

Did the construction of the Berlin Wall change the US-FRG relations for worse during 1961? How did it create, and to which extent, tensions between the two states and opened up new problematic issues?



President John F. Kennedy Meets with the Mayor of West Berlin, Willy Brandt, 13 March 1961, Oval Office, White House, Washington, D.C., JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

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INTRODUCTION

The Berlin Crisis started in 1958¹, putting an end to a calm period in Berlin. It all started when the Chairman of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev issued an ultimatum with which he gave the Western Allies a period of six months to retract their forces from the city of Berlin. Furthermore, he demanded that West Berlin becomes a free city, without Allied military forces stationed there.² However, the Allies dismissed his claims.³

The Berlin Crisis continued with the Foreign Ministers' conference that took place in Geneva during 1959 which did not solve any of the problems. Similar results followed the Vienna conference(1961), where President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev had some personal discussions that did not end up to an agreement.⁴ On the contrary, Khrushchev fueled the Crisis by repeating his initial ultimatum declaring that unless the West meets his demands, the USSR will proceed to sign a unilateral peace treaty with Germany's Democratic Republic(GDR).⁵ Signing a unilateral treaty with the GDR would mean an abolishment of the Berlin status as it was signed after the war and a way of the USSR to proceed, unofficially, to provocative actions towards the West under the cover of the sovereign GDR.

The Berlin Crisis reached its peak during August 1961⁶ with the construction of the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961 that divided the city.⁷ As the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva claimed in 1962, the wall ended the freedom of movement in the area of Greater Berlin and violated the Berliners' rights⁸. The Wall became a symbol of the Cold War, as well as the Berlin Crisis.⁹ The construction of the Berlin Wall preceded the Tanks standoff confrontation on October of 1961, a confrontation that was caused by the erection of the Wall and the effects which that had to the US foreign policy in Berlin.¹⁰

Germany played a central role in the Cold War, and Berlin became the most important city of the Cold War confrontation. The relations between the US and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) were characterized by necessity. Both countries perceived their cooperation and alliance as vital, each for a different reason. On one hand the US believed that the preservation of West Berlin and West Germany were necessary for the maintenance of American prestige as well as European safety and security against the 'red threat' from the USSR. On the other hand, the Germans realized that the Cold War confrontation was beyond their control and they needed a strong ally like the US to protect them against socialism and Soviet power.

The question this paper is going to answer is: Did the construction of the Berlin Wall change the US-FRG relations for worse during 1961? How did it create, and to which extent, tensions between the two states and opened up new problematic issues?

¹ *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: A Super-Ally, a Superpower, and the Building of the Berlin Wall, 1958-61*, H. Harrison, (2000)

² *A Brief History of the Berlin Crisis of 1961*, Neil Carmichael, (2011)

³ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Elisabeth Barker, (1963)

⁴ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Elisabeth Barker, (1963)

⁵ *The U. S. Military Response to the 1960 - 1962 Berlin Crisis*, Dr. Donald A. Carter, (2018)

⁶ *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: A Super-Ally, a Superpower, and the Building of the Berlin Wall, 1958-61*, H. Harrison, (2000)

⁷ *The Berlin Wall and the battle for legitimacy in divided Germany*, Pertti Ahonen, (2011)

⁸ *The Berlin Wall. A defiance of human rights. International commission of jurists Geneva*, (1962), 11

⁹ *The Berlin Wall and the battle for legitimacy in divided Germany*, Pertti Ahonen, (2011)

¹⁰ *A Brief History of the Berlin Crisis of 1961*, Neil Carmichael, (2011)

The paper will concentrate on what were the effects the Wall had on the US-FRG relations regarding the security and the status of Berlin. Furthermore, it will examine the conflict the Wall created regarding the strategy the two nations wanted to develop in order to deal with the GDR and the Soviet hostilities. Finally, it will showcase how and why the Berlin Wall affected the stance the FRG adopted towards the US-USSR talks on Berlin during the second half of 1961.

