prepared to make the concessions which Gromyko was not able to make at Geneva. Three problems would have to be surmounted: the manner in which the German question should be discussed in the future and the link to be established between such discussions and an interim solution; the question of subversive activities including links between West Berlin and the FRG; and a formula to express the situation which would arise at the end of any Interim Agreement. Another crucial question facing the Western Powers was whether they would be prepared to change the status of West Berlin, if Khrushchev made it plain that he would only sign an Interim Agreement on this condition.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Foreign Office Brief no. 2 for the Foreign Ministers Meeting, Washington, 30 March 1960. FO 371/154087 WG 1074/55. In March a US Working Group issued a questionnaire floating ideas on a change of status for Berlin, Caccia to Lloyd, 3 Mar. 1960, FO 371/154086, WG 1074/40.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

The Foreign Ministers Conferences of 12-14 April 1960 in Washington and 1 May in Istanbul

The Foreign Ministers Conference of 12-14 April 1960 approved the main recommendations of the Working Group Report. The Foreign Ministers agreed that, before their next scheduled meeting in Istanbul on 1 May, the Working Group would try to improve on the proposals put forward at Geneva on the 28 July 1959, in relation to Western rights, and freedom of communication between the Federal Republic and West Berlin.¹³⁸ They agreed that the Western proposals of 28 July had several advantages: they had already been submitted to the Soviets; the new access provisions would add a certain clarity to the existing situation; and they were generally acceptable to the Government of Berlin. The disadvantages were that a time limit might be regarded by the population of West Berlin as only a period of grace, and the reduction of troops might be seen by the Soviets as the first step to total withdrawal. The German Foreign Minister did not like the words 'modus vivendi', and instead wanted the following title, 'Essential Conditions for the Exercise of Western Rights in Berlin', one which the Soviets would obviously refute. He also objected to the word 'interim' because it implied a time limit to the agreement. These demands exemplified the total unreality of the German position, for even at Geneva, the Western Powers were considering negotiating on the basis of a time limit. Selwyn Lloyd noted somewhat cynically that Couve de Murville now thought an Interim Agreement on Berlin was the 'only hope about progress on Germany either at the summit or thereafter, whereas when he (Selwyn) said the same thing months ago, he was accused of 'basic unreliability and of selling the pass'.¹³⁹

In response to Soviet insistence on a mechanism for all-German talks, the Western Powers agreed that they would discuss the question of Germany on a quadripartite basis, and if appropriate, include consultation with German experts. This countered the Soviet proposal of an all-German Committee which the West perceived as the first step towards confederation. As regards Soviet strategy, the Foreign Ministers anticipated that their

¹³⁸ Meeting of Western Foreign Ministers, 13 April, 1960, Washington, PREM 11/2992.

¹³⁹ Conversation between Lloyd and Couve de Murville, 13 April, 1960. PREM 11/2992.

major tactic would be to start with maximum demands for a 'Free City', which proved to be a correct assumption.¹⁴⁰

A further Western Foreign Ministers Meeting at Istanbul, on 2-4 May confirmed these conclusions, and agreed that if an Interim Agreement on Berlin was to be achieved, it had to be on the basis that Western rights would remain intact when the Interim Agreement expired.¹⁴¹ They also decided to privately warn Khrushchev at the summit that if there were any provocative actions in Berlin it would endanger the chances of detente and early disarmament, two themes which they recognised as crucial to Khrushchev's objectives.

Conclusion

At Camp David, President Eisenhower reached the same conclusion as Macmillan, after his visit to Moscow: that the Soviet Government wanted a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Berlin problem. During the course of the ensuing year, as a result of British diligence and pressure, the other delegations on the Four Power Working Group were converted to the necessity and viability of negotiating an Interim Agreement on Berlin based on the Western position of 28 July, at the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference. Macmillan's personal role at the Western Summit of December 1959, and during his visit to President Eisenhower in March 1960 were also of vital importance to the success of the British objective of a summit conference at which the Western Powers would negotiate on an East-West modus vivendi on Berlin and disarmament measures.

The available evidence suggests that the Soviet Government also saw the Camp David accord as a turning point in East-West relations, characterised by a new personal and cordial relationship between the two leaders on which Khrushchev set much store. The Soviet leader's emphasis during the course of the year on peaceful coexistence and disarmament as the twin pillars of Soviet Foreign policy, together with indications that the Soviet Government were prepared to negotiate on 28 July Soviet proposals, boded well for the summit. It was clear that Khrushchev was so keen to reach an

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. They were correct in this assumption. See Appendix B.

¹⁴¹ Crisis over Berlin, NATO Ministers' Meeting, FRUS 1959-1960, Vol. 1X, no.141, pp. 363-367.

accommodation with the West and was prepared to sacrifice Soviet relations with her most powerful ally, China, with all which that implied for future Sino-Soviet relations.

Chapter Seven

The Impact of the U-2 Incident on the Paris Summit and on Negotiations for an Interim Agreement on Berlin from 1-16 May 1960

Macmillan recorded in his diary that 16 May 1960 was the 'most tragic day' in his life. The summit for which he had worked for two years and which he believed was his most important goal, and on which he had set such high hopes had 'blown up like a volcano. It is ignominious; it is tragic; it is almost incredible'.¹ In his Memoirs, Khrushchev saw the breakdown of the Paris Summit as 'a landmark event in the history of our struggle against the American imperialists who were waging the Cold War'.² Both leaders had high expectations of the summit but the downing of the U-2 over Soviet territory on 1 May 1960, initiated a series of events which forestalled the possibility of an East-West compromise on an Interim Agreement on Berlin and on disarmament.

This Chapter will analyse US and Soviet policy on the U-2 Incident from 1-16 May, but as the US perspective on this subject has already been well covered, it will concentrate on Soviet perceptions of, and reactions to the downing of the U-2 and will seek to determine the factors governing Khrushchev's reaction to the incident.³ In particular it will examine Khrushchev's reasons for exploiting the U-2 Incident, given that he hoped to achieve detente with the West. In conclusion, it will present new evidence suggesting that in spite of the U-2 Incident, Khrushchev left Moscow for the Paris Summit still hoping to achieve an Interim Agreement on Berlin, based on terms which the Western Powers might well have accepted. Arguably, a modus vivendi on Berlin, albeit a provisional one based on the status quo, combined with compromise measures on disarmament might well have led to a lessening of East-West tension and to detente at an earlier stage.

Eisenhower states in his Memoirs that the Paris Summit was unlikely to end in detente between the Powers. His only regret, he said, was the 'erroneous cover story'.⁴ However, as argued in this thesis, and contrary to Eisenhower's statement, probably sanitised for posterity, it appears that after meeting Khrushchev at Camp David, the President had been

¹ As quoted in Macmillan's Diary, Horne, op cit, p.228.

² N.Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament p. 449.

³ See M.R. Beschloss, Mayday: Eisenhower, Kennedy and the U2 Affair (New York, 1986)

⁴ Eisenhower, Dwight D. The White House Years: Waging Peace 1956-1961 (New York, 1965) p.588.

converted to the British view that a modus vivendi on Berlin and disarmament was possible. He was therefore prepared to go to Paris to sign a genuine accord on disarmament and an Interim Agreement on Berlin.⁵ Due to vociferous opposition from Adenauer, supported by the French, the US had backed down on any compromise with the Soviet Union based on a change of status for Berlin, and on Macmillan's idea of a zone of limitation of forces and weapons. Nevertheless, in May 1960, Western Heads of State were prepared to negotiate a compromise agreement on Berlin based on the 28 July Geneva proposals. Eventually the President hoped to move the Chancellor away from a rigid policy of non-recognition of East Germany, whilst still preserving the freedom of Berlin. 'It was therefore doubtful that he would have sacrificed some type of East-West accord solely on the German issue, in spite of the importance he placed on Adenauer's East Germany.'⁶

Unlike his chief advisors, Dulles then Herter, and General Nathan Twining, Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who were opposed to detente, Eisenhower was more optimistic about the prospects for a successful summit and particularly hopeful about a breakthrough on a nuclear test ban treaty.⁷ Preparatory documents and Goodpaster, the President's Chief Staff Officer's recollection suggest that Eisenhower was willing to offer concessions and a negotiation process on the German issue that might have allowed Khrushchev to claim that his tough stand was showing results.⁸ Although in the aftermath of the U-2 Incident, the President had stubbornly refused to announce in public that U-2 flights would not be continued, he had in fact made this decision prior to his departure for Paris. He planned to reveal his decision at the opening of the summit emphasising that the US wished to negotiate a Berlin settlement and a test ban treaty.⁹ In an election year, both parties in the US vied with each other to play the anti-Soviet card and powerful men in the Central Intelligence Agency, (CIA), the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and Department of Defense (DOD) and their suppliers in the defence industry

⁵ Ambrose, Eisenhower Soldier and President (New York, 1990) p. 505.

⁶ T.A. Schatz, Eisenhower and the Germans in Eisenhower: A Centenary Assessment (Eds. G. Bisshop and S.E. Ambrose. (Washington, 1995) p.220.

⁷ In the past, some US historians have considered that the U-2 Incident was 'simply seized upon by the Russians as a pretext for breaking off the conference', see J. E. Smith, The Defence of Berlin (Baltimore, 1963); this view is countered by R.A. Divine, Eisenhower and the Cold War (Oxford, 1981) p.152; and S.E. Ambrose, Eisenhower Vol. 2 The President 1952-1969 (London, 1984), p.505; and by Beschloss, Mayday pp.376-382.

⁸ Ibid. Mayday p. 377.

⁹ R.A. Divine, Eisenhower and the Cold War (Oxford, 1981) p.150.

were firmly opposed to any outbreak of peace and together that helped to sabotage Eisenhower's vision.¹⁰ In a conversation with George Kistiakowsky, his scientific advisor in July 1960, just after the Paris Summit, the President spoke about 'how he had concentrated his efforts the last few years on ending the Cold War, how he felt that he was making big progress, and how the stupid U-2 mess had ruined all his efforts'.¹¹

Khrushchev too, placed high hopes on the Paris Summit, but there has been some disparity in assessments of Soviet policy during the period from the Soviet leader's Baku speech of 25 April until 16 May. Sir Patrick Reilly's view on Khrushchev's motives immediately prior to the summit was negative. On 16 May 1960, he stated that it seemed to him probable that one of the main objectives of the course which Khrushchev followed at Paris was to 'find a way of again deferring action about a German Peace Treaty and Berlin without loss of face'.¹² On 19 May 1960, Northern Department prepared the following analysis of the Paris Summit breakdown for the Directors of Intelligence:¹³ Soviet disillusionment became apparent in Khrushchev's angry Baku Speech of 20 April, in which he alleged that the US Government was not willing to reach an agreement on disarmament and on ways of improving East-West relations unless its view on the Berlin question was accepted. Khrushchev alluded to certain Western statesmen who sought to reduce discussions on Germany at the summit to an 'exchange of opinions which would not be binding' and to 'pleasant conversations'. Clearly a reference to General de Gaulle!

According to Northern Department's analysis, the U-2 Incident came as an opportunity for Khrushchev to put pressure on the US to improve his bargaining position at the summit and to demonstrate to home and Eastern Bloc opinion that he could be tough with the US, notwithstanding his aim for detente. Given his serious doubts about the summit, and the breach of Soviet security, he therefore decided on a showdown and to wreck the Conference, unless he could get the President to give him an apology promising to punish

¹⁰ Ambrose, Soldier and President p.498.

¹¹ Divine, op cit. p.152; see pp.140-152, for an account of the progress on test ban negotiations with the Russians.

¹² Reilly to Lloyd, Dispatch no. 51, 14 June 1960, FO 371/151922 NS1022/49.

¹³ Report for the Directors of Intelligence by Northern Dept. 19 May 1959, FO 371/151923; see also Reilly to Lloyd, 26 April 1960, no.518, FO 371/151921 NS1022/25; 'Excerpts and Statements by Khrushchev, Herter and Dillon', 5 May 1960, NSA no. 1884; and Schick, op. cit. pp. 110-111.

those guilty for the incident and undertaking to permanently end flights over the Soviet Union. This line was agreed by the Praesidium before Khrushchev left for Paris.

The evidence available suggests that Khrushchev 'put himself on the record as favouring a long term accommodation with the West and that he was prepared to make as well as to receive, concessions'.¹⁴ Accounts by participants in these dramatic days, such as Adzhubei, Sergei Khrushchev, and Burlatsky, his advisor, also testify to Khrushchev's hopes of reaching agreement, on Berlin and disarmament, in Paris.¹⁵ Why then, given this major objective in foreign policy did Khrushchev insist on an apology from Eisenhower for the U-2 Incident, thereby endangering his objective of negotiating with the West an Interim Agreement on Berlin and disarmament measures?

