

Chapter II

AMERICAN AND ALLIED DECISIONS ON MEETING THE THREAT TO BERLIN

A. The Substance of the American Decisions

1. Communication of the Decisions to the Allies

Principles of Proposed Policies. On July 19 the National Security Council discussed alternative courses of action for dealing with the Berlin problem, on the basis of the reports prepared in response to the assignments given in National Security Action Memorandum No. 59 of July 14. Following this meeting the President had Special Assistant McGeorge Bundy issue instructions to the responsible heads of departments and agencies of the Government summarizing the decisions reached.¹

Summaries of the decisions reached were also communicated in messages sent by the President on July 20 to Prime Minister Macmillan, President de Gaulle, and Chancellor Adenauer, and in instructions of July 21 directing the American Ambassadors in all NATO capitals to inform the respective NATO Powers.² The most detailed statement of the American position, however, was contained in a memorandum, with several attachments, which the Secretary handed to representatives of the Embassies of Britain, France, and the Federal Republic on July 21.³

The memorandum stated at the outset that the United States had "reached certain conclusions as to the course of action which it believes ought to be followed."

¹Record of Actions by the National Security Council at its 488th meeting (NSC Action No. 2435), July 19, 1961, secret; National Security Action Memorandum No. 62, July 24, top secret.

²To London, tel. 335, July 20, 1961; to Bonn, tel. 154, July 20; to Paris, tel. 422, July 20; to Ankara, tel. 73, July 21, sent also to all other NATO capitals; all secret.

³To Bonn, tel. 170, July 22, 1961, secret.

First of all, the United States believed that the USSR was in earnest regarding its stated intention to sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany in the course of the year, a treaty which in the Soviet view would end Allied rights in Berlin. Likewise, the United States felt that a key factor in this Soviet policy was the belief that in the end the West would not fight to defend its position in Berlin.

Therefore, in the view of the United States, Western policy should consist of two principal elements: 1) a clear demonstration of Western determination to defend the Allied position in Berlin; 2) an active diplomatic program including negotiations with the Soviet Union, designed to provide the Soviet leadership with an alternative course of action which did not endanger Western interests in Berlin.

Creation of a More Effective Deterrent. With respect to the first element of Western policy, i.e., the establishment of a more effective deterrent and of capability for military action, the United States proposed (according to the memorandum) to begin immediately a series of measures aimed at increasing its armed strength, with due regard, however, to the dangers of an armament race.

As a first step the United States proposed to take measures that would initiate a long-run build-up of military strength which would not be of so dramatic a nature as to exacerbate the crisis. Specifically, on July 26 the United States Government would send to the Congress a request for a supplementary defense budget of 3.2 billion dollars to be added to a supplementary request for 3 billion dollars made earlier. This would give the United States a capability for moving an additional six divisions to Europe at the end of the year or at any time thereafter, depending on Allied decisions. The United States would also have available supplementary units of tactical and transport aircraft as well as increased naval strength, especially in the field of anti-submarine warfare. Furthermore, the United States would take immediate action to increase by fifty percent the number of its bomber aircraft on ground alert status. Finally, the United States also intended to undertake substantial measures in the field of civil defense, such as construction of shelters and recruitment and training of the necessary personnel.

In addition, the United States held that the following precautionary and planning measures should be undertaken within the next few weeks:

- a) Strengthen West Berlin's ability to sustain an interruption of access by reviewing and improving air lift procedures as well as the situation with regard to stockpiles.
- b) Review Berlin contingency planning in the light of the current situation.
- c) Complete Allied plans for use of non-military countermeasures, including economic sanctions, upon interruption of access to Berlin or earlier, as a warning and deterrent.

In view of the great importance of maximum support by world public opinion for the Western position and policies, the United States had begun an active world-wide public information program to this end and was proposing to expand this program in cooperation with the Allies. There had already been agreement on a preliminary quadripartite paper based on propaganda themes suggested by the British (see ante, Chapter I, A), and further steps in the development of such a program were suggested.