Answering the above questions is of high historiographical value. During the Berlin Crisis new events took place in Berlin while the balance of power between the US and the FRG changed. These alterations are explained by the effect the Berlin Wall had on the US-FRG relations during 1961. At the start of 1962, in a meeting with Henry Kissinger, Konrad Adenauer, the Chancellor of West Germany, openly criticized the US and questioned its prestige and military superiority over the Soviets. In April of the same year at a conference in Bonn, Adenauer seemed to go against any US proposal towards a resolution of the Berlin problem, stating that the US had been abandoning Germany. By that time Kennedy had already stopped asking for Adenauer's advice regarding the Berlin matter. The following day the Germans leaked documents from a US-German meeting in Lausanne that took place earlier in March regarding US-Soviet negotiations. The leak was Adenauer's initiative aimed at sabotaging the US-Soviet talks because he did not agree with the American strategy regarding the negotiations. At the same time a lack of trust from both sides was becoming obvious while direct communications between Kennedy and Willy Brandt without Adenauer's participation became more common. In addition, the FRG questioned the Berlin status and the US' authority to it.

Following the construction of the Berlin Wall, the US-FRG relations were damaged deeply as the initial US response to the construction of the Wall disappointed the FRG and they believed the Americans abandoned them. This mistrust was also reinforced later when the US-USSR talks regarding the settlement of the Berlin question took place. The FRG did not agree with the stance the US kept and the strategy they followed. The president Kennedy set aside the aspect of Germany's unification, something that led the West Germans to believe that the US were not as committed as they used to declare, leading them to sabotage the negotiations and to oppose any proposal and action made by the US. This growing mistrust and the problems created after the construction of the Wall in the US-FRG relations led to the events that were described, during 1962. Even though the US administration made some serious efforts to improve the relations between the two countries, the situation did not seem to change notably.

In order to examine and understand how the relatively harmonious US-FRG relations until 1961 ended up on the verge of collapse a year later, it is critical to research whether these changes occurred due to the effects the Wall had on the US-FRG relations. The present paper wants to examine not only how the construction of the Berlin Wall brought tensions to the US-FRG relations but how these tensions affected greatly the Berlin Crisis and the Cold War direction. The paper studies how the attempt of the US to preserve the US-FRG alliance and show commitment in Berlin, affected the Berlin Crisis. How the US strategy, regarding Berlin, changed after the first collision the US and FRG had due to the US response to the Wall. We are going to see how the US were pushed to demonstrate firmness and to respond firmly to new Soviet hostilities, the responses which escalated the Cold War and led to new events such as the Tanks standoff in Checkpoint Charlie. The main objective is to understand if, how and why the tensions and the problems that were created between the US-FRG and the inter-alliance conflict helped towards the escalation of the Berlin Crisis and unfolded a chain of new events that changed completely Berlin's and Cold War' character. In

order to study the above aspects, the study will focus on the diplomatic communication and cooperation between the two nations and the Kennedy's administration actions.

Furthermore, what makes this research imperative is the need for more information and new approaches differing to those already offered on the matter. This paper tries to produce and offer a new insight on this historical matter and shine light on some of the dark spots in that subject through facts that have not yet been covered or discovered from the historiography.

Historiography

Regarding the present historiography, one of the most detailed books regarding the Berlin Crisis is the book "The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962" by Jack M. Schick. This book covers the whole of the Berlin Crisis. As it would be natural for a book written about the Crisis, Schick's book contains a part dedicated to the US-FRG relations after the construction of the Wall. Schick describes that the FRG's administration remained silent regarding the Wall construction and kept an approach of inactivity, as the West Germans were afraid that a reaction from their side would cause massive repercussions from the US and the USSR¹¹. Furthermore, according to Schick, the US administration had a weak reaction to the Wall because they were getting prepared to recognize a de facto existence of the German Democratic Republic (GDR; i.e. East Germany). The writer believes the Americans wanted to distance themselves from the FRG regarding the Berlin matter, something which created different policy strategies and perceptions from the ones Germans had.¹² For Schick the US were ready to settle and accept the existence of two Germanys.¹³ In addition, he points out a demonstration of willingness from the German side regarding new talks, as they believed that might force the Soviets to settle.¹⁴ Finally, according to Schick the Americans were willing to proceed with going to war, if necessary to prevent the Soviets from gaining control of the Berlin routes, but that war would not include use of nuclear weapons.¹⁵