Until full access is granted to the Communist Party Archives, it is only possible to shed limited light on Khrushchev's motivation prior to the Paris Summit. A number of issues need to be addressed. First, was the hardening of Soviet policy prior to the summit due to internal opposition to Khrushchev's policies, by neo-Stalinist hard-liners within the Kremlin, and by the Army? Second, to what extent was Soviet decision making affected by the Chinese factor? Third, what was the relevance of the U-2 Incident and blundering US reaction to it, to the failure of the Conference? And finally, and most importantly, was an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and possibly some deal on disarmament or nuclear testing feasible, had the U-2 Incident not taken place? A chronological survey of US and Soviet policy in this vital period, 1-16 May will facilitate an analysis of the factors governing Soviet reaction to the U-2 Incident.

US and Soviet Policy 1-16 May

The Eisenhower administration believed they were justified in despatching U-2s over the Soviet Union, because Russia had turned down Eisenhower's Open Skies proposal at the 1955 Geneva Conference. These high altitude flights by Lockheed aircraft began in 1956, as a result of the recommendations of a scientific panel headed by James Killian.¹⁶ They

¹⁴ Zagoria, op cit. p. 287.

¹⁵ Interview with Adzhubei; 1 Sept. 1991, Burlatsky, op. cit. pp.155-158; and S. Khrushchev, op. cit. pp.27-37.

¹⁶ James Killian, former Director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology headed the President's Science Advisory Committee.

provided quick, efficient and covert information on such important areas as the so called 'missile gap', and revealed, in so doing, that it did not exist. This was long before Penkovsky passed his valuable information on Soviet missile development to Greville Wynne.¹⁷ Eisenhower was able to resist the clamour for further defence expenditure, because one of the key discoveries of CIA expert Ray Kline, who interpreted U-2 intelligence was that 'the military's claim of Communism hell bent on world domination was not backed up by the evidence.....there was no sign that the Communists were either ready or able to resort to direct military action'.¹⁸

The U-2 could be detected by radar but until that fateful day on 1 May, Soviet forces could not shoot it down it because it flew beyond the range of Soviet surface to air missiles and planes. The Americans did not wish to publicly admit that they were violating Russian air space and the Soviets were humiliated by the intrusions, so neither side publicly acknowledged the flights, though the Russians sometimes filed a complaint with the US Government.¹⁹ The President, unlike his colleagues, was far more aware of Soviet sensitivities concerning intrusions of spy planes. He knew that flights would increase Soviet fears of encirclement by United States bases on the Soviet perimeter, especially as the Russians had sensitive memories of the German invasion in 1941, which was accompanied by overflights.²⁰ Prior to the U-2 flight, General Andrew Goodpaster, Eisenhower's Staff Secretary had somewhat prophetically warned that the President's tremendous asset for the summit, his honesty, would be impugned and his effectiveness threatened 'if one of these aircraft were lost when we (were) engaged in apparently sincere deliberations'.²¹ In October 1959, at Camp David, Khrushchev publicly warned the West to take no action before the Paris Summit that would 'worsen the atmosphere' and 'sow seeds of suspicion'.²²

At a National Security meeting, after the Camp David Summit, the President suggested that the flights be halted, but CIA, and DOD officials objected, arguing that they needed the

¹⁷ O. Penkovsky, The Penkovsky Papers (New York, 1982). In Jan. 1960, Allen Dulles of the CIA told the President that the Russians had no operational ICBMs and that they would only have 35 by mid 1960.

¹⁸ P. Lashmar, Spy Flights of the Cold War (Stroud, 1996) p.144.

¹⁹ J.L. Gaddis, We Now Know Rethinking Cold War History (New York, 1997) p.245.

²⁰ M. Beschloss, Mayday p.372.

²¹ S. Ambrose, Eisenhower the President, Vol. 2 1952-1969 p.586.

²² Beschloss, Mayday p.239.

chance to photograph the first operational ICBMs under construction, so he gave in.²³ Eisenhower gave his personal permission for two more flights, on 9 and 30 April, but because of bad weather the second flight was postponed. Khrushchev was furious when on 9 April, a U-2 plane photographed the Soviets' three most secret sites: the nuclear test site in Semipalatinsk, the anti-ballistic missiles complex at Sary Shagan and a space complex at Tyura-Tam. Soviet air defence under Marshal Biruzov had failed yet again to shoot the plane down.²⁴

On 1 May, the most important day in the Soviet calendar, and only two weeks before the Paris Summit, the first East-West meeting since 1955, the skies broke, and the U-2 finally took off. On that same day, Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, the Minister of Defence, addressing the Soviet armed forces said 'the people of the whole world are expecting from the coming summit meeting a just and urgent settlement on complete and general disarmament and a liquidation of the remnants of World War II' (i.e. A German Peace Treaty) but he warned the West that 'a smashing blow would be delivered to anyone attacking his country'.²⁵ Whether he knew the U-2 had been downed at Sverdlosk that very morning one cannot tell.

The US government believed it impossible that either plane or pilot could be captured, as in the event of an accident, plane and pilot would automatically be blown up, and the pilot was in any case supplied with suicide pills. As it happened, Gary Powers' desire for life was greater than his superiors bargained for. No comprehensive impartial investigation of the downing of the U-2 has ever taken place, but the semi-official US enquiry verdict concluded that on 1 May, Gary Powers' plane which normally should have been travelling at 72,000 feet over Sverdlovsk, was downed by a Soviet missile, an SA-2 at 68,000 feet. According to the report this may have been due to trouble with the petrol tank and the autopilot.²⁶

The crisis broke on 5 May when Khrushchev publicly announced that an American aircraft had been shot down over Soviet territory.²⁷ He also revealed that earlier on 9 April, another US plane had crossed the Soviet border. The National Aeronautics and Space

²³ Beschloss, Mayday pp.237-238.

²⁴ Zubok and Pleshakov, *op. cit.* pp. 203-204.

²⁵ Alexander Werth, The Khrushchev Phase (London, 1961) pp.253-254.

²⁶ See Beschloss, Mayday pp.355-363 for a detailed account of the U-2 Incident.

²⁷ SIA, pp.61-66; for other accounts of the U-2 Incident see Schick, *op. cit.* pp.111-128; and Horne, *op.cit.* pp.224-233; and Beschloss, Mayday chaps. 10-14.

Administration (NASA) put out a statement saying that 'the plane might be one of its Lockheed U-2 aircraft engaged in high level weather studies over Turkey which had been missing since 1 May, when its pilot had reported oxygen difficulties'. It was immediately apparent that even if the violation was a mistake, the Soviet Union could make propaganda out of the incident. A shorter statement was therefore issued on 5 May by the press department of the State Department, stating that the plane might have accidentally violated Soviet air space due to oxygen failure; the implication being that the Soviet Union was responsible for creating an incident out of the affair. The President ordered an immediate enquiry and sent a note to Moscow, naming the pilot as Gary Powers, and asking for further details.²⁸ This US cover up played into Khrushchev's hands.

Apparently, as soon as the U-2 was shot down, Khrushchev told Oleg Troyanovsky, one of his advisors that it might ruin the Paris Summit, and during the ensuing days, Troyanovsky revealed that Khrushchev laid 'a kind of trap for the White House and did it with relish'.²⁹ This is corroborated by Anatoly Dobrynin, who at that time was in the American Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, working on the U-2 Incident. He said Khrushchev deliberately forbade anyone to mention the affair as he hoped the Americans would consider Powers dead and put forward a face saving story to excuse the flight.³⁰ Nevertheless, Khrushchev still could not believe that the President, 'a sober and peaceful man' could have personally ordered the flight on May Day. He blamed the forces of evil in the State Department, the Pentagon and the CIA, but it seemed he did not want to exacerbate the situation, because from 2-4 May, nothing was said in Pravda about the U-2 Incident.³¹ Adzhubei described the speech Khrushchev made to the Central Committee informing them of the the incident 'as quite a circus'. Usually Khrushchev prepared his speeches in advance, but on this occasion initially he said nothing about the incident, merely 'proceed as usual, which struck the members as unusual'.³²

Furthermore, at the meeting of the Supreme Soviet, on 5 May, there was no evidence of a Government retreat from defence cuts and the needs of Soviet consumers. Khrushchev reaffirmed his goal of detente and his aims for the Paris Summit: disarmament, the

²⁸ SIA, 1959-1960, pp.61-66.

²⁹ Zubok and Pleshakov, *op. cit.* p. 203.

³⁰ A. Dobrynin, *In Confidence* (Washington, 1995) pp. 40-43.

³¹ Werth, *op. cit.* p.246.

³² Interview with Adzhubei, 12 Sept. 1991, Moscow.

conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and agreement over Berlin.³³ Only after speaking for two hours did the Russian leader inform the Supreme Soviet of the violations of Soviet sovereignty. Whilst he condemned the act, Khrushchev gave Eisenhower the benefit of the doubt, implying that the Pentagon was responsible, and they had not informed the President. As Khrushchev put it, ‘it was not a harbinger of a third World War, but an attempt by the American military to play on nerves for Cold War purposes’. He would therefore still go to Paris ‘with a pure heart and the best intentions’.³⁴ It also emerged from the speech that Khrushchev was offended that Nixon, for whom he had little regard, was due to replace the President at the Paris Summit, if it went on after 23 May. ‘It was a case of setting a goat to guard the cabbages’, said Khrushchev.³⁵ During this session of the Supreme Soviet both Gromyko and Malinovsky made tough speeches condemning the US action, and stated that they would act against ‘pirate flights’ and would wipe out the bases and aerodromes.³⁶

Sergei Khrushchev emphasises that at this stage, his father reacted calmly to the crisis saying that ‘spying was spying, and diplomacy was diplomacy’. He expected the President to apologise on behalf of his subordinates, and he did not have any clear plan about what he was going to do.³⁷ On 6 May, in a letter to the President concerned with the organisation of the forthcoming Paris Summit, Khrushchev expressed his anxiety that ‘a series of public declarations by highly placed official representatives of the US on questions concerning the forthcoming conference were conceived in the ‘spirit of the Cold War’. He did not mention the U-2, but merely stated that they needed to seek a solution of disputed questions on a mutually acceptable basis.³⁸

³³ Tompson, op. cit. pp.222-223.

³⁴ Text of Khrushchev’s speech to the Supreme Soviet, 5 May, 1960, Chancery, Moscow to FO no. 564, FO 371/151921, NS/1022/27.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Reilly to Lloyd, 7 May 1960, no.588, FO 371/ 151921/NS/1022/28. Marshal Malinovsky, Soviet Minister of Defence 1957-1963 replaced Marshal Georgii Zhukov in the aftermath of the Anti- Party Coup of 1957.

³⁷ Sergei Khrushchev, Nikita Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles, (1994, Moscow) in Russian. p.32. Sergei Khrushchev was a Soviet scientist engaged in secret research on missiles. He persuaded his father in his retirement to dictate his famous tapes which were smuggled out of the Soviet Union.

³⁸ Letter, Khrushchev to President, 6 May, 1960, PREM 11/2992.

What did infuriate Khrushchev was the State Department's elaborate cover story before they had tested the extent of Soviet intelligence.³⁹ In a speech on 7 May, Khrushchev let the world know, what he had known since 1 May: that the Soviet Government had proof that the U-2 was a spy plane for aerial reconnaissance. Furthermore, the Soviet Government stated that they had retrieved the wreckage of the plane and had captured Gary Powers whom they intended to put on trial. However, Khrushchev gave the President a way of escape. 'I am prepared to grant that the President had no knowledge of a plane being dispatched to the Soviet Union'. The Soviet leader's apparent strategy was to give Eisenhower the opportunity to make a conciliatory gesture which would enable the summit to proceed on track. Whilst exposing the blundering lies of the United States Government, he also said 'I think it quite possible that the President knew nothing about the plane'. He blamed the flight on 'militarists' in America who began 'running the show'.⁴⁰ Clearly, the Soviet leader valued Macmillan's role as an intermediary, for in his letter of 7 May to the Prime Minister, as well as expressing his anxieties over provocative speeches by Douglas Dillon, Under-Secretary of State, Herter and Vice-President Nixon, in April and May, he voiced his anger over the the U-2 Incident. The latter, he said, 'attempted to preclude any possibility of a fruitful exchange of views and made null and void all that of a positive nature we achieved during our preliminary talks'. He asked Macmillan what was the point of a provocative and aggressive action on the eve of the summit and whether those involved wanted to torpedo the Paris Summit? The Soviet leader told the Prime Minister that he was expressing these sentiments because he wanted him to understand his motivation for the sake of peace and a solution of problems.⁴¹

It was now left to the Americans to react. Faced with the choice between public disavowal, (an impossible option given the flagrant evidence), and the unprecedented association of the Government with its own espionage, the US Government chose the latter course and gave a limited confession. The State Department issued a press statement on 7 May stating that the U-2 had 'probably' crossed the Soviet border to 'give a measure of protection against surprise attack'. Defiantly, the press release added, 'such flights had been made along the frontiers of the free world since 1956'. The statement

³⁹ For a detailed account of the U-2 Incident, see SIA 1959-1960, pp.61-70.

⁴⁰ Divine, *op. cit.* p.149.