The United States considered it to be of the utmost importance that the response to the Soviet threat be a joint undertaking by the NATO alliance and it hoped, therefore, to be joined by its Allies in all aspects of this endeavor. The United States believed in particular that all NATO members should make an effort comparable to its own in the military field notwithstanding the cost and sacrifice involved. A clear willingness on the part of all the Allies was essential to convince the Kremlin of Allied determination. Such a joint endeavor would require closest consultation at every step of the way, and the United States was prepared to work out jointly with its Allies a military program to this end.

Anticipated Effects of Western Military Build-Up. An attachment to the memorandum given to the Western Embassies showed how the strengthening of the Allied military capability to cope with a threat to Berlin would affect NATO's general military posture with respect to the Soviet Bloc so that Berlin contingency plans would henceforth become closely linked to NATO's general strategy.

It was argued in this paper that the only action possible with currently deployed Allied strength, in the event of a blockage of access to Berlin, was a gradual series of probes which, if repulsed, would force the West to accept humiliation or to initiate nuclear action. Meanwhile, the NATO front would be vulnerable to sudden penetration by Soviet forces. Thus, the proposed American and Allied military build-up would open "wider options" for NATO military action and help to reverse misconceptions about NATO's weakness; and it would make much more credible the capability of the Western Alliance to take actions leading to a situation which the Soviet Union could no longer control and which would therefore be dangerous to its basic interests. The completion of American and Allied military programs would make possible the deployment along NATO's crucial central front of about forty allied divisions (about 1-1/2 million men), including a substantial strategic reserve, prior to a probe along the Autobahn. These divisions would be supported by substantial Allied air power and nuclear power generally superior to that of the Soviet Union. Even under the assumption of a deployment of a maximum force on the side of the Soviet Union, the latter would not have the margin necessary to assure it of rapid offensive success with non-nuclear weapons. Thus, the West would have the option of initiating a large-scale ground action which the Soviet Union could not throw back with conventional means.

The most important results of the Western military build-up, however, would be felt in the phase that preceded a ground probe. This was particularly important, since it was desirable to delay a ground probe until all other reasonable alternative courses had failed, in view of the fact that military actions after an initial ground probe tended to pass beyond the control of either side. It made, therefore, a big difference with respect to the effectiveness of these alternative courses whether they were undertaken against a background of growing military strength or against a background of continued non-nuclear weakness. That is to say, economic countermeasures, an airlift, or naval harassment and blockade would be more meaningful and less likely to lead to enemy countermeasures and retaliation if undertaken against a background of growing military strength rather than against a background of unchanged strength.

Active Diplomatic Program. With regard to the second element of Western policy, namely, an active diplomatic program,

the United States indicated in its memorandum that it foresaw several possible courses of action which should be the subject of further discussions among the allies. Even at the present stage, however, the United States favored indicating in general terms what it might wish to propose later in greater detail. At this point the memorandum referred to the possibility of early informal talks with the Soviet leadership through the Western Ambassadors in Moscow, as suggested in the "Outline on Germany and Berlin" submitted to the President by the Secretary on July 18 (see ante, Chapter I, C). Thereafter, it might be desirable to explore opportunities for Western political initiatives at an appropriate time. The timing of such initiatives would depend, among other things, on the likelihood at any particular time that the Soviet leadership might be sufficiently impressed by Western deterrent efforts to be willing to settle for solutions acceptable to the West.

Allied Consultations. Finally, the United States suggested in its memorandum a schedule of allied consultations as set forth in the "Outline on Germany and Berlin" of July 18. Thus, following initial consultations by the Ambassadorial Steering Group, allied consultations at a senior officer level would take place in Paris for a week beginning July 28. This would be followed by a meeting of the four Western Foreign Ministers in Paris, who would subsequently report to NATO. If necessary, the group of senior officers could remain in Paris for a few days longer to carry out the instructions of the Foreign Ministers.¹

When Secretary Rusk handed the memorandum to the Ministers of the British and French Embassies and to West German Ambassador Grewe on July 21, he did not review its contents but expressed hope that this memorandum and its annexes would receive careful study by the Governments concerned and that they would provide a basis for a continuing discussion of the Berlin problem. The Secretary also confirmed a schedule and program of the forthcoming Allied consultations which had already been outlined to the three Embassies by Assistant Secretary Kohler of July 20.²

¹"Memorandum on Measures for Dealing with the Berlin Situation", July 21, 1961, secret.