Another piece of work that describes the Berlin Crisis and the US-FRG relations is the book written by W.R. Smyser called "Kennedy and the Berlin Wall: A Hell of a Lot Better than a War." It is an important book, as Smyser experienced the events firsthand at the time when he was stationed in Berlin on diplomatic duty for the US. In his book Smyser makes remarks regarding the negative relations Kennedy had with the Chancellor Adenauer due to their differences regarding the Berlin policy. He addresses the US-FRG problems more than Schick does in his book. He writes about the first hours following the construction of the Wall, presenting a vigorous reaction from Willy Brandt, the mayor of Berlin. He paints Brandt as quite upset by the weak American response. However, there are no other references to Willy Brandt and his role in the US-FRG relations. In his book Smyser continues by describing the first reactions from Adenauer regarding the US-Soviet talks on the Berlin matter. Adenauer decried the negotiating strategy of the US by expressing his objections through two letters. Adenauer was afraid that a lack of support from the Americans would lead the West Germans to turn their interests and hopes towards Moscow¹⁶. However, he does not provide further information regarding the actions and the objections of the West Germans whilst he does not give enough information regarding the US-FRG relations during the US-USSR talks.

¹¹ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 166

¹² *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 169

¹³ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 173

¹⁴ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 178

¹⁵ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 181

¹⁶ *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall: A hell of a lot better than a war*, Smyser W. R., (2009), 171

Furthermore, another relevant book is “First Steps Toward Détente: American Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1963” written by Richard D. Williamson. In his book Williamson refers to US-FRG relations during 1961, starting with Adenauer’s visit in Washington in April 1961. He describes a mild conversation focusing on the creation of contingency plans for Berlin. After the construction of the Wall, according to Williamson, Adenauer showed an understanding towards the US’ reaction to the Wall, in contrast to a Willy Brandt who was furious with the American response. However, the author does not give further information on the matter.¹⁷ Later in the book Adenauer is presented as cooperative and standing by the side of the US without presenting any problems or objections.¹⁸ Williamson does not make an extensive reference to US-FRG relations.¹⁹

Moreover, there is John C. Ausland’s book called “Kennedy, Khrushchev and Berlin(The 1961-1964 Berlin Crisis)”. In his book John C. Ausland writes about the US-FRG relations, only after the first days of the Wall’s construction. He describes that the US did not give a firm response however, he does not provide information regarding German reaction to the US response except from the first letter Brandt sent, whilst he presents Adenauer having no objections or any reaction to the US response towards the Wall. Finally, he does not provide us further information regarding the relations between the two nations.²⁰

Furthermore, there is the dissertation Eisenhower, Kennedy and American Cold War foreign policy written by James M. Scarry. In his dissertation Scarry presents Willy Brandt’s first letter regarding his views on the Berlin Wall as an advisory letter rather than a letter of demonstration towards the American response.²¹ The dissertation presents mainly the inter-talks and plans the US administration had regarding the Wall, without giving sufficient information in the communications between the two states and without analyzing or describing the German reaction and objections to the US’ response to the Wall. In addition, the paper describes the planning behind the proposals the US made during the first stages of the post-Wall US-USSR talks.²² However, it does not make a concrete connection of the US strategy change with the objections and the reactions from the West German side. Indeed, the author makes a reference to Adenauer’s suspiciousness regarding US’ commitment in Berlin but does not show why and how Adenauer phrased these concerns and to which extend. The same case stands also for Brandt.²³

In addition, there is the article “ The Berlin Wall and the battle for legitimacy in divided Germany” written by Pertti Ahonen. Within this article is noted the way both East and West Germany used to perceive the Wall and what meant for them. According to the article the FRG the construction of the Wall demonstrated the inhuman character of the GDR and the way the regime tried to establish itself, something which is accurate. The FRG seems that used the Wall as leverage against the establishment of the GDR on a diplomatic level. However, does not cover the anxiety and the fear the FRG felt after the construction of the Wall. The article gives the impression that the Wall

¹⁷ *First Steps Toward Détente: American Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1963*. Richard D. Williamson, (2012), 100