⁴¹ Letter, Khrushchev to Macmillan, 7 May, T.325/60, PREM 11/2992.

unleashed the next fiasco in the deception, as it went on to state that, ‘insofar as the authorities in Washington are concerned there was no authorisation for any such flight, as described by Mr Khrushchev’.⁴² This was disastrous on two counts; it suggested that the White House had no control over the administration and that some unauthorised person had decided to sabotage the Summit. More importantly, it revealed that the security of the US made espionage imperative, only two weeks before the most important East-West meeting since the 1955 Geneva Conference. The question of responsibility for the flight was left unclear. Macmillan, through his American friend Bob Murphy, tried to hint to the President that he should follow the British example and decline to discuss intelligence activities in public, but to no avail.⁴³

On 9 May, Herter completed the US volte face, and publicly stated that the President had authorised the espionage programme, but not specific missions, and that the US had not and did not ‘shirk its duty’ to collect intelligence ‘in the absence of Soviet cooperation’.⁴⁴ Khrushchev reacted in a conciliatory fashion saying that the incident need not be on the summit agenda, but nevertheless he expressed doubt about Eisenhower’s forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union. Commentators hoped that a private meeting between the two leaders could heal the rift but this never happened. Meanwhile, Khrushchev was still trying to blame anyone other than the President for the U-2 disaster. At a reception at the Czech Embassy on 9 May, he blamed Allen Dulles for putting the US Government in such a spot.⁴⁵

Most importantly, the Soviet Government made their most significant gesture yet indicating that it was still their intention to negotiate with the Western Powers in Paris. On that same day, 9 May, they sent General de Gaulle the new Soviet proposals for an Interim Agreement for Berlin. This was hardly the action of a government determined to scupper the Paris Summit.⁴⁶

Sergei Khrushchev states that his father considered the ‘door was still open’ and that he was ready to search for any way out of the situation.⁴⁷ This he did. In an effort to save the

⁴² SIA 1959-60, pp.61-69, and Beschloss, Mayday, pp.243-309.

⁴³ Macmillan’s Diary, Horne, op. cit. p.226.

⁴⁴ SIA, 1959-60, p.64.

⁴⁵ Werth, op. cit. p.249.

⁴⁶ See Appendix B.

⁴⁷ See Sergei Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles pp.30-31.

summit, he paid a visit to Llewelyn Thompson, the US Ambassador in Moscow, a person whom Khrushchev respected both as the representative of his country and as a man. Khrushchev thought Thompson knew nothing of the U-2 intrusion and did not approve of the flight, and he hoped that an appeal by the US Ambassador to the President would help establish unofficial and confidential contacts with Eisenhower, thus allowing a mutually acceptable resolution of the crisis.⁴⁸ Unfortunately it was too late for Thompson to take preventive action, for the same day, 9 May, the State Department completed the US volte face and issued a statement, directly attributing the U-2 espionage programme to the President, and implying that the flights would go on in defiance of Moscow.

Eisenhower's confirmation of his own responsibility for the flights, made on 11 May, and Herter's inflammatory speech, stating that the US Government needed to take 'such measures as are possible unilaterally to lessen the Soviet threat', only exacerbated the situation.⁴⁹ Both speeches were condemned by Khrushchev and Gromyko. Gromyko said that Herter's statement that the flights were necessary for the 'national defence of the USA' was an incredible violation of international law and of those very principles of national sovereignty to which the American Congress had subscribed several times in the past.⁵⁰ In his speech, Khrushchev said he would not like to be President Eisenhower when he comes to the Soviet Union because 'questions are going to be put to him'.⁵¹ This certainly suggested that the President's visit to Moscow, organised at Camp David, was still on. Continuing his speech, Khrushchev said he believed America's other partners, Britain and France would not be pleased with what the Americans had done. Finally he pleaded with the Western press not to say anything which would increase tension further.

For our part we shall do everything so that present tension could be digested; we want international relations to return to their normal boring rut, and we want good relations to be restored between the Soviet Union and the United States ----but the USA will have to help in this.⁵²

The Soviet leader then stated that the 'incident would not necessarily be put on the agenda of the summit', and he announced his departure for Paris on 14 May, two days before the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ DOS Press release of Herter speech, 9 May, 1960, PREM 11/2992.

⁵⁰ Werth, *op cit.* p.250.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

summit was due to start. Presumably, he expected Eisenhower to contact him personally beforehand and be prepared to make an apology to save him losing face. Sergei Khrushchev's recent account also suggests that Khrushchev still hoped the Paris Conference would go ahead. Walking with his father at their dacha, just before his departure for Paris, Sergei said there was no hint that Eisenhower's visit to the Soviet Union, an invitation issued at Camp David was being put off. But he did notice that his father seemed worried that they were going to Paris as 'supplicants', especially as the Americans had confirmed their right to continue espionage flights.⁵³ Thus, 11 May is generally interpreted by contemporary commentators and historians as a crucial day for Khrushchev, who admitted that the US had placed him in a very difficult position in relation to those who had reservations about his policy of detente. Marshal Vershinin's visit to Washington was cancelled and Mao Tse Tung was invited to Moscow for the first time for three years.⁵⁴

In Paris, Macmillan became the intermediary between the Russians and the Americans. On his arrival in the French capital on Sunday 15 May, Khrushchev paid private visits to de Gaulle, Chairman of the Paris Summit and Macmillan and he urged the Western leaders to persuade the President to accept his conditions. The Soviet leader said he was sure that Britain and France could not possibly have approved of the U-2 flight.⁵⁵ He then read a prepared statement presenting Soviet demands: the 'US must denounce the impermissible provocative actions of the American Air Force, refrain from continuing such actions and call strictly to account those responsible'.⁵⁶ He told Macmillan he was not prepared to negotiate under the 'real threat' of the U-2. If the US Government 'were ready to admit they had made a bad mistake and had been caught and say they were sorry the situation would be quite different; but their attitude was that they were justified in doing it and that they should go on doing it. The Soviet Government could not accept such a bandit's philosophy'. He said he was prepared to sit down to negotiate but only if the US Government withdrew what they had declared to be their national policy of sending

⁵³ S. Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles p.32.

⁵⁴ Tatu, op. cit. pp.59-63.

⁵⁵ Thompson asked the British Ambassador if the Russians had approached Britain and France on the U-2, because they thought they would condemn the US Government. Reilly said 'no', but Khrushchev said in passing that he was sure Macmillan did not approve of the action. 'Recorded bits of useful information at the Heads of Government Meeting' by Thompson. 16 May, 1960. NSA 1897.

⁵⁶ Gladwyn Jebb, Paris, to FO, no 171, 15 May, 1960, and 'Meeting of Heads of Government' Doc. 6 pp.15-18, PREM 11/2992.

aircraft over the Soviet Union. Although Macmillan's appeals to the Soviet Prime Minister failed to move him, he did agree to the suggestion that nothing should be said to the press.⁵⁷ According to Sir Patrick Reilly, Khrushchev asked the Prime Minister to 'work on the Americans'.⁵⁸

At the the opening session of the Paris Summit, on 16 May, Khrushchev repeated his demands to the President and called for an apology.⁵⁹ He angrily proclaimed that the summit had been torpedoed by reactionary circles in the US but that the Soviet Union was prepared to wait for a change of thinking by a new American President. He then proposed that the summit conference be postponed for six or eight months. The President rejected the Soviet 'ultimatum', and offered either to take the matter no further or to deal with it bilaterally during the summit. The final blunder in Eisenhower's statement was his almost casual dismissal of the Soviet assertion that further U-2 flights were a threat. The President said 'in point of fact these flights were suspended after the recent incident, and are not to be resumed, accordingly this cannot be the issue'.⁶⁰

The order to suspend flights had been made on 12 May, but unfortunately the President decided not to make it public until he had seen Khrushchev at the conference. The President told Herter that if Khrushchev brought up the U-2 Incident at the summit he planned to suggest that the two leaders should have a private talk about it. Herter told the President that the British and French Ambassadors had thought this a 'fine idea'.⁶¹ Unfortunately the invitation to Khrushchev did not materialise and the tragedy was that no action was taken and entrenched positions were publicly adopted. According to Sergei Khrushchev, his father thought the initiative should be taken by the side which had insulted the national pride of the other side.⁶² He (Sergei) understood that Eisenhower had been prepared to do this and had asked Herter to organise for Khrushchev to call at the Residence of the US Ambassador at 4 p.m on the first day in Paris. Apparently, this never happened. When Lloyd asked Herter at their meeting in Paris on 14 May, why couldn't the President say he was sorry, Herter said that the President's first reaction was that he and Khrushchev would

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Minute, Reilly to Rumbold, 17 May 1960, PREM 11/2992.

⁵⁹ SIA pp. 61-69 for a detailed account of public statements and speeches made on the U-2 Incident; also T.P. Whitney, Khrushchev Speaks Selected Speeches Articles and Press Conferences (Michigan 1963).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Memo of Conference between President and Herter. 12 May 1960, NSA no.1898.

⁶² See Sergei Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles pp.30-31.

have to sort it out by themselves, but later as he (Herter) left the US for the summit, the President's inclination at that time was to wait for Khrushchev to raise it, and then the President intended to suggest a talk between the two of them.⁶³

During the evening of 16 May, after the official meeting, Macmillan went in turn to see de Gaulle, Eisenhower and Khrushchev. Selwyn Lloyd tried to stop him seeing Khrushchev but to no avail, 'Harold was incited by the private secretaries to do it'. According to the Foreign Secretary, they had a civil talk with the Soviet leader, but it made no impression.⁶⁴

The Prime Minister pleaded with Khrushchev to avoid a violent break and to allow the process of detente to be pursued.

Khrushchev's response was that he would still be prepared to talk, if President Eisenhower expressed his regret; 'after all it was normal to apologise even when treading on someone's foot and the Soviet Union was not a colony of the United States'.⁶⁵ Furthermore, he said he did not accept President Eisenhower's statement at his press conference of 16 May, that the Soviet Government had presented an ultimatum. Khrushchev considered 'it was an elementary requirement to condemn and express regret for the flights and say they would not be repeated', as the Soviet Union had done when their aircraft accidentally flew over Iran. Again he seemed to be giving Eisenhower a let out. He said:

the difficulty was that President Eisenhower reigned but did not govern. He had some fine qualities, but political leaders must be judged by the acts which they did and the present situation was one in which the United States military gave President Eisenhower papers which he signed without reading. No doubt Mr. Allen Dulles had drawn up the plans for the overflights and had probably shown the photographs to the President. The President in turn had probably congratulated Mr. Dulles. Therefore he was not now in a position to condemn Mr. Dulles.

Khrushchev said he quite understood how it had happened.⁶⁶

⁶³ Conversation between Lloyd and Herter, 14 May 1960, 'Meeting of Heads of Government, Palais de l'Elysee, Doc. 3 p.10, PREM 11/2992.

⁶⁴ Selwyn Lloyd's Diary, Selo, 4/33, Churchill Archive Cambridge. Lloyd obviously resented the influence of de Zulueta.

⁶⁵ Heads of Government Meeting, record of conversation between the Prime Minister and Khrushchev at the Soviet Embassy, Paris, 9.30 p.m. 16 May, 1960, Doc. 13 pp.35-38, PREM 11/2992.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

The Prime Minister made a last unsuccessful appeal to Khrushchev (who had said he did not plan to leave for a few days) not to break up the Paris Conference the following day, but to start their work and thereby allow it to continue in six or eight months, as Khrushchev had suggested. Macmillan told the Soviet leader that ‘the peace of the world and the future of mankind were in Mr. Khrushchev’s hands’.⁶⁷ In retrospect, Khrushchev in his Memoirs recalled Macmillan’s words at this meeting. The Prime Minister told him that they had demanded too much and should have been more flexible but nevertheless Khrushchev could tell from the expression on his face that basically Macmillan understood their position but was saying all this as a formality to register his general solidarity with the US.⁶⁸

By the evening of 17 May, when it had become clear that the summit was doomed, the Western leaders made a statement that they would be ready to meet ‘at a suitable time in the future’.⁶⁹ At his press conference on 18 May, Khrushchev made a vituperative speech about the U-2 and US policy, still stating that he thought the President wanted peace but was unable to impose it on his administration. He told his audience that the Soviet Government would still strive for disarmament and suspension of nuclear tests and had not ruled out the possibility of a future summit.⁷⁰ He thanked de Gaulle and Macmillan for the efforts they had made to make the summit possible but regretted that they had not taken a sufficiently ‘objective’ view of what had happened and had not therefore been sufficiently firm with Eisenhower. Sergei Khrushchev said his father could not forgive Eisenhower, either the President or the man for the fiasco of the U-2 flight. He wanted to have nothing to do with him, but he was still prepared to negotiate with a future President.⁷¹

Events after the summit throw further light on Soviet motivation. First, Khrushchev left the way open to a future conference with a new United States administration on the Berlin issue. The fact that Khrushchev did not fulfil his threat and sign a peace treaty with the DDR en route home through West Berlin reinforced the point. He later told Ulbricht that he did not want to create the impression that he had deliberately sabotaged the Paris Summit as an excuse to go ahead with the threat. Instead he proposed another summit six to eight

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ N. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers : the Last Testament p. 459.