²To Bonn, tel. 165, July 21, 1961, and tel. 170, July 22, both secret.

2. President Kennedy's Report to the Nation on the Berlin Crisis, July 25

President Kennedy announced the conclusions and decisions reached on the Berlin problem in an address to the American people carried over radio and television on July 25. Its purpose was not only to give the American people a dramatic presentation of the situation confronting them and of the burdens which they would have to shoulder but also to make clear to friends, neutrals, and foes in the international arena the position and the goals of the United States in the face of this crisis over Berlin.

The President told his audience that Khrushchev's threat to Berlin had prompted a series of decisions by his administration as well as consultations with the Allies as a result of which it had become clear what needed to be done. The President stressed that the steps to be taken would require sacrifice on the part of many citizens and that even more would be required in the future. But he was hopeful that peace and freedom would be sustained if the United States and its allies acted out of strength and unity of purpose with calm determination and steady nerves, "using restraint in our words as well as in our weapons."

The President warned that it would be a mistake to look upon West Berlin, because of its location, as a tempting target, emphasizing that Berlin was not isolated because "the United States is there, the United Kingdom and France are there, the pledge of NATO is there, and the people of Berlin are there". The President declared that the United States "cannot and will not permit the Communists to drive us out of Berlin either gradually or by force." As long as the Communists insisted that they would unilaterally end Western rights in Berlin and Western commitments toward its people, the President said, the West had to be prepared to resist with force. But it would always be willing to talk "if talk will help."

Announcing the preparations to be undertaken, the President mentioned that a long-term military build-up of American strength had been under way since January 1961 and that as a result of supplementary defense appropriations requested in March and April the United States had already begun moving toward its goal in the field of defense. It was necessary to

speed up these measures and to take others as well. But it was even more important to have the capability of placing in a critical area at the appropriate time a force which, in combination with the forces of the Allies, was large enough "to make clear our determination and ability to defend our rights at all costs and to meet all levels of aggressor pressure with whatever levels of force are required." The United States, the President stressed, intended "to have a wider choice than humiliation or all-out nuclear action."

The President announced that he would now take the following steps. He would request of the Congress: an additional appropriation of 3.247 billion dollars for the armed forces; an increase in the Army's total authorized strength from 875,000 to approximately 1 million men; an increase of 29,000 men in the active-duty strength of the Navy and 63,000 men in that of the Air Force.

To fulfill these manpower needs, draft calls would be doubled and tripled in the coming months; authority would be requested of the Congress to call into active duty certain reserve units and individual reservists; and, under that authority, the President would also order to active duty a number of air transport squadrons and Air National Guard tactical air squadrons to provide airlift capacity and needed air protection.

The President also stated that ships and planes once headed for retirement would be retained or reactivated, thus increasing American airpower as well as airlift, sealift, and anti-submarine warfare capacity. Strategic airpower would be further increased by delaying the deactivation of B-47 bombers. Finally, the President informed his audience that some 1.8 billion dollars--about half of the total amount requested--would be needed for procurement of non-nuclear weapons, ammunition, and equipment.

All these requests, the President declared, would be submitted to the Congress the next day.¹ Subsequent steps

¹On August 1 President Kennedy signed a bill passed by both houses of Congress the previous day which gave him authority to call up 250,000 reserves. On August 10 the House and Senate passed a defense appropriation bill of \$46.6 billion, signed by the President on August 17, which included the additional funds he had requested.

would be taken to suit subsequent needs and comparable efforts for the common defense were being discussed with the NATO allies.

President Kennedy also discussed the "sober responsibility" of civil defense measures against nuclear war, announcing that the next day he would submit to Congress a request for new funds for the following immediate objectives: To identify space in existing public and private structures to be used for fall-out shelters in case of attack; to stock these shelters with food, water, and other minimum essentials for survival; to increase their capacity; to improve air raid warning and fall-out detection systems; and to take other measures that would be effective in saving millions of lives at an early date.¹

The President made it clear that the new defense expenditures would not require new taxes at the moment but that a request for an increase in taxation would be made the following January should the events of the next few months make this necessary.