¹⁸ *First Steps Toward Détente: American Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1963*. Richard D. Williamson, (2012), 133

¹⁹ *First Steps Toward Détente: American Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1963*. Richard D. Williamson, (2012), 123

²⁰ Ausland, John C. *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Berlin-Cuba Crisis, 1961-1964: The 1961-64 Wall*, (1996), 2/15-2/18

²¹ Scarry, J. M. *The Berlin crises of 1958 and 1961: Eisenhower, Kennedy and American Cold War foreign policy*, (1999), Miami, 276

²² Scarry, J. M. *The Berlin crises of 1958 and 1961: Eisenhower, Kennedy and American Cold War foreign policy*, (1999), Miami, 283-286

²³ Scarry, J. M. *The Berlin crises of 1958 and 1961: Eisenhower, Kennedy and American Cold War foreign policy*, (1999), Miami, 289-291

became a chance for the FRG to take the upper hand in the Berlin conflict whilst it brought fear to the FRG's administration and problems in the ranks of the FRG. Furthermore, the article presents an image of sobriety from the Western German side and an impression of acceptance of the Wall. Even though the FRG learned to live with the Wall, according to the primary sources they could not accept it nor feel comfortable with the Wall around them. Moreover, it does not showcase the problems the Wall created to the US-FRG relations and the effects that had to the Berlin Crisis²⁴

An article that studies the same field as the present paper is the article called "Adenauer and Kennedy: An era of distrust in German-American relations" written by Frank A. Mayer. The author follows the Berlin Crisis from the start of Kennedy's presidency as well as the US-FRG relations. Even though, the article makes references regarding the initial response of the US to the construction of the Wall and presents briefly some of the objections Chancellor Adenauer had regarding that, it does not provide the full lengths of the tension and problems the US-FRG relations reached. It does not show how and to which extent the West Germans stopped to trust the Americans, how they reacted to the US-USSR talks after the construction of the Wall, neither makes any remark about the role Willy Brandt dramatized into these events and situations.²⁵

Furthermore, the article "John F. Kennedy's Decision-Making on the Berlin Crisis of 1961" by Alexander Sergunin, describes the decision-making of the US administration regarding the Berlin situation, providing an insight of the diplomatic bodies and groups the Americans had created. However, there seems to be some problems, for example the article does not provide in its full extent the mentality of commitment the US had regarding the city of Berlin, as well as, does not make remarks regarding the effects of the Berlin Wall and the tensions that brought to the US-FRG relations.²⁶ On the same direction we can find also Fred Kaplan's article "JFK's First-Strike plan". In the article the focus is on the determination the US planned to show on Berlin and how they were prepared for an escalation of the Berlin Crisis towards a total nuclear War. However, Kaplan also, does not provide information regarding the initial response of the US to the construction of the Wall, neither the reaction of the FRG to that response.²⁷

Moreover, we find the article "The Berlin Crisis and the FRG 1958-62" by Jill Kastner. In his article, the author covers the field of the US-FRG relations. He presents the US to be ready to accept a settlement in Berlin by recognizing the GDR, something which was not truth according to the research. Moreover, the articles shows that some tensions existed between the two countries, but does not present the extent neither the actions of Adenauer and Willy Brandt after the US response to the construction of the Wall, presenting a calm Chancellor.²⁸

Even though historiography has studied US-FRG relations after the building of the Wall, it does not appear to have covered some aspects enough. A common point among all the works done on the matter is the lack of discussion on the great effects of the initiation of the new US-USSR talks after the construction of the Wall regarding US-FRG relations. Furthermore, there could have been said, more, regarding the intensity of the West German reactions to the US strategy and the level of aggression from the West German side towards the application of the US' foreign policy on Berlin. They seem to focus mainly on the same events (e.g. the first letter sent by Brandt after the Wall) but they do not examine further, the problems, the communications and the diplomacy that took place between the two countries, neither emphasize the extent to which Adenauer opposed to the US.