⁶⁹ Conference of Heads of Government, Elysee Palace, 16 May 1960, Doc. 23, p.53, PREM 11/2992.

⁷⁰ Werth, op cit. p.255.

⁷¹ S. Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles p.36.

months later, when a new and stronger US President had been inaugurated.⁷² On 28 May, Khrushchev told the Confederation of Shockworkers in Moscow that he thought Eisenhower wanted peace but he had been unable to impose it on his administration. The Soviet Government, he said, would continue to strive for disarmament and suspension of nuclear tests and he did not rule out the possibility of a summit in the future.⁷³ Later he claimed to have 'voted' for Kennedy by holding Gary Powers until after the election. Second, as argued throughout this thesis, Khrushchev's policy on Berlin should be viewed in the context of his desire for disarmament and detente. After the Paris fiasco, some observers expected disarmament negotiations might come to a halt, so it came as a surprise to find that Gromyko still hoped for a Test Ban Treaty. Sir Patrick Reilly reported that the new Soviet proposals, were a serious attempt to meet Western views, and must have been prepared for the summit conference. On 4 June, Brezhnev had assured him 'with emphasis and the appearance of complete sincerity that the Soviet Government were really serious about these proposals'.⁷⁴ Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar, a member of the British delegation in Paris heard from de Gaulle that when Khrushchev came to say goodbye, he told him (de Gaulle):

he had come to Paris with some Soviet proposals about control of missiles and their means of delivery etc. which he thought if things had not turned out so badly he meant to have presented at Geneva. Now he would have to consider whether or not to proceed with their proposals in the light of altered circumstances.⁷⁵

The Factors Governing Khrushchev's Reaction to the U-2 Incident

On May 16th, Bohlen heard Khrushchev state that the U-2 Incident was a matter which 'involved deeply the internal politics of the Soviet Union, a matter of the greatest importance to them'.⁷⁶ In the past, the Soviet leader's decision that he could not participate in the summit unless the US met his demands, has been attributed to opposition to his policy of detente either from hardliners in the Kremlin and the Army, and/or from the Chinese.

⁷² Richter, op. cit. p.131.

⁷³ Reilly to Lloyd, 28 May 1960, FO 371/151922 NS 1022/38.

⁷⁴ Reilly to Lloyd, 25 May 1960, no.42, FO371/151922 NS 1022/36.

⁷⁵ Heads of Government Meeting, 19 May 1960, Doc.37, p.56, PREM11/2992. The Western leaders intended to discuss the question of nuclear tests with Khrushchev at a meeting in the British Embassy during the first days of the summit, see Heads of Government Meeting, record of meeting between Lloyd and Herter at the British Embassy on 14 May 1960, Doc.2, PREM 11/2992.

⁷⁶ Schick, op. cit. p.126.

The ensuing analysis will suggest that these factors were of secondary importance to the impact of the U-2 Incident on Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence.

Michael Tatu's detailed study states that there was organised opposition to Khrushchev's policy of detente even in the period immediately after Camp David.⁷⁷ In his view, the Praesidium included only a tiny minority of Khrushchev's clients, and even the majority had doubts about the scope of Khrushchev's power since the defeat of the Anti-Party Group. Marshal Kliment Voroshilov was still a member of the Praesidium, and as late as 1958, Khrushchev had demanded the expulsion of Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich and Marshal K. Voroshilov, perhaps indicating a degree of insecurity. It was also generally recognized that Mikhail Suslov was a hardliner. Tatu considers that in this situation, Mao was able to play a major role in wrecking the summit, though the decision was probably taken in Moscow. He sees the changes in the Praesidium announced in Pravda on 5 May, following a meeting of the Central Committee on 4 May (prior to the summit) as dealing a blow to Khrushchev, by demoting Nikolai Beliayev, Yekaterina Furtseva, Alexei Kirishenko and Nikolai Ignatov, his supporters, and promoting Frol Kozlov (who now controlled the Secretariat), Alexei Kosygin, Dimitri Polyanski, and Nikolai Podgorny, men in whom he might not be able to place so much confidence. It was no longer unthinkable that an opposition might rally behind men such as Suslov, Kozlov and Kosygin.⁷⁸ Sir Frank Roberts, British Ambassador in Moscow, also thought Kosygin's and Kozlov's star seemed to be rising though his interpretation of events did not perceive a split in the Praesidium.⁷⁹

Tatu also analyses the attitude of the army to Khrushchev's defence cuts. In his view, Generals M. Zakharov, Chief of the General Staff, and Andrei Grechko, Commander of the Warsaw Pact forces favoured a firm foreign policy and opposed any agreement on detente at the Paris Summit. Even after Camp David, Marshal Zhukov, who was in charge of cultural relations with the West warned that 'these relations must not become a Trojan horse of bourgeois ideology within Soviet society'.⁸⁰ The army must have been very worried about US and British U-2 intrusions, which they had known about for years and which were considered a threat to Soviet security, and a flagrant flouting of Soviet sovereignty,

⁷⁷ Tatu, op. cit. pp.84-94.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Roberts to Home, Annual Review of Soviet Union, 17 Jan. 1961, FO 371/159534, NS1011/1. Sir Frank Roberts took over from Sir Patrick Reilly as Ambassador in June, 1960.

⁸⁰ Tatu, op. cit. P. 49 and 69-77.

especially as they had atomic capability. Suslov, a member of the Praesidium since 1955, was appointed by Khrushchev in 1960 to conduct an indoctrination campaign to persuade the armed forces to accept his programme.

In assessing the role played by the Army in events at the Paris Summit, the Foreign Office also seemed to have attached much importance to the fact that Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, the Minister of Defence seemed to be glued to Khrushchev's side during all his meetings with Western leaders in Paris. However, a Soviet source from the Foreign Ministry gave Thompson, US Ambassador in Moscow, a straight forward rather than a sinister explanation. He said the Soviet Government had noticed that US Secretary Gates was on the US Delegation, and accordingly had sent Malinovsky.⁸¹ Tatu concludes that given the views of the hardliners in the Praesidium and the Soviet Army and in deference to the Chinese, a decision not to go ahead with the summit was taken in Moscow by a meeting of the Praesidium on 10 or 11 May, but that nevertheless the Soviet leader left for Paris in case he could meet the President and review the situation.⁸²

As the summit was convened only one month before the Bucharest Conference of June 1960, during which the Sino-Soviet split became public knowledge, Chinese opposition to Khrushchev's policy of detente must have been an element in Soviet reaction to the U-2 Incident. Certainly Mao's public opposition to detente was strident and relentless. Peking newspapers published articles against detente and the belligerent nature of imperialism and Mao made five statements within ten days accusing the US of war preparations, and obliquely attacking Khrushchev. Mao said he hoped the U-2 Incident would wake up 'certain people' who had considered Eisenhower as a 'lover of peace'.⁸³ The Soviet Embassy in Peking informed Khrushchev that Mao was conducting a campaign to convince the Party and people of China that the Chinese Communist Party's analysis of the international situation was correct.⁸⁴ The U-2 Incident produced a strong reaction in China. For five days, fifty three million people demonstrated all over China, and the Chinese leadership proclaimed that 'aggression and provocations against the

⁸¹ Memo by Thompson, 16 May 1960, NSA 1897. This account has been corroborated by Sergei Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles p.32.

⁸² Tatu, op. cit. p.60.

⁸³ Beschloss, Mayday p.259.

⁸⁴ Zubok and Pleshakov, op.cit. p.-233.

Soviet Union are aggressions and provocations against the Peoples Republic of China, against the socialist camp in general'.

In 1957, Khrushchev had undoubtedly faced opposition to his foreign policy by the anti-Party Group, and, as an astute politician, he would have had to take this factor into account in formulating policy before the summit. However, the general opinion of those in Soviet Government circles who knew Khrushchev, was that far from the Praesidium and the Army being riven by strife, the Soviet Premier dominated foreign policy formulation. Aksuitin, historian and biographer of Khrushchev and a member of the Central Committee during the Berlin Crisis, stated that Khrushchev's foreign policy was virtually unopposed even when he was toppled from power by an internal coup in 1964, and that there were no organised groupings plotting to reverse his foreign policy.⁸⁵ Adzhubei, as a member of the Central Committee, Editor of Izvestiya and a companion of his father in law on all foreign visits, also considered that Khrushchev dominated Soviet foreign policy.⁸⁶ Sergei Khrushchev too challenges the views of Linden, Tatu and Slusser that in 1960, Khrushchev's leadership was in jeopardy, with Kozlov as a potential rival to his father. He says 'without doubt Kozlov expressed the views of the right wing, but we don't know how he would have acted in power. All I know is that Khrushchev saw him as his successor and that there were no open clashes between them'.⁸⁷ When Kozlov retired because of ill health, Khrushchev said to his son, 'I was really counting on him. He was already in place, he was the kind of person, who could decide things on his own, he knew the economy. I don't see a replacement for him, but it's already time for me to think about retiring'.⁸⁸

Foreign observers were of the same opinion. In April 1960, the Swiss Ambassador in Moscow, who was exceptionally close to Soviet sources said that the only serious critics of detente on the Praesidium were Otto Kuusinen and Petr Pospelov but that they had now dropped their opposition. The only other possible critic was Suslov, who was ill, so like Sir Patrick Reilly, Zehnder believed that Khrushchev was 'unquestioned master of the country and the sole director of its foreign policy'.⁸⁹ Furthermore, according to the latest

⁸⁵ Interview with Aksuitin in Moscow, 12 Sept. 1991.

⁸⁶ Interview with Adzhubei in Moscow, 12 Sept. 1991.

⁸⁷ S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev on Khrushchev p.28, and 28-32.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Letter, Reilly to C.D.W. O'Neill, Superintending Under-Secretary FO, 12 April, 1960, FO 371/151921 NS/1022/24.

study of changes in the hierarchy, the personnel changes ratified by the Central Committee on 4 May appear to have been planned before the U-2 Incident.⁹⁰ Khrushchev dismissed men such as Beliayev, Kirichenko, Furtseva, and Ignatov from the Praesidium because of their poor performance. During his early years in power, Khrushchev had promoted men who were reliable, whereas by 1958, when his leadership was secure, he could afford to choose men on the basis of their performance.⁹¹

The weight of Soviet testimony therefore rejects the view that there were factions actively plotting against Khrushchev within the Kremlin, but as Oleg Troyanovsky, Khrushchev's foreign policy assistant points out, those who doubted the wisdom of Khrushchev's detente policy were nevertheless triumphalist. He recalls that the breakdown in the Khrushchev-Eisenhower relationship led to 'gloating and handrubbing' within the Central Committee and the Praesidium, amongst those who had doubts as to whether it was worth endangering the Sino-Soviet alliance for the sake of detente. However, he concludes that prior to the Paris Summit 'there were no serious challengers to Khrushchev within the Kremlin'.⁹²

The most influential factor determining Khrushchev's attitude to the U-2 Incident was not organised opposition from internal opponents or from the Chinese but the challenge which the spy plane intrusion presented to the Soviet doctrine of peaceful coexistence, (which Khrushchev himself first enunciated at the 1956 Congress of the Communist Party), and to his policy of detente. Alexander Werth, a well known contemporary journalist, who witnessed events in Moscow and Paris, reported an extremely illuminating conversation on this question with an unnamed Soviet diplomat, Comrade 'N', following the collapse of the Paris Conference. Werth said that Khrushchev had desperately wanted the summit conference, but the United States had dealt a terrible blow by attacking his basic doctrine of peaceful coexistence. According to 'N', the latter was based on two elements: Khrushchev's personal negotiations with Macmillan, de Gaulle and Eisenhower; and 'a continuous reinforcement of international legality, to us an essential corollary of the socialist legality inside the Soviet Union'.⁹³ An acceptance of the status quo in Eastern Europe and Berlin was basic to this approach.

⁹⁰ Tompson, *op.cit.* pp.220-221.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² See Zubok and Pleshakov, *op.cit.* for the views of Troyanovsky, recorded during an interview in the US, 9 March, 1993, p.205.

⁹³ A. Werth, *The Khrushchev Phase* (London, 1961) pp.9-14.

In the most recent account of Soviet policy, Zubok and Pleshakov also emphasise that the Soviet leader's new personal relationship with Eisenhower, established at Camp David was jeopardised by the intrusion of the U-2.⁹⁴ On 16 May, the US Ambassador in Moscow, Thompson asked a member of the Soviet delegation why Khrushchev had exploited the U-2 Incident so hard and was told that 'Khrushchev in his statement had exonerated the President personally and could not understand how he could endorse such flights as government policy. The French told Thompson that other Soviet sources had also confirmed this view.⁹⁵ Alexander Werth, drawing on his experience of the Russian people, thought the Soviet leader was desperate to secure a reconciliation after 1 May but he emphasises that the Russians felt genuinely affronted by the United States action. Anatoly Dobrynin also emphasises this factor. As head of the US division in the Soviet Foreign Ministry he was a member of his working group on the U-2, and half century later he recalled that Khrushchev tried to pursue the public fiction that Eisenhower was not responsible for the spy missions, but after the President's admission of responsibility, he was no longer able to deal with him without public loss of face. The US Government's illjudged, or one might even say disastrous reaction destroyed Khrushchev's trust in Eisenhower, whom, since Camp David, he had seen as his 'friend'.