Reiterating that the choice was not merely between resistance and retreat, "atomic holocaust and surrender", the President declared that the American response to the Berlin crisis would not be only military or negative. The United States, he said, had previously indicated its readiness to remove "actual irritants in West Berlin." But the freedom of that city was not negotiable, and the United States could not negotiate with those who said, "what's mine is mine and what's yours is negotiable." Yet the United States was willing to consider any arrangement or treaty in Germany consistent with the maintenance of peace and freedom. Moreover, the United States recognized the Soviet Union's "historical concerns about their security in central and eastern Europe" and it believed that arrangements could be worked out which would meet these concerns.

¹When Prime Minister Macmillan replied on July 23 to President Kennedy's message of July 20, which had given him and the other Allied leaders advance notice of the contents of the President's address to the American people, he asked if the President could avoid "emphasizing too much the need for air-raid shelters." Letter, Macmillan to Kennedy, July 23, 1961, secret.

The President emphasized that what was abnormal was not the freedom of West Berlin but the situation in divided Germany. If anyone doubted the legality of the rights in Berlin, the United States was ready to have it submitted to international adjudication. Likewise, he said, the United States was prepared to submit the question whether its presence was desired by the people of West Berlin to a free vote in Berlin and among all the German people. The President declared that the world was not deceived by the Communist attempt to label West Berlin as a hotbed of war. The source of world trouble and tension, he said, was Moscow, not Berlin, and if war should begin it would have started in Moscow, not in Berlin.

The President pointed out that the Soviet challenge was not only to the United States but to all free nations and particularly to the Atlantic Community and that "today the endangered frontier of freedom runs through divided Berlin." The Soviet Government alone could "convert Berlin's frontier of peace into a pretext for war." But the steps which the President had indicated in his address were aimed at avoiding that war.

Finally, the President declared that he would sum up the central meaning of this crisis and of the policy of the American Government with these words: "We seek peace, but we shall not surrender."¹

B. Allied Consultations at Paris, July 28-August 8

1. Four Power Working Group Report: Political Questions

In accordance with the program proposed by the United States and accepted by Britain, France, and the Federal Republic, the first of the scheduled allied meetings took place in Paris, July 28-August 3. This was the meeting of the Four Power Working Group, which produced a report that was to be reviewed by a subsequent meeting of the four Western Foreign Ministers.

¹Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 694-701.

Soviet Motives and Intentions. The report first analyzed Soviet intentions and motives in terms similar to those of the internal American documents previously discussed.

Tactics. The Report then turned to the matter of Western tactics. They should be aimed at bringing about within the next few weeks a change in the position of the Soviet Union so that it would accept negotiations.

The Working Group held that the question of a Western initiative regarding negotiations would depend on the development of the Soviet position. It should be avoided that the Soviet Union interpreted a Western initiative as a sign of weakness. Circumstances, however, might force the Western Powers to consider an initiative at an early stage--for instance, an impending action by some country to bring the Berlin question into the United Nations or a Soviet reply to the Western notes of July 17 inviting negotiations on terms which the West would find difficult to refuse. The situation in East Germany could likewise precipitate matters. (It is noteworthy that an annex to the Report dealing with the implications of the deteriorating economic situation in East Germany ended with the conclusion that the Communists seemed to be creating enough difficulties for themselves without the Allies taking a hand and that the Allies "should do nothing to exacerbate the situation.")

The Working Group recommended that, prior to receiving a Soviet reply to the Western notes of July 17, the Western Powers should adhere to the line set forth in these notes. The Working Group also considered the possibility of more limited Western initiatives, such as an early approach through the Ambassadors in Moscow and discussions with the Soviet leaders at the Geneva Conference on Laos or in New York at the UN General Assembly. It was agreed, however, that any Ambassadorial approach in Moscow should not precede the Soviet reply to the Western notes of July 17. It was also stated that it would be desirable in principle that a negotiation with the Soviet Union take place before the USSR had acted unilaterally in convening a peace conference. In any event, it was felt that the question of the date of a Western initiative was a very delicate one, and that the ideal condition would be to take advantage of a Soviet overture.