²⁴ *The Berlin Wall and the battle for legitimacy in divided Germany*, Pertti Ahonen, (2011)

²⁵ *Adenauer and Kennedy: An Era of Distrust in German-American Relations?* Mayer, Frank A, (1994)

²⁶ *John F. Kennedy's Decision-Making on the Berlin Crisis of 1961*, Alexander Sergunin, (2014)

²⁷ *JFK's First-Strike Plan*, Fred Kaplan, 2001

²⁸ *The Berlin Crisis and the FRG, 1958-62*, Jill Kastner, (2002)

Finally, a lot of aspects of their narration and the information they provide seem to be problematic as the archival research for this paper discovered. Moreover, it seems that within the historiography there are some misunderstandings regarding the US commitment and strategy in Berlin. The literature presents the US to be ready to accept a settlement that includes the recognition of the GDR alongside other concessions regarding Berlin, something which seems to be wrong. Furthermore, the present paper re-approaches and provides new information and aspects of the role Adenauer and Brandt played within the Berlin Crisis and the US-FRG alliance during 1961. The paper provides also, more information regarding the problems and the inter-alliance crises the US-FRG relations experienced. In addition, the role of the US-USSR relations and the role they had in the US-FRG relations and the Berlin Crisis will be studied. Finally, new information and further study is conducted on the matter of the Berlin Status and the disagreement the US and the FRG had on that.

Primary Sources

The research using primary sources shows that there are more aspects to explore regarding the Berlin Crisis. Furthermore, my research unveiled contradictions and differences when contrasted to the information and the analyses already given in existing historiography. Even though current historiography provides us with plenty of information, there are still aspects that are in need of more research.

The main primary source that was used for this research is the archival collection “Office of the Historian” provided by the US State Department. This collection belongs to the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series. Within this collection we can find all the political and diplomatic documents and archives of the Kennedy’s administration regarding the Berlin Crisis. The archive is assembled from conversation records, estimates, reports, minutes of meetings and conferences. All this information comes from a formerly classified archive which was declassified and opened to the public in 1993. However, the archive was digitalized in the form of an e-book on May 2018.²⁹ The new e-book that was produced gives the chance to historians to conduct thorough researches on the matters of US foreign policy, giving them instant access through State Department’s official website. Furthermore, it offers more time to the researcher to conduct his research as he can download the e-book on his personal computer, making the research easier and more detailed. Even though, there have already been some references to the FRUS’ archive in academic literature and authors have conducted research using it, its newly digitized form gives the chance for further exploration of the archive, offering a fertile ground for more thorough examination of this precious material. That assumption has been confirmed in my personal research, as I discovered details and new aspects the historiography has not yet examined to their whole extent. For example, covert actions undertaken by Adenauer in order to sabotage the US-Soviet talks on Berlin come to light through the study of that archive which includes confidential estimations and reports of the US administration concerning the German policy. In the FRUS archive I discovered new information that I have included in my research, engaging with newly arisen facts that provide more historical knowledge regarding the Berlin Crisis. The study of the FRUS archive is vital for this paper, as it is the best source for the historians to examine and study the US-FRG relations during 1961. Within the archive one will find all the necessary information regarding the cooperation and communication of the two countries as well as American estimates, reports, inner communication regarding the US foreign policy planning

²⁹ <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v14>

and every aspect concerning the Berlin and FRG events. The FRUS gives an insight to President's Kennedy administration and White House confidential archives. Within the FRUS archive are provided plenty of information to answer the above stated questions. Into the archive we can find the reasons why the US had a weak initial response to the Wall construction, how and why the Kennedy administration changed their strategy after that and why they proceeded with the reinforcement of the military forces in Berlin. In addition, the archive contains all the information regarding the IS-FRG relations breakdown, the confrontation regarding the Berlin status as well as the strategy the US followed during the US-USSR negotiations during the second half of the 1961.

In addition, I made use of the CIA archive which is also digitalized and accessible through the CIA library website.³⁰ The CIA archive can be found in 'The Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room' library. This archive offers a great variety of CIA estimations, covert operations, meetings and studies. The vast amount of US intelligence knowledge on Berlin can be found in that archive. The CIA archive is important due to the role the CIA played in the US' presence in Berlin. The CIA was the main source of information of Kennedy's administration, defining the decision and policy making regarding Europe and Berlin of the Kennedy's administration, providing rare and vital information on Berlin and the events taking place there. The CIA archive provides additional answers regarding the reasons behind the weak response of the US to the Wall as well as the aftermath of the Wall. Moreover, there are information regarding the reasons and the way the US reinforced their military presence there and estimations about the Soviet hostilities that help to the realization of the Berlin Crisis.