The other essential component of Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence was the acceptance by the US of absolute Soviet sovereignty, and a willingness on their part to deal with the Soviet Union, a totalitarian state, as an equal partner. The espionage activities of the CIA, like the nuclear rhetoric of the Secretary of State, symbolised for Khrushchev long years of technological inferiority, humiliation and impotence, and according to Adzhubei, Khrushchev 'felt that Eisenhower had pulled the rug out from under him'.⁹⁶ In his memoirs, Khrushchev reveals that if the Soviet Union allowed the US 'to spit in our faces, it would have highly damaged our authority in the eyes of world public opinion, especially our friends, communist parties and those countries that struggle for independence'.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Zubok and Pleshakov, *op. cit.* pp.202-205 give a revealing account of the U-2 Incident and its repercussions. Richter, *op. cit.* p.131 also takes this view.

⁹⁵ Memo by Thompson on the U-2 Incident, 16 May 1960 NSA no.1897.

⁹⁶ Interview with the author, 12 Sept. 1991, Moscow.

⁹⁷ N. S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* p.451.

Khrushchev could not regard the U-2 intrusions as routine aspects of espionage used by both sides in the Cold War, and even if there had been no pressure from internal opponents and the Chinese, it would have been difficult for him to have been more conciliatory. Indeed John F. Kennedy criticized the US Government's policy during his May election campaign in Oregon, and claimed he would have apologised. He said the President had let 'the risk of war hang on the possibility of an engine failure', and he should have 'expressed regret' for the U-2 flight.⁹⁸ Macmillan thought Khrushchev might have been mollified by a formal American disclaimer or a diplomatic white lie.⁹⁹ Interestingly, Macmillan reveals in his diary, though not in his Memoirs, that U-2 flights had been taking off from British bases in 'Exercise Oldster'. However, Macmillan was more aware of the potential harm a mishap could do, so he cancelled flights well before the summit and subsequently admitted that he was relieved that such flights did not become public knowledge.¹⁰⁰ Eisenhower himself admitted well before the incident, that nothing would make him ask Congress for a war declaration more quickly than Russian penetration of US airspace.¹⁰¹ So even if there had been no pressure from the Praesidium or the Chinese, arguably, it would still have been difficult for Khrushchev to have been more conciliatory.¹⁰²

In retrospect, the following analysis drawn up on 3 June 1960 by the UK Delegation to NATO for the NATO Council on the 'External and Internal Causes of the Soviet Attitude to the summit conference' provides a sound and rational summary of the situation. It concluded that there had not been changes in the Soviet leadership on 5 May, but that Khrushchev had been under internal pressure from party die-hards and the Army who were indignant at the affront to Soviet pride, and under external pressure, from the Chinese and the East Germans.¹⁰³ The Soviet leader could not be seen to be betraying Soviet interests by being soft and he could no longer portray Eisenhower as a man of peace. Hence it was incumbent on him to demand an apology from the US and an end to

⁹⁸ Beschloss, Mayday p.319.

⁹⁹ Horne, op. cit. p.226.

¹⁰⁰ Horne, op.cit. pp.226.

¹⁰¹ Beschloss, Mayday p.364.

¹⁰² Ibid. pp.253-254.

¹⁰³ UK Del to NATO Paris to FO, 3 June 1960, FO 371/151922 NS 1022/35.

flights. Khrushchev did not understand that the conditions imposed on Eisenhower were unacceptable.¹⁰⁴

The other key and much disputed question, is when did Khrushchev decide to extract an apology from the President for the U-2 Incident? Tatu believed that in deference to Chinese views and those of the Soviet elite who opposed detente it was likely that a meeting of the Praesidium on 10 or 11 May ratified a decision by a 'hard line' majority to 'wreck the summit conference'.¹⁰⁵ Fedor Burlatsky, one of Khrushchev's foreign policy apparatchiks has a similar opinion. He asserts that before flying to Paris, Khrushchev called a meeting of the Praesidium at Sheremetev Airport and proposed scrapping all the proposals and documents that had been prepared for the Conference on the grounds that it was a bad time for an agreement in every respect.¹⁰⁶

However, his version of events was totally rejected by Adzhubei, who actually accompanied Khrushchev to Paris, and who arguably, was better placed to know the inside picture.¹⁰⁷ He told the author that the 'grey men', his term for the Praesidium, always saw their leader off when he went on a foreign visit, but there was no meeting of the Praesidium at the airport and no decisions were taken to scuttle the summit. He said Khrushchev went to Paris, still hoping to negotiate with the Western Powers, when he could easily have stayed at home. 'He was prepared to fly to Paris to show this (but) he couldn't come back to Moscow having backed down. It would have meant loss of face, especially after his earlier visit to the United States. The Chinese factor in this affair was a minor matter, whatever Burlatsky and Arbatov might say.'¹⁰⁸

Victor Zorza, a highly acclaimed journalist and witness to events unfolding in Moscow and Paris argued in the Guardian that the decision to demand an apology from the President was taken after the Soviet leader arrived in Paris.¹⁰⁹ He dismissed the idea that Khrushchev faced an internal revolt and went to Paris with the aim of deliberately sabotaging the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Tatu, op. cit. p.60.

¹⁰⁶ Burlatsky, op. cit. p.157.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with the author, Khrushchev's apartment in Moscow, 12 September, 1991. Adzhubei was 'recognised by those in the know as Khrushchev's unofficial deputy for foreign affairs'. See R. A. and Z. A. Medvedev, Khrushchev: The Years in Power (London, 1977), p.141.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Victor Zorza, a journalist on The Guardian who was highly acclaimed in his field, witnessed events in Moscow and Paris. Schick, op cit. p. 125, considers his view is plausible.

summit. However, he noted that the statement which Khrushchev read out in Paris was an altered version of the original he took with him from Moscow. Zorza concluded that after Khrushchev's arrival in Paris 'the Central Committee probably swayed by Suslov and the Marshals held a rump session and compelled Khrushchev to change his position'.¹¹⁰

Most of the more recent accounts, by Beschloss, Troyanovsky and General Dimitri Volkoganov, the Soviet historian conclude that: Khrushchev dominated Soviet decision making and that he hoped that Eisenhower would apologise for the U-2 Incident so that negotiations could proceed at the summit. Beschloss believes that Khrushchev obtained the Praesidium's approval to go to Paris early, in the hope that he would win a public apology, and an admission that the US had no right to violate Soviet borders.¹¹¹ Troyanovsky, another of Khrushchev's advisors and his interpreter at the Paris Summit, states that the official instructions of the Soviet delegation. 'were still to make a serious attempt to negotiate with the Western Powers on Germany, disarmament and other issues', but when Khrushchev arrived at the airport he told the Praesidium members waiting to see him off, that he believed that the old instructions should be scrapped and negotiations should begin only after Eisenhower apologised for the spy flight.¹¹² Deputy Prime Minister Ignati Novikov's recollection of the occasion was that Khrushchev briefly described what he intended saying to the French leaders in the departure lounge at Sheremetova airport. To Novikov, 'this seemed like a new style, with the party leader actually consulting his colleagues. When Khrushchev had finished, he asked for comments, apparently confident of support. And indeed everyone began voicing their approval and praising his ideas'.¹¹³ In the final analysis, surely the testimony of Khrushchev which according to Strobe Talbott, the editor and translator of the Soviet leader's Memoirs, is 'the single most comprehensive candid and authorative account of the inner workings of the Kremlin Leadership' should be accorded the greatest weight.¹¹⁴. Khrushchev admitted that hopes for reaching an agreement in the forthcoming Four Power Talks in Paris had suffered a 'terrible setback' as a result of the U-2 Incident, and he could not just simply go to Paris 'pretending everything was fine'. Nevertheless he was still positive in attitude before leaving for Paris:

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Beschloss, op. cit. p.274.

¹¹² Zubok, and Pleshakov, op.cit. Inside the Kremlin's Cold War p.205

¹¹³ Volkoganov, op.cit. p 251.

¹¹⁴ See the Foreword of Strobe Talbott, Khrushchev Remembers: the Glasnost Tapes

Before leaving we prepared the necessary documents. These were devoted to advancing the goal of peaceful coexistence and finding a solution to controversies above all the German question and disarmament. I was in particular concerned about disarmament. Recently a great deal of flammable material had accumulated. If an explosion were touched off by a spark a terrible war would break out.¹¹⁵

However, during the plane journey Khrushchev pondered on the fact that the US had dared to send a U-2 against his country. It was as though 'the Americans had deliberately tried to place a time bomb under the meeting'. He wondered if such a country could come to a reasonable agreement and he also had nagging doubts about the effect on the Soviet Union's prestige especially in the Third World. As the injured party, he therefore needed to defend his country's honour and extract an apology from the President.¹¹⁶ 'The idea came to me that we should make some basic alterations in the declaration we had prepared for presentation at the outset of the negotiation in order to defend our honour', and he decided to present the Americans with an 'ultimatum'. They would have to apologise officially for sending their spy plane into the USSR, and the President of the United States would have to retract what he said about America's 'right' to conduct reconnaissance over Soviet territory. After consulting Malinovsky and Gromyko, Khrushchev telephoned Moscow from the plane and obtained approval of the new Soviet position. He was assured by the Kremlin that at the highest level there was no opposition to the Soviet change of position. Gromyko and the MID staff worked very hard on the plane changing the documents, sometimes by '180 degrees', especially the Soviet opening statement, which later was perceived by the Americans, as an ultimatum.¹¹⁷

On balance it appears that Khrushchev discussed the fact that he might demand an apology from the President with his Praesidium colleagues at the airport but that he made the final decision to demand an apology on the journey to Paris. Adzhubei described how when the plane was approaching Paris, Khrushchev gathered everyone together, including Gromyko and Malinovsky. He suggested that on arrival in Paris, they should hold a meeting with the French President at which they would demand an apology. He also asked one of his aides,

¹¹⁵ N. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament pp. 449-450.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ N. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament pp.449-50; this account of events is corroborated by Sergei Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles p.30

on arrival in Paris, to go to the Soviet Embassy and inform Sergei Vinogradov, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris of their decision.¹¹⁸

This straightforward and believable account, taken together with the fact that Khrushchev was pre-eminent in foreign policy formulation provides a convincing version of events, which has since been corroborated by Sergei Khrushchev, in his study of his father.¹¹⁹ It emphasises the centrality of Khrushchev to the decision making process, and the acute feeling of personal betrayal his father experienced as a result of Eisenhower, his 'friend's' actions. Sergei portrays Khrushchev's struggle regarding his attitude to the forthcoming summit not as 'one with an opposition but as a struggle with himself'. A struggle between two objectives in international relations: first, to banish war; and second, after ten years of struggle against Western imperialism, to ensure that his country was granted due respect.¹²⁰ According to his son, Khrushchev was still hopeful that a private meeting with the President would sort matters out, so when he arrived in Paris, Khrushchev took steps to see whether Eisenhower was trying to arrange a private meeting between them. He was told that there had been no attempt to make contact.¹²¹ Arguably, this was Eisenhower's greatest mistake, for a private meeting between the two leaders, as advocated by Macmillan, might have allowed them to reach a formula by which both could save face. Certainly that is the implication of Marshal Malinovsky's speech on 28 May, reported in Pravda on 31 May, in which he continued to defend Khrushchev's quest for detente:

The Soviet Government would have been fully justified in not attending the Paris conference. Nevertheless, faithful to its peace-loving policy, the Head of Government went there in the hope that a personal meeting between the Heads of Government, would, with the courage and tact befitting gentlemen, openly condemn this aggressive act'.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Interview with Adzhubei, Moscow, 12 September, 1991. This interview took place just after the attempted coup, which Yeltsin defeated. Adzhubei said it was the first time he felt he could speak without the risk of the KGB watching him. Since the fall of Khrushchev, he said he too had been in disgrace. The atmosphere of these post coup days in Moscow was 'heady' and full of hope. Under Yeltsin's orders, all premises of the Communist Party had that day had a notice posted on them saying 'Zakrit'(closed).

¹¹⁹ See S. Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles p.30 and pp.32-37.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* p.30

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Tatu, op. cit.* p.62.

Conclusion

The US challenge to Khrushchev's doctrine of peaceful coexistence, and to the military prestige of the Soviet superpower appears to have been the main cause of the breakdown of the Paris Summit. The indications are that the Praesidium did not hold a meeting forcing Khrushchev to back down on his policy, prior to his departure for Paris. However, as an astute politician, the Soviet leader would probably have heeded voices opposed to detente, both from within the army and the ruling elite and also from the Chinese. Khrushchev's decision to demand an apology from Eisenhower, or at least a meeting to sort things out, as a pre-condition for the Paris talks, appears to have been his, and his alone, although he paid due attention to the views of his Praesidium colleagues. Despite his great pride in his country and its achievements, Khrushchev had a deep inferiority complex, and he felt keenly that Eisenhower's continuation of U-2 flights at a sensitive and crucial time was an act of betrayal by a person he regarded as a friend.