The Working Group preferred a Western initiative to be aimed first at a conference of the Foreign Ministers of the three Western Powers and the Soviet Union, even though a summit meeting might eventually become necessary to achieve a meaningful discussion of basic issues. The German delegation indicated that German public opinion would not object to a discussion of the German question by the four Powers without German participation. The question was, however, whether the Soviet Union would agree to a conference without German participation. Despite the disadvantages of the Geneva formula of 1959, the Working Group concluded that it might be necessary to adhere to this formula providing for participation of West and East German "advisers" in order to achieve a conference.

Regarding the agenda of such a ministerial meeting, the Working Group believed that it should not focus on Berlin alone but, at the least, cover Germany and Berlin. Inclusion of other subjects such as "East-West relations" might also be considered. If there should be a summit meeting, each head of Government would obviously have the right to introduce any subject he wished.

Substantive Political Questions. The Working Group lacked time to elaborate a complete Western negotiating position. It attempted, however, to assess certain proposals, including those advanced by the West earlier.

With regard to Germany, the Working Group felt that the Western Powers would have to raise at a Foreign Ministers conference the issue of German reunification on the basis of self-determination. The Working Group considered the Peace Plan of 1959 still a good basis for negotiations but suggested that the Plan should be reviewed with the object of presenting it in a more "striking" manner to public opinion, suppressing disarmament features no longer corresponding to the situation, and adding features which would make it more difficult for the Soviet Union to reject the Plan. After discussing the possibility of a special status for a reunified Germany, the Working Group concluded that the Western Powers should adhere to the position taken in the Peace Plan, namely, that a reunified Germany should be free to opt either for joining a security pact or for staying neutral.

The Working Group also agreed that the security provisions of the Western Peace Plan ought to be the basis for any further study of the subject. It was recommended, however, that the provisions of paragraph 16 of the Plan (measures against surprise attack) might be made the subject of a study by military and political experts.

With respect to Germany's eastern frontiers, the Working Group concluded that concessions should be offered only if the West received a suitable quid pro quo. But if hostilities over Berlin seemed imminent, it might become important to counter Soviet propaganda concerning the Oder-Neisse line. The Working Group warned, however, not to have any illusions that Khrushchev would accept a satisfactory Berlin arrangement merely in exchange for recognition of the Oder-Neisse line. The German delegation observed that any final definition of the eastern frontier should be linked with a solution of the German problem, and there was general agreement that any proposal regarding the Oder-Neisse line should not be advanced as a separate initiative.

The Working Group also agreed to recommend to the Foreign Ministers that the possibility of an all-German plebiscite along the lines of the Working Group report in preparation for the summit meeting of 1960 (see ante, Part III, Chapter II, A) be reviewed and the language of the recommendation re-examined.

As for Berlin itself, the Working Group agreed that no arrangement was acceptable that did not secure these three essential objectives: 1) Maintenance of the presence and security of Western forces in West Berlin; 2) maintenance of the freedom and viability of West Berlin; 3) maintenance of the freedom of physical access to West Berlin. The Working Group considered that the defense of these objectives implied the preservation of the existing status of Berlin and that all other solutions would result in such a profound transformation of the status of the city and of the conditions of access that the basis of Allied policy in Europe would be endangered.

The Working Group considered two different hypotheses in examining the problem of negotiations on Berlin with the Soviet Union: 1) negotiation with the USSR before signature of a separate peace treaty; 2) a situation resulting from the signature of a separate treaty.

Under hypothesis 1), the Western Powers could advance an all-Berlin proposal which should be linked to the reunification of Germany. Subsequently, the Western Powers, as in 1959, could present proposals aiming at a modus vivendi in Berlin on the basis of the current status. The proposals put forward at Geneva on July 28, 1959, as revised in April 1960 in preparation for the summit conference, still represented a generally acceptable solution and, therefore, could be re-examined. Finally, the Western Powers, faced with a probable failure of negotiation and with the prospect of imminent signature of a separate peace treaty, might consider under what conditions the Soviet Union, while signing the treaty, might enter into practical arrangements safeguarding in fact the existing system of access. This was envisaged under the formula of "Solution C".

Under hypothesis 2), the Working Group considered that, once a separate treaty had been signed, acceptable modalities of access could be established resulting either from parallel measures taken by the two parties or from negotiation. The formula of "Solution C" could also be envisaged in this case.