The central and concluding question is this. Had the Paris Summit taken place, was there a possibility of an East-West modus vivendi on the Berlin question and disarmament? The Soviet and Western negotiating positions on an Interim Agreement on Berlin in readiness for the Paris Summit reveal that a compromise may have been achievable, given the basic desire for a modus vivendi. The fact Khrushchev sent de Gaulle his proposals for an Interim Agreement on Berlin, on 9 May after the U-2 incident, and that, as Adzhubei put it, he was so keen to achieve an accommodation with the West that he was still prepared to go to Paris, suggests that the Soviet leader was hoping for serious negotiations with the West.

The 9 May Soviet proposals were a revised version of the 28 July Soviet proposals at the Geneva Conference.¹²³ What was the initial Western reaction to the new Soviet proposals? The general impression of the Four Power Working Group was that the new proposals did not change the Soviet position. They were a restatement in more concrete terms of the memo the Soviet Ambassador to West Germany, Smirnov gave to the German SPD Chairman, Eric Ollenhower on 13 January.¹²⁴

¹²³ See Appendix B; Proposals by the Soviet Government (on an Interim Agreement on Berlin), 9 May, 1960.

¹²⁴ NSA no.1893, 14 May, 1960.

The Foreign Office thought the new proposals were a change for the worse, in spite of the fact that the agreement would last for two instead of one and a half years, as in the 28 July 1959 Geneva proposals.¹²⁵ First, the Working Group considered that this new document expressly saw an Interim Agreement as preparing the way for a conversion of West Berlin to a ‘Free City’ at the termination of the agreement, whereas the 28 July proposals stated that if there was no agreement between the two German States, the Four Powers would resume talks on termination of the Interim Agreement.¹²⁶ Second, the two German states were required to work together on all-German questions. The British knew that any agreement terminating in a change of status for West Berlin, and establishing an all-German Committee, would be seen by the West Germans, and their supporters the French, as implying a tacit *de facto* recognition of the DDR, and would therefore be rejected by them.

On 14 May, the Western Foreign Ministers met to consider the Soviet proposals. Herter circulated a US document giving a preliminary assessment of the points of difference between the Western and Soviet positions.¹²⁷ The new terms were as Selwyn Lloyd admitted, ‘a step backwards’ over and above the 28 July Geneva terms. Nevertheless, the Western Powers were still prepared to put forward their own revised 28 July proposals to the Soviet Union, and they agreed that the summit negotiations should elucidate what would happen on expiry of the Interim Agreement. It is important to note that during their discussions in Paris, the FRG were pressurised by their Allied partners to agree to delete one clause in the Western proposals: This stated that the rights of the Four Powers in relation to Berlin and access thereto shall remain unaffected by the conclusion or the termination of this agreement.¹²⁸ The Western Foreign Ministers hoped this might make an agreement with the Soviet Union possible i.e. if neither side mentioned the contentious question of Western rights. The Western Heads of State then approved the revised 28 July Geneva proposals ready for the summit.¹²⁹ In the final analysis, Macmillan’s more

¹²⁵ Minute from Rumbold to Hoyer-Millar, 13 May 1960, PREM 11/2992. See Appendix A for a comparison with the Soviet 28 July 1959 proposals at the Geneva Conference on an Interim Agreement for Berlin.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Meeting of Foreign Ministers, Quai D’Orsay, 3 p.m. 14 May 1960, Doc. 1, PREM 11/2992. See Appendix D for the revised version of the Western Proposals of 28 July 1959 at the Geneva Conference.

¹²⁸ The FRG had demanded the insertion of this clause at the Foreign Ministers Meeting in Istanbul.

¹²⁹ See Appendix D.

pragmatic approach had won the day and it seemed that the Western Powers might prove to be more flexible in negotiation.

On 15 May, at a Heads of Government Meeting which included Adenauer, the Soviet proposals were discussed at greater length.¹³⁰ Macmillan and Eisenhower agreed that the crucial question as regards Berlin was as follows: the Western Powers (France, Britain and the US) had the right as occupying powers to maintain their troops in Berlin and supply the city, but ‘how could they prevent the Russians from making difficulties on the supply routes to the city without doing anything so serious as to be an obvious *casus belli*’. Macmillan had evidently gained the President’s support for the British position on an ever present danger: that the implementation of current contingency plans on access could ultimately trigger a nuclear war.¹³¹

The Western leaders agreed that the worst part of the new proposals was that West Berlin would be accorded a new status at the end of two years. Adenauer argued in uncompromising terms that disarmament should take precedence over discussions on Germany, and de Gaulle rejected any change in status of West Berlin after two years. The Prime Minister considered that it might be better to negotiate a new status now than be driven later to accept an arrangement on Berlin which was very much worse. He thought the position as it had been left at Geneva was not unsatisfactory. Eventually the leaders agreed consequential discussions were still possible. De Gaulle rejected any change of status after two years, but Eisenhower adopted a far more conciliatory position: he considered it might be possible to find a formula that preserved Western access conditions and provided for a plebiscite at the end of two years. He was also prepared to see cuts in the Western garrison.¹³² Significantly, the President said ‘the West cannot go on saying no’. De Gaulle was doubtful, and repeated his customary maxim that everything depended on whether the Soviet Union wanted *detente*. Macmillan, like the President, was positive, and thought a two year moratorium could provide the means to find an acceptable formula.¹³³

¹³⁰ Heads of Govt. Meeting, Elysee Palace, 2.30 p.m. 15 May 1960, Doc. 5, PREM 11/2990.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.* During the Geneva Conference, the Western Powers were discussing a figure of 8000.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

Certainly, it was the view of the Foreign Office that if there was the will on both sides to reach an Interim Agreement, a formula could be found on the difficult question of Western rights at the end of two years, which would save the honour of both sides. As Sir Anthony Rumbold argued on 13 May 1960, 'France and America are not insisting on an affirmation that our rights will not be unimpaired, what they are insisting on is a form of words which could be interpreted as meaning that our rights would not be impaired. What we tried to get at Geneva but failed'. It was a question of splitting hairs.¹³⁴

Two questions are vital to any consideration of the viability of an Interim Agreement on Berlin. First, did the Soviet proposals merely represent the Soviet Government's opening position? And second, would the Soviet Government have been prepared to make further compromises which might have been acceptable to the West? Two documents from the SED Archive in Berlin, in Ulbricht's Office suggest that this may have been the case. The first document which is entitled 'Starting Points and Possibilities for Compromise Proposals on the West Berlin question', dated early May 1960, suggests that further compromises over and above the 28 July 1959, Soviet proposals for an Interim Settlement at Geneva were under discussion.¹³⁵

The document stated that the clause in the 28 July Soviet Geneva proposals, that no atomic weapons should be stationed in West Berlin, should be maintained, as the Western powers had already conceded this in principle. Moving on to the proposal on espionage and propaganda activities, the report rejected the initial Western proposal at Geneva that the agreement should cover the whole of Berlin and proposed that it should cover only West Berlin. Further assurances were then conceded to the West. The proposed declaration by the DDR not to interfere in West Berlin could be extended to comprehensive declarations of non-interference and respect for the Interim Agreement; and ratification by the Volkskammer, as a solemn undertaking, to be deposited with the Secretary General of the UN. The reference to this DDR statement in the Interim Agreement could be given up and instead could be covered by an exchange of letters between the Governments of the DDR and the USSR which could be lodged with the UN Secretary-General and which would remain in force for the period of the Interim

¹³⁴ Letter, Rumbold to de Zulueta, 12 May 1960, PREM 11/2992.

¹³⁵ SED Archive in the former East Berlin, SAPMO Barch, DY30/ J IV, 2/202/128. The author found this document in a file in Ulbricht's Office. It was undated but filed at the beginning of May 1960.

Agreement.¹³⁶ This concession was obviously in response to Western objections to dealing directly with the DDR, thereby implying de facto recognition of the regime. On the question of control of the observance of West Berlin's duties a committee of representatives of the Three Western powers could be created and in the event of a complaint, a representative of the Soviet Union could be brought in. A UN representative stationed in Berlin could report to the Secretary General on breaches of the agreement and make corresponding recommendations to the governments of the Four Powers.¹³⁷

As regards the vital question of access, the document stated that the Soviet Union and the DDR were ready to declare that connections between West Berlin and the outside world for military traffic would be maintained in their present form, based on the agreement which came into effect in April, 1959. Moving on to the question of free traffic between East and West Berlin, the document stated that a binding agreement for the future, as proposed by the West, was pointless, but there could be a recommendation from the Four Powers that traffic should be maintained as hitherto, and the DDR could make a corresponding declaration. The Western proposal to set up a Four Power Commission on access was unacceptable. So instead, the DDR suggested that access problems would be dealt with in the same way as hitherto.¹³⁸

The document then dealt with three crucial questions for the West: the duration of the Interim Agreement, the all-German Committee, and the Free City proposal. On the first it suggested extending the time limit from the one and a half years proposed by the Soviet Union to three. (The Western proposal at Geneva had put forward a period up to reunification or five years and the latest Soviet concession of 9 May had extended the duration of the Interim Agreement from one and a half to two years). Arguably, the two year period mentioned in the 9 May Soviet proposals was to be the opening position for the negotiations. If this was indeed the case, it made the possibility of agreement that much closer, for the US and Britain both agreed that they would be satisfied with a three year agreement.

The second question concerned the connection between the Interim Agreement and the creation and activity of an all-German Committee, as proposed by the Soviet Union at

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid

Geneva. This document proposed that the demand for such a connection should be the starting point for the Soviet negotiation but if the Western Powers could not accept it and agreement had been reached on other questions, the Soviet side could give up the connection.

The third question dealt with the Free City proposal. In response to West German fears that the creation of of a Free City would bring about a breakdown in currency and economic relationships, the DDR draft document suggested that for a certain period a currency and economic-political link with the FRG could be maintained in its present framework.

The DDR draft put forward further compromises on the 28 July Geneva proposals for an Interim Agreement. They are important and reflect the desire of the Soviet side to reach a modus vivendi with the West. More extensive guarantees were given concerning the Interim Agreement and freedom of Western access, and the DDR recognised that the Western powers would be unwilling to sign an Interim Agreement in which the DDR was a direct participant, as this might have bestowed *de jure* recognition for the East German regime. Hence their agreement to an exchange of letters with the Soviet Union. There was to be no change in existing arrangements for civilian access dating back to the April 1959 agreement, a most important point for the Western Powers. Furthermore, the concession extending the Interim Agreement from one and half to three years was one that would meet even the Americans' demands. The DDR were prepared to drop the connection between the Interim Agreement and the all-German Committee which was one of the sticking points for the West at Geneva, but the Free City proposal was to stand with modifications. However in spite of these last two concessions, it was unlikely that the Western powers and particularly the Federal Republic, supported by France would ever agree to the Free City status or to the all-German Committee. This is why the next piece of Soviet evidence is crucial to the argument that an East-West Interim Agreement on Berlin was a possibility in May 1960, had the summit proceeded.

Soviet draft proposals for an Interim Agreement on Berlin, dated 11 May which were found in the SED Party Archive in Berlin suggest a further crucial compromise was being considered.¹³⁹ The fact that they were amongst Ulbricht's personal papers (in his Office)

¹³⁹ See Appendix E (translated by the author): this Russian document, dated 11 May 1960 was located in a file from Ulbricht's Office, SAPMO Barch, DY30/ J IV, 2/202, 128.

indicates that the proposals were at the very least under discussion at the highest level. They present vital evidence that the Soviet Government was possibly prepared to make two very important concessions over and above their 9 May proposals: first, point (6) states that the present agreement will end after two years and the participants in the agreement will start new negotiations. No mention is made of West Berlin becoming a Free City, a proposal which the Western Powers had opposed from the outset; (although Britain and the US were prepared privately to concede that ultimately a new status for Berlin with adequate guarantees would have to be accepted.) Second, no mention is made of the establishment of an all-German Committee, which, given Adenauer's intransigence was the other major hurdle for the Western Powers in accepting a modus vivendi on Berlin.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, the accompanying draft Note from the Soviet Government to the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of 11 May, would have given the Western Powers guarantees of the readiness of the Soviet and DDR governments to recognise an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and during its term of existence would have ensured the maintenance of West Berlin communications with the outside world, in their present form.¹⁴¹ It appears that the intention of the Soviet Note was to reassure the Western Powers, as it officially associated the Soviet Government with the DDR's guarantee of communications, by a series of declarations.

The discussions of the Foreign Ministers and the Four Power Working Group during the Spring of 1960 suggest that these proposals, had they been put to the West, would have been a welcome concession and possibly the basis of a modus vivendi on Berlin. On 28 April, in discussions with Herter, the Foreign Secretary had stated that he would prefer to see a firm Interim Agreement on Berlin for a limited period of three years.¹⁴² He suggested that a period of even two years would get the West well over the next election in the FRG and 'such an agreement might suit us better than allowing Khrushchev to keep Berlin hanging over us as a sword of Damocles from meeting to meeting'.