But this search for practical arrangements safeguarding access should be subject to one major condition, namely, that the Western Powers could accept neither direct negotiations with the GDR regarding their access rights nor subordination of their traffic to GDR control.

The Working Group also agreed that the possibility of a plebiscite in West Berlin regarding the position of the Western Powers in that city should be examined. The German delegation indicated that it wanted to consult West Berlin authorities before expressing further views on this subject.

2. Four Power Working Group Report: Military Build-Up and Contingency Plans

Strengthening the Forces of the Alliance. The four delegations fully endorsed the policy set forth in the American memorandum of July 21 regarding the progressive build-up of the strength of the Alliance. In view of the fact that the nuclear capacity of the West had already reached a high level, it was agreed that the required efforts should be made mainly in the field of conventional armaments so that the Alliance in a given situation could respond with appropriate means,

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either conventional or nuclear. The Working Group felt that the dangers threatening the West and peace would be considerably increased if the Soviet Union had grounds to believe that the West had no other choices than to react either with limited forces or, at the outset, with nuclear arms.

The British representatives stated that their government was considering the most effective action it could take and that the Foreign Secretary would make pertinent statements at the Foreign Ministers meeting. The French declared that their contribution was likewise under study and that the measures undertaken or anticipated were closely in line with those anticipated in the American memorandum. The representatives of the Federal Republic stated that their government would endeavor to fulfill the goals foreseen in NATO planning, and they expressed the hope that a total of nine divisions would be assigned to NATO by the end of 1961. Moreover, the Federal Republic intended to take all necessary measures to assign two further divisions to NATO in the course of 1962.

Review of Berlin Contingency Plans. In reviewing Berlin contingency plans, the Working Group first considered the implications of the American memorandum of July 21 with regard to ground access procedures. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the Foreign Ministers instruct the Ambassadorial Group in Washington as follows:

a) To undertake a review of existing Allied contingency plans with a view to providing for Allied acquiescence in execution by East Germans of the current Soviet procedures regarding Allied ground access to Berlin.

b) To redraft the note to be addressed to the Soviet Government when signature of a peace treaty appeared imminent, and to redraft the public statement to be made by the three Western Powers as well as the instructions to Allied personnel.

c) To develop a rationale, in the pertinent documents referred to in b), for the acquiescence in the execution of current procedures by East Germans. The Western Powers would make clear in these documents that no document signed by the USSR and the GDR could affect their rights with respect to Berlin and access thereto;

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that they would insist on undisturbed physical access to Berlin; that as long as this continued under current procedures it was a matter of indifference to them who executed these procedures; and that they would continue to hold the Soviet Union responsible for maintenance of their rights with respect to Berlin, including those of access.

d) To study the possibility of extending the scope of arrangements now governing civilian traffic to Berlin by having East and West Germans at the "technical level" agree on procedures governing all traffic to Berlin, including allied military traffic.

The Working Group explained its recommendations by pointing out that the concept underlying the Allies' contingency planning, by precipitating an immediate showdown, allowed little elasticity for diplomatic and political maneuvering. In order to allow more time for this and also for the necessary deployment of military forces, it might be desirable in the initial stages to resort to a garrison airlift. The Working Group, furthermore, declared that existing contingency plans would make difficult any approach to a modus vivendi on access along the lines of "Solution C". The Working Group, finally, expressed doubt as to the political feasibility of adhering to the present "peel-off" procedures in view of public opinion, especially among the Allies, and it pointed to the dangers of Allied disunity over an essentially procedural question.

On the other hand, however, the Working Group asked the Foreign Ministers to consider the disadvantages of the proposed change in procedure. It would greatly increase the hold of the GDR over Allied access and enable it to employ "erosive" tactics that might paralyze any forceful reaction by the three Powers. Furthermore, even though the suggested procedure applied only to land access, it might encourage the GDR to extend it to air access, which would endanger civil access to Berlin.