As late as 10 May, Sir Patrick Reilly considered that from the Soviet point of view, 'the advance of detente would extend Soviet influence' and 'raise the standard of living of the

¹⁴⁰ At the Geneva Conference, the Western Powers had rejected the all-German Committee. Instead they proposed a continuation of the Foreign Ministers Conference. See minute by Hancock of Western Dept. 2 August, 1959, FO 371/145889, WG/1079406.

¹⁴¹ See Appendix F.

¹⁴² Conversation between Lloyd and Herter, in Tehran, 28 April 1960, PREM 11/2992.

people'. In the Ambassador's view, Khrushchev would therefore have been willing at the summit to forego a separate treaty with the DDR if a temporary agreement on Berlin, linked to some machinery on all-German discussion and disarmament could have been achieved. But he needed to demonstrate to the Soviet people that detente paid off and after the U-2 Incident, 'any discussion of an Interim Agreement was likely to be even more difficult'.¹⁴³ This assessment of prospects for the summit may have been too pessimistic. On 10 May, Nekrasov, the London representative of Pravda told Leo Murray of the Irish Times that Khrushchev was anxious to improve relations with the West and he wanted to pledge the Soviet Government to accept the principle of general and complete disarmament. Furthermore, the Soviet Government was ready both to accept the Western proposals of 28 July on an Interim Agreement for Berlin, and to guarantee the continuation of Allied troops in West Berlin. They would even consider expanding the period of the agreement to ten years.¹⁴⁴

Perhaps the best indication of Soviet intentions can be found in Khrushchev's discussion of the Berlin issue with President Kennedy at the Vienna Meeting of 1961.¹⁴⁵ On that occasion, Khrushchev recalled his visit to Camp David, where Eisenhower had agreed that the situation in Berlin was 'abnormal' and that 'US prestige was involved'. He had discussed with Eisenhower an 'interim arrangement' that 'would not involve the prestige of our two countries'. He had hoped to reach such an agreement with Eisenhower at the Paris Summit, 'but the forces that (are) against the improvement of relations between the US and the USSR sent the U-2 plane. The USSR decided that in view of the tensions prevailing as a result of that flight, this question should not be raised'.¹⁴⁶ Interestingly, at Vienna Khrushchev said he was willing to 'accept such an arrangement (on Berlin) even now'.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Reilly to Rumbold, 10 May, 1960, PREM 11/2992.

¹⁴⁴ Minute by J. Russell of Northern Department, 11 May 1960, PREM 11/2992 NS1022/30. It is clear from the author's work in the Soviet archives that Pravda was directly told by the Central Committee of the line they should take on any Foreign Policy issue. So, in the absence of evidence from the Central Committee Archives on the Berlin Crisis (as yet unopened) this evidence is more valuable than it initially appears.

¹⁴⁵ Conversation between Khrushchev and the President, FRUS Crisis in Berlin 32, 1961-63 Vol. X1V, p. 92; also, Beschloss, Kennedy v. Khrushchev p 219: see also US position papers for the Vienna Conference. Conversations between the President and Khrushchev, 3-4 June 1961, NSA nos. 2076, 2078.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

In retrospect, Macmillan thought Eisenhower 'should have made the right statement at the right time to let Khrushchev off the hook, it was such a childish thing'.¹⁴⁸ Everything turned on the President's disinclination to meet and make even a private apology to Khrushchev. In fact the whole conduct of US policy jeopardised any hopes of the Paris Summit delivering an Interim Agreement on Berlin. According to Selwyn Lloyd, writing retrospectively, Eisenhower was distressed at the turn of events. 'He thought all his work had been ruined by that piece of silliness, the timing of the flight, the silly explanations given.'¹⁴⁹ The Foreign Relations Committee appointed on 27 May 1960, to examine the conduct of US policy, delivered a powerful indictment of the policy of the Eisenhower administration. First, contrary to the President's assertion, there was no specific decision not to halt the U-2 flights before the Conference; the group of officials responsible, had just given their automatic sanction without bargaining for an accident after four years of successful flights.¹⁵⁰ This miscalculation gave the the Soviet Union the chance to walk out of the Paris Conference which would not otherwise have happened. The second criticism was the embarrassing National Security statement of 5 May which revealed a lack of direction from either the White House or the Department of State, and a lack of coordination with other agencies involved. Third, the assumption of responsibility by the President, and the implied warning that flights would continue, militated against US interests in so far as they weakened Khrushchev's position vis-a-vis the Soviet military and hardliners and the Chinese Communists.¹⁵¹

Such was the fate of a potential Interim Agreement for Berlin, which the British Government had worked so hard to promote. The Prime Minister's statement to the Cabinet on 20 May was depressing in tone, and admitted that 'the failure of the Summit Meeting was a serious setback to the Government's policy and was bound to be a shock to public opinion'.¹⁵² The Foreign Secretary added that it was due to the Prime Minister's efforts that the meetings in Paris had ended without damage to the Western Alliance. It had been necessary from the point of view of public opinion for President Eisenhower to give an

¹⁴⁸ Horne, *op.cit.* p. 232.

¹⁴⁹ Selwyn Lloyd's diary, entry, 16 May, 1960, Selo, 4 /33, Churchill Archive, Cambridge.

¹⁵⁰ SIA 1959-1960, p.69. Recent archival evidence has shown that Eisenhower personally authorised the flight. See Beschloss, Mayday p.242.

¹⁵¹ Beschloss, Mayday p.313-317.

¹⁵² Cabinet Conclusion 32 (60), Minute 1, 20 May 1960, CAB 128/34.

assurance that there would be no further U-2 flights and 'this had been achieved by the Prime Minister's persuasion'. It had also been necessary to resist the intention of the US and French Governments to bring the meetings to an end prematurely.

The implications of the Paris Summit breakdown were enormous. Burlatsky states that the Soviet Government was working hard to prepare a package for the Paris Conference and intimates that if the summit had gone ahead and Soviet proposals had been accepted, either wholly or in part, both 'the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis as well as the subsequent terrifying twist in the arms spiral could have been avoided'.¹⁵³ Zubok and Pleshakov also conclude that before leaving for Paris, the official instructions of the Soviet delegation were still to make a 'serious attempt to negotiate with the Western powers on Germany, disarmament, and other issues'.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, from the evidence presented in this thesis, it appears that the DDR was supportive of Soviet policy on an Interim Agreement on Berlin, both at the Geneva Conference and in the period prior to the Paris Summit in 1960.

The British contribution to the attempt to find a modus vivendi in East-West relations and an Interim Agreement on Berlin, from November 1958 until the Paris Summit of May 1960, was crucial. The available Soviet and DDR evidence suggests that from the outset, the British assessment that Soviet aims were defensive and that Khrushchev was not interested in expansion, but in the maintenance of the status quo in Europe was correct. This was the starting point of British policy. In 1959 Macmillan directed the Foreign Office to undertake a major review of British policy on Berlin, Germany and European Security and embarked on a personal initiative to improve East-West relations. After his visit to Moscow, Macmillan became convinced of Khrushchev's genuine desire to reach an accommodation on Berlin, and to end the Cold War. His new relationship with Khrushchev was a valuable confidence building exercise throughout the Berlin Crisis, and both during Dulles' illness, and after his demise, the British Government performed an invaluable task as a mediator between East and West. In addition, it moderated the extreme position of the Eisenhower administration on the question of contingency planning, a vital function in an age of nuclear mass retaliation. Gradually, Macmillan's personal diplomacy and the work of Foreign Office officials on the Four Power Working Group, won Britain's allies over to considering

¹⁵³ Burlatsky, op. cit. pp.156-157.

¹⁵⁴ Zubok and Pleshakov, op. cit. p.205.

negotiations on an Interim Agreement on Berlin. At the Geneva Conference, Selwyn Lloyd fought hard to achieve Macmillan's objectives, but French and German opposition to an all-German Committee, and US insistence on a strictly legalistic definition of the issue of Western rights prevented any compromise on the 28 July negotiations with the Soviet Union. In any case, it appears that Khrushchev would probably have preferred to reach an agreement on Berlin at a meeting of East-West Heads of Government.

Macmillan's personal quest for a summit in 1959 was denied him, but arguably his insistence that the President had to meet Khrushchev to judge whether he was sincere paid off, for after Camp David, the President was increasingly ready to compromise on Berlin. Indeed, in discussions with Macmillan and de Gaulle at the Paris Summit, the President revealed his real views on the situation. He said 'all last years talk about an armed division going down the autobahn to Berlin was bunkum, we have to negotiate'.¹⁵⁵ Eisenhower was also prepared to consider Macmillan's idea of a 'zone of limitation of forces and weapons', although he was later forced to drop this initiative in view of Adenauer's intransigence. Contrary to his statements in his memoirs, Ambrose considers that the President was ready to go to Paris and sign a genuine accord and 'never in the Cold War did we seem so close'.¹⁵⁶ General Andrew Jackson Goodpaster's recollection was that Eisenhower was willing to make concessions: and prepared to adopt a negotiation process on the German issue that might have allowed Khrushchev to claim that the Ultimatum was bringing results.¹⁵⁷ Khrushchev then would have been in a position to reject Chinese attacks on his policy of detente with the West and sign a partial Test Ban Treaty and agree regular East-West meetings on culture and technology.

Macmillan's pursuit of an independent role for Britain as mediator between East and West in the Cold War has been criticised as unrealistic, and an exaggeration of Britain's influence in a period of post-war decline. Arguably, the Soviet perception was different. Far from being seen as a power of lesser significance in the Cold War, Oleg Gordievsky recently testified that during this period, the KGB regarded Britain as extremely important and as enemy number one after the US.¹⁵⁸ Had an East-West modus vivendi on Berlin emerged

¹⁵⁵ Meeting of Heads of Govt. 16 May 1960, PREM 11/2992.

¹⁵⁶ S. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President New York, 1991) p.505.

¹⁵⁷ Ambrose, op. cit. p.377.

¹⁵⁸ ICBH Witness Seminar on HMG Embassy Moscow, held at the FO, 8 Mar. 1999. Oleg Gordievsky, a Colonel in the KGB defected to the West in 1985.

from the Paris Summit, Macmillan's mediatory role during the Berlin Crisis would have been perceived as invaluable to the Soviet Union, to the US and to the world at large. It was the U-2 Incident and its impact on the fragile US-Soviet relationship which destroyed Macmillan's efforts to achieve an Interim Agreement on Berlin.

The Soviet and DDR evidence presented in this thesis is fragmentary and patchy because access to the Soviet Archives on the Berlin Crisis is strictly limited. But what the documents available do suggest is that Khrushchev, in spite of the U-2 Incident, still left for Paris hoping to negotiate an Interim Agreement for Berlin, which could have been achieved had US policy been more sensitive to his dilemma. Moreover, it appears that the Soviet Government was prepared to make further concessions to the West, over and above the 28 July Soviet position, to facilitate an East-West Agreement. We are left with the sobering thought expressed by Anatoly Dobrinin, Soviet Ambassador to the UN to Kissinger in 1969: 'great opportunities had been lost in Soviet-American relations, especially between 1959 and 1963, when he was Head of the American Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry: he knew that Khrushchev seriously wanted an accommodation with the US.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, George Kennan believed that Khrushchev was 'the only Soviet statesman of the post-Stalin period with whom we might conceivably have worked out a firmer sort of coexistence'.¹⁶⁰ The U-2 Incident, which led to the failure of the Paris Summit and the possibility of an Interim Agreement for Berlin was indeed, as Khrushchev claimed in retrospect, 'a landmark in the history of the Cold War'.¹⁶¹ Macmillan encapsulated the tragedy in the following heartfelt words:

We are only now beginning to realize as the weeks go by the full extent of the summit disaster in Paris. For me, it is perhaps the work of two or three years. For Eisenhower it means an ignominious end to his Presidency. For Khrushchev, a set back to his more conciliatory and sensible ideas, for the world, a step nearer disaster.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Beshloss, Mayday p.379.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ N. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (1971) pp.201-202.

¹⁶² Horne, *op. cit.* p. 233.

Appendix A

Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference Comparison of the Soviet and Western Proposals of July 28 1959¹⁶³

USSR Proposal

Western Proposals

1. Duration and Rights

The participants in the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference agree to implement the following measures of an Interim Agreement for a period of one year and a half years.

The arrangement to be for five years, after which, if there is no reunification, they can be reviewed by the Foreign Ministers Conference on request of any of the Four Governments. Arrangements are described as modifications in respect of 'the existing situation and the agreements at present in force'.

2. Armed Forces

US, UK and France will reduce West Berlin garrisons and corresponding armaments to token contingent totaling not over 3,000 to 4,000 men.

US, UK and France to declare they intend to limit forces in Berlin to present combined total of about 11,000. They will discuss further reductions if developments permit.

3. Activities

US, UK, and France will not allow West Berlin territory to be used for interference in internal activities of other states or for any kind of subversive activities or hostile propaganda against the USSR, GDR or other socialist states.

Measures consistent with fundamental rights and liberties will be taken to avoid activities in Berlin which might disturb public order or seriously affect the rights and interests, or amount to interference in the internal affairs of others.

4. Access

The Government of USSR will declare that for the duration of the agreement communications of West Berlin with the outside world will be preserved in present form.

Free and unrestricted access to West Berlin by land, water and air for all persons, goods, and communications, including those of Western forces in accordance with procedures in effect in April 1959. Freedom of movement between East and West Berlin will continue.

¹⁶³ NSA no. 1724, 26 October 1959.

5. Atomic Weapons and Missile Installations

US, UK and France shall not locate nuclear weapons in West Berlin.

US, UK and France will declare their intention to continue not to locate atomic weapons or missiles in West Berlin.

6. Disputes Mechanism

A committee of representatives of US, UK, France and the USSR will be set up within a month of date agreement enters into force to supervise and take measures implementing these agreements.

All disputes will be raised and settled between the Four Governments, which will establish a quadripartite commission meeting in Berlin to examine such and seek solutions in the first instance. If necessary, the commission may consult German experts.

7. Role of the United Nations

The Secretary General of the United Nations will be requested to have a representative and staff in Berlin who will have free access to all of the city for the purpose of reporting propaganda activities in conflict with the foregoing principles. The Four Governments will consult with the Secretary General on appropriate action to be taken on any such report.

8. Negotiations between the two German States

US, UK, France and the USSR to announce they favour setting up an all-German committee of representatives of the two parts of Germany to consider a peace treaty with Germany and to work out measures on reunification of Germany and development of contacts. All decisions will be taken by agreement between the two sides. If no agreement reached after the one and half year period, the states represented at the Geneva Conference will again negotiate on West Berlin.

Appendix B

Proposals by the Soviet Government on an Interim Agreement for Berlin 9 May 1960¹⁶⁴

The Soviet Government is in favour of proceeding immediately to the signature of a peace treaty with the two German States. Nevertheless, since such a solution of the problem for the time being gives rise to objections on the part of the Western Powers, the Soviet Government which continues to try to assure concerted action on the German question by the four principal players of the anti-Hitler coalition, is ready in the meantime to agree to an interim solution. This interim solution would consist of the signature of a provisional agreement on West Berlin of a kind to prepare conditions for its later transformation into a Free City and the adoption of measures leading to a future peace settlement. The Soviet Government therefore proposes the following:-

- 1) The conclusion of a provisional agreement on West Berlin for two years. The agreement would comprise approximately the same list of topics as those already discussed by the Foreign Ministers at Geneva in 1959, and without bringing any radical change in the present status of West Berlin would open the way to the elaboration of an agreed new status for the city in keeping with peacetime conditions.

The provisional agreement must provide for the reduction of the forces of the Three Western Powers in West Berlin. This reduction could be carried out progressively, in several stages. It would be appropriate also to record in writing the intention expressed by the three powers not to locate either atomic arms or rocket weapons of any sort in West Berlin.

The agreement ought also to include the undertaking to ensure the prohibition of the use of the territory of West Berlin as a base for subversive activity and hostile propaganda directed against other states. Arrangements for the prohibition of subversive activities and hostile propaganda against West Berlin might equally be provided for in some appropriate form.

The agreement would also take account of the declaration of the Soviet Union and of the DDR on the maintenance of the communications of West Berlin with the outside world in their present shape for the duration of the provisional agreement.

¹⁶⁴ Soviet Proposals given to General de Gaulle by the Soviet Ambassador, 9 May 1960, FO 371/154089.

The undertakings involving the DDR might take a form which would not imply diplomatic recognition of the DDR by the Western Powers, as parties to the agreement.

To supervise the carrying out of the obligations arising from the provisional agreement on West Berlin and to adopt, as necessary, measures intended to guarantee the application of the agreement when it has been concluded, a committee might be created consisting of representatives of France, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States.

2) At the same time as they conclude an agreement on West Berlin, the Four Powers should make a declaration inviting the two German states to take advantage of the interim period fixed by the agreement to try to arrive at a common point of view on the German question. A contact might be established between the two German states through the creation of an all-German Committee or in some other form acceptable to them both.

In putting forward these proposals, the Soviet Union starts from the idea that, if the German states refuse to engage in discussions with each other or if, on the expiry of the provisional agreement, it is evident that they are not able to reach an understanding, the Four Powers will sign a peace treaty with the two German States, or with one or them as they think fit. Of course, if the DDR and the Federal Republic succeed in reaching an understanding, there will be no obstacle to the conclusion of a single peace treaty for all Germany. Measures will be taken, moreover to turn West Berlin into a Free City. As for the status of the free city of West Berlin, the Soviet Union would prefer to work this out in conjunction with France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In proposing to turn West Berlin into a Free City, it is not the intention of the Soviet Union to harm the interests of the Western Powers, or to change the present way of life in West Berlin, or to try to integrate the city into the DDR. The Soviet proposals derive from the realities of the situation and are intended to make more normal the atmosphere in West Berlin, while taking account of the interests of all the parties. The creation of a free city would not harm the economic and financial relations of West Berlin with other states, including the Federal Republic. The free city could establish in its own way its relations, foreign, political, economic, commercial, scientific and cultural, with all states and international organisations. Completely free communications would be assured with the outside world.

The population of West Berlin would receive solid guarantees for the defence of its interests, the Governments of the Soviet Union, the United States, France and the United Kingdom assuming the necessary obligations to guarantee the precise execution of the conditions of the agreement on the Free City. The Soviet Union declares itself also in favour of the participation of the United Nations in the guarantees given to the Free City. It is self-evident that in the case of the reunification of Germany there would no longer be any reason for a special status for West Berlin as a Free City.

Appendix C

Interim Agreement on Berlin - US Paper of 14 May 1960 on 'Points of Difference in Soviet Proposals'¹⁶⁵

(United States Paper of May 14, 1960)

Soviet Proposals 2 July 1959

Soviet Proposals 9 May 1960

Duration

1-1/2 years

Reduction in Western Forces

To not above 3,000 to 4,000 total

Progressive reduction in several stages. (No figure mentioned.)

Free City of West Berlin

(Not explicitly mentioned.)

Purpose of proposal is 'to prepare for eventual transformation of West Berlin into a Free City'. Attributes of Free City:
No prejudice to Western Powers' interests.
West Berlin's 'way of life' to be maintained.
No integration into GDR
No prejudice to economic and financial relations with other States, including F.R.G.
Able to establish own relations (except military) with all states and international organisations.
United Nations as well as Four Powers to guarantee.

Access

Soviet declaration to preserve in present form for duration of agreement.

Soviet and G.D.R declarations to preserve in present form for duration of agreement.

Subversive Activities, &c.

Interference in internal affairs, subversive activities, and hostile propaganda to be prohibited in West Berlin. (Interference in internal affairs not mentioned.)

Prohibition in appropriate form of subversive activity and hostile propaganda with respect to (i.e., directed against) West Berlin

¹⁶⁵ US Paper on 'Points of Difference on Soviet Proposals', (at the Geneva Conference of 1959 and the Soviet Proposals of 9 May 1960), 14 May 1960, Meeting of Heads of Government, PREM 11/2992, Annex 11; also Paris to DOS, 14 May 1960, NSA no.1895.

envisioned.

G D R Role

Declaration not to interfere in West Berlin internal affairs and to respect interim status. Declaration to maintain Berlin communications in their present form for duration of agreement.

G.D.R engagements would take form which would not signify diplomatic recognition by Western Powers.

Supervisory Committee

To be set up within one month. (No time limit mentioned.)

Result of Failure of all-German Negotiations

After expiration of agreement, States represented at Geneva will hold new negotiations on Berlin. If the 'two German States' refuse to talk with one another or after expiration of agreement:

Four Powers will conclude peace treaty with two German States, or separate peace treaties, as they deem best.

West Berlin to be transformed into Free City, Soviet Union preferably elaborating statute jointly with Western Powers.

Appendix D

Revised Version of the Western Proposals of 28 July 1959 (as at 13 May 1960)¹⁶⁶

The Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have examined the question of Berlin in the desire to find mutually satisfactory solutions to the problems which have been raised and which derive essentially from the division of Berlin and of Germany. They agreed that the best solution for these problems would be the reunification of Germany with the consequent re-establishment of Berlin as its capital. They recognised however that meanwhile the existing situation and the agreements at present in force can be modified in certain respects and have consequently agreed upon the following:

- a) The Soviet Foreign Minister has made known the decision of the Soviet Government no longer to maintain forces in Berlin.

The Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom and the United States declare that it is the intention of their Governments to limit the combined total of their forces in Berlin to the present figure (approximately 11,000) The three Ministers further declare that their Governments will from time to time consider the possibility of reducing such forces if developments permit.

- b) The Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom and the United States further declare that it is not the intention of their Governments to continue to locate atomic weapons or missile installations in West Berlin.

- c) Free and unrestricted access to West Berlin by land, by water, and by air shall be guaranteed for all persons, goods and communications, including those of forces of the Western Powers stationed in Berlin. The procedures in effect in April 1960 shall be improved with a view to facilitating communications. Freedom of movement will likewise be guaranteed between East and West Berlin. All disputes which might arise with respect to access will be raised and settled between the Four Governments. The latter will establish a Quadripartite

¹⁶⁶ Meeting of Heads of Government, PREM 11/2992, Annex III.

Commission which will meet in Berlin to examine in the first instance any difficulties arising in connexion with access and will seek to settle such difficulties. The Commission may make arrangements if necessary to consult German experts.

- d) Measures will be taken, consistent with fundamental rights and liberties to avoid activities which might either disturb public order or seriously affect existing rights. The Secretary General of the United Nations will be requested to provide a representative, supported by adequate staff, to be established in Berlin, with free access to all parts of the city for the purpose of reporting to the Secretary General any activities which appear to be in conflict with the foregoing principles. The Four Governments will consult with the Secretary General in order to determine the appropriate action to be taken in respect of any such report.
- e) The arrangements specified in sub paragraphs (a) through (d) above can in the absence of reunification 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. The rights of the Four Powers in and relating to Berlin and access thereto shall in no way be affected by the conclusion or eventual modification or termination of this agreement.
- f) All parties to this agreement shall refrain from any act prejudicial to the execution of the terms of the agreement

Appendix E

Soviet Draft Interim Agreement on Berlin 11 May 1960¹⁶⁷

The Governments of the Soviet Union, France the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, having examined the ways of promoting a mutually acceptable resolution of the Berlin Crisis have recognised the necessity of achieving a broad settlement based on the following:

1. The Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America declare their readiness to reduce the number of their troops in Berlin to (...) thousand men. They will bring their troops to an agreed level by the day on which the agreement comes into force.
2. The Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America declare that as in the past they will refrain from installing any nuclear weapons or missile installations in West Berlin.
3. The Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America accept measures to prevent the use of the territory of West Berlin for activities which might lead to the breakdown of public order and security or which might lead to interference in the internal affairs of the other states, as well as hostile propaganda against them.
4. The Governments of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America acknowledge the contents of the Note from the Soviet Government of 1960 declaring that during the period of the agreement communications between West Berlin and the outside world will be guaranteed in their existing state.
5. A committee will be set up on the day of the month on which the agreement is due to come into force, composed of representatives of the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, the United States of America and France to observe the fulfillment of commitments arising from the present agreement and for the adoption of necessary measures, pertaining to the fulfillment of the agreement.

¹⁶⁷ Soviet Draft Interim Agreement on Berlin, found in the Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (Sapmo- BArch) DY30 (SED) 2/202/128 (Ulbricht's Office) Berlin, (cited before 1994 as IfGA, ZPA, J 1V 2/220/128). Translation from Russian supplied by the author.

6. The present agreement will last for two years after which the participants in the agreement will start new talks.

Appendix F¹⁶⁸

Draft Soviet Note to the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America 11 May 1960

The Soviet Government today notifies the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of their receipt of the following DDR Declaration.

‘The Government of the German Democratic Republic declares its readiness to respect the Interim Agreement drawn up by the Governments of the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America on the Berlin question (...)1960, and pledge their cooperation in its enforcement.

‘The Government of the German Democratic Republic takes note of the acknowledgment in the agreement that the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America will take measures to prevent the use of West Berlin for activities which might prove a threat to the maintenance of public order and security either regarding the internal or external affairs of other states and likewise with regard to propaganda against other states.

For their part, the Government of the German Democratic Republic declares that it will not allow the use of the territory of East Berlin or any other area subject to its authority to be used for any activity which might disturb public order or the security of West Berlin.

The Government of the DDR declares its agreement during the duration of the said agreement to guarantee West Berlin’s existing communications with the outside world’.

The Government of the Soviet Union, for its part, supports the declaration on the maintenance of the communications of West Berlin with the outside world, in their present form for the duration of the above mentioned agreement, and following discussions with the Government of the DDR states that there is no objection to accepting the Soviet note as an appendix to the agreement on the Berlin question.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

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