With regard to the military aspects of contingency planning, the United States delegation presented to the Working Group a paper on "Military Planning and Preparations toward a Berlin Crisis" which included also draft instructions to the military authorities of the three Western Powers. The Working Group

agreed that it would not be possible to establish governmental positions regarding the U.S. delegation's paper and the draft instructions prior to the meeting of the Foreign Ministers and suggested that Secretary Rusk might start a discussion of these issues by presenting these two papers to the other Foreign Ministers.

The Working Group recommended that the Foreign Ministers ask the Ambassadorial Group in Washington to study the following topics:

a) Means for concerting and coordinating the planning and execution of military measures beyond the competence of LIVE OAK.

b) Means of assuring continuity of military control during transition from tripartite Berlin measures to control by established NATO mechanisms, if and when necessary.

c) Means of effecting coordinated political guidance and control of military activity world-wide during a Berlin crisis.

The Working Group, finally, recommended that the Foreign Ministers consider the need for new directives for LIVE OAK and other military authorities.

Economic Countermeasures. The Working Group also submitted recommendations with regard to economic countermeasures. As these were substantially revised as a result of the review by the Foreign Ministers, they will be taken up in the context of the discussions and decisions at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers.¹

3. Tripartite Foreign Ministers Meeting, August 5

Prior to the review of the Working Group Report on a quadripartite basis, the Foreign Ministers of the United States,

¹Ministerial Consultations on Berlin, Paris, August 4-9, 1961; Report of the Four-Power Working Group on Germany and Berlin, Paris, July 28-August 4, 1961, Aug. 4, 1961, secret.

Britain, and France met on August 5 to discuss certain topics before the Germans joined the deliberations.

There was general agreement with the American proposal that the Germans should be associated more closely with planning regarding Berlin and that they should become full-fledged partners in the Work of the Ambassadorial Steering Group in Washington.

French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville stressed that he preferred to discuss in the absence of the Germans how important the Berlin question was to the future of the Federal Republic and its attachment to the West. The West, Couve de Murville said, must avoid anything that could alter this attachment and lead to German neutralism. At stake was the future of the Atlantic Alliance.

The discussions of the three Foreign Ministers then turned to the question of the timing of any negotiations with the Soviet Union on Berlin and it became apparent that there was a basic disagreement over this question, between the United States and Britain on one side and France on the other.

Secretary Rusk, supported by British Foreign Secretary Home, took the position that the Western Powers should take an initiative prior to the convening of the UN General Assembly, September 19, to bring about a Foreign Ministers meeting with the Soviet Union without, however, revealing the substance of the Western position. The Secretary emphasized that, if the Western Powers did not proceed in this manner, their friends and Allies would be unwilling to support either a military build-up or economic and propaganda measures. Moreover, it should be avoided that, when the UN General Assembly met on September 19, other countries would take an initiative for negotiations which might be disadvantageous for the Western Powers.

Couve de Murville stated that before offering negotiations the Western Powers should realize that the Soviet Union would only want to negotiate about Berlin. A substantive agreement acceptable to the Soviet Union would have to satisfy the latter's demand for an end to West German political activities in Berlin and for control by the GDR of all German traffic, including that of refugees, between the Federal Republic and Berlin which was now proceeding under the protective "camouflage"

of Allied military rights. Thus, the Allies should realize that any agreement was bound to change the status quo regarding access to Berlin.

The French Foreign Minister declared that he did not see the problem of tactics and of public opinion in the same light as Secretary Rusk. The essential fact in the situation was the West's relationship with the Soviet Union. In the center was a trial of strength and it was important not to show weakness. For the West to take an initiative toward negotiations as proposed would merely indicate that fear of war was "at the bottom [of] our hearts." Since Khrushchev was saying all the time that the West would not fight and would eventually accept the Soviet position, it would be wrong to give him the impression that he was right.

Addressing himself to Couve de Murville's argument that a trial of strength was the issue, Secretary Rusk declared that strength had many components and that the West should not discount the importance of world reactions to Khrushchev as well as to the West. The Soviet Union had extensive objectives in many parts of the world and would have to take it into account if the West succeeded in showing up the Soviet position regarding Berlin. On the other hand, if the Western Powers were unable to convince most of the members of the United Nations that their position was reasonable, a great deal of pressure might be brought to bear on them which could create much difficulty. Finally, if the democratic countries should ask their people to assume the risk of nuclear war, they must make it clear that every effort was being made to achieve the objective by other means.¹

4. Quadripartite Foreign Ministers Meetings, August 5-6

In view of the divergences of opinion at the tripartite meeting with regard to the tactical approach to negotiations, it is perhaps not surprising that when the Foreign Ministers met on a quadripartite basis they decided to take up the section on tactics of the Working Group Report only at a later stage in their meetings held August 5 and 6.

¹From Paris, tel. SECTO 8, Aug. 5, 1961, secret.

Soviet Motives and Intentions. In discussing the section on "Soviet motives and intentions", the four Foreign Ministers dealt with the explosive situation in East Germany resulting from the mass exodus of refugees (see post, p. 77). West German Foreign Minister Brentano emphasized that the situation could easily become dangerous if the "Berlin door" were closed. The four Foreign Ministers decided to approve the report and also to instruct the Washington Ambassadorial Group to keep the situation in East Germany under constant review.

Strengthening the Forces of the Alliance. In taking up the "strengthening of the forces of the alliance", the Foreign Ministers discussed at some length the military build-up of their individual countries. Brentano declared that the Federal Republic would take the necessary measures to ensure the build-up of its forces as set forth in the Report but that no measures should be taken before the West German elections of September 17. The Foreign Ministers unanimously endorsed the policy of a progressive build-up of the Alliance, as proposed in the American Memorandum of July 21, agreed that it should be "Alliance-wide and have an organized follow-up", and also agreed that the problems of military preparations should be discussed in NATO.

Economic Countermeasures. Accepting with some amendments a Working Group paper on economic countermeasures, the Foreign Ministers 1) acknowledged the important auxiliary role of economic countermeasures; 2) agreed to the imposition of a total economic embargo against the Soviet Bloc in the event "military and civilian access, air or ground, to West Berlin is blocked"; 3) agreed to consider whether a total embargo should be imposed if only Allied traffic to Berlin was blocked or substantially interfered with; 4) directed that studies of possible measures other than total embargo be undertaken by the Four Power Working Group under the guidance of the Ambassadorial Steering Group; 5) undertook to seek agreement of all NATO members to these principles and to initiating the necessary legislative and administrative actions required to carry out the concerted measures should the contingencies arise.

In the course of their discussions the Foreign Ministers also agreed that an embargo was essentially an economic measure while a blockade was essentially of a military nature and that both should be considered by the Ambassadorial Group.

Berlin Contingency Planning. In dealing with the Working Group paper reviewing Berlin contingency planning, the Foreign Ministers approved, without much discussion, the recommendations regarding ground access providing for acquiescence in East German execution of existing Soviet ground procedures. Couve de Murville and Brentano, however, raised questions with respect to paragraph d) of the recommendations, which provided for a study of a proposal to have procedures governing Allied traffic to Berlin agreed upon by East and West Germans at a technical level.

Secretary Rusk pointed out that, while the Allies would not want to talk with the East Germans about Allied military traffic to Berlin, they would not wish to go to war to avoid talking to the East Germans. Since it would increase East German prestige if the Allies entered into discussions with them, it would be preferable, in a certain situation, to have the West Germans talk with the East Germans about Allied military traffic; the more so as the two sides already dealt directly with civilian traffic to Berlin, which was 95 percent of the whole traffic.

Brentano expressed doubts as to the desirability of letting Germans handle Allied traffic on this basis. He felt that it would be dangerous to broach the subject with the East Germans and to imply that they had a right to be consulted about Allied traffic.

In the end, the Foreign Ministers agreed that the study proposed in paragraph d) of the Working Group recommendations on contingency planning should be undertaken.

In the discussion of the military aspects of contingency planning, Secretary Rusk specifically endorsed the Working Group recommendation that the Ambassadorial Group in Washington be given broad responsibility for planning for action on a world-wide basis. He also stressed that the Ambassadorial Group might have to be strengthened by the addition of more military advisers and that there was need for better liaison between the Group and LIVE OAK. The Secretary, furthermore, drew attention to the problem raised in the American military papers circulated in the Working Group as to whether existing NATO machinery was suitable for control of operations at a time when events might move into an actual military phase.