Thesis Structure

The present thesis is divided into three chapters. Each chapter's extent is determined by the different phases of the Berlin Crisis as I perceive them.

The first chapter of my thesis presents the foundations of the Berlin Crisis. The first chapter covers the first phase of the Berlin Crisis. This phase concerns the first years of the Berlin Crisis from 1958 onwards when the Crisis started with Khrushchev's ultimatum, until early August 1961 right before the construction of the Berlin Wall. The chapter focuses mainly on the Foreign Ministers' conference that took place in Geneva during 1959 and the Vienna Conference on 1961. Moreover, there is a particular focus on the first meetings President Kennedy had with Willy Brandt and Konrad Adenauer on early 1961, and their first agreements towards a commonly accepted budgetary policy regarding Berlin's security.

The second chapter begins with the construction of the Berlin Wall and covers the August of 1961. The chapter presents the effects of the Berlin Wall on US-FRG relations during the first month of the Berlin Wall's existence. Within the chapter we can see the initial planning of the US administration to tackle the new Soviet hostilities and the Wall construction, as well as, the intense German objections and reactions to the initial US response. Regarding the German reactions the chapter focuses on the vigorous reactions coming from the Adenauer and Willy Brandt through their letters of demonstration and statements towards the US government. In addition, the chapter explains the change of the US strategy towards Berlin and how that escalated the Berlin Crisis. Finally, it shows Kennedy's mentality towards the new situation and the way he tried to minimize

³⁰ <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/>

the damage the Wall did to the US-FRG relations with Johnson's visit and the appointment of General Clay as the President's representative in Berlin.

In the third and final chapter of the thesis we can see the events following August 1961. The chapter explores the initiation of the post-Wall US-USSR talks regarding the Berlin question and the reactions of the FRG to the strategy of the US in these talks. Furthermore, it examines the effects these German reactions had on the US-FRG relations and the configuration of the new US foreign policy regarding Germany and Berlin. The chapter shows how the FRG reactions to the initial US reaction to the Wall, led the US to escalate their responses towards the Soviets, something which led to the Tanks standoff at the Checkpoint Charlie confrontation. Moreover, the chapter provides information regarding the way the FRG reacted by presenting the unilateral actions to which Adenauer proceeded to sabotage the US-USSR talks (Kroll Case), bringing new information that escaped the historiography so far, by presenting the back-door covert discussions the FRG had with the USSR. Finally, it studies the problem of the Berlin Status which brought the US with FRG to a collision course, due to different perceptions regarding the legal status and identity of Berlin.

CHAPTER 1: Towards the Berlin Wall

Whether you like or not, history is on our side.

We will bury you!

Chairman Khrushchev, November 18th, 1956

In the autumn of 1958, the calm period in Germany started to end. By that time Khrushchev had established his position as the head of the Soviet Union.³¹ At the same time, the success of the Sputnik gave the Soviets a technological lead which generated confidence and a feeling of superiority towards the West. Khrushchev regarded the West's presence in Berlin as an obstacle for the final consolidation of the Soviet Bloc in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the Soviet leader perceived West Berlin as a Western espionage and intelligence hub threatening the Bloc's security and integrity. Simultaneously, the pressure coming from the GDR's government applied to him regarding the refugee situation provided him with enough motivation to question Western presence in the core of East Germany.³²

On November 10th 1958 Khrushchev gave a speech that led to an escalation of the Cold War actions from both countries and the Berlin problem into the Berlin Crisis.³³³⁴ The Soviet Union unilaterally denounced the four-power agreements. They stated that the "occupation regime" in West Berlin must be ended and proposed that West Berlin should become a demilitarized free city³⁵ with no armed forces in it.³⁶ The city's status would be guaranteed by the four powers.³⁷³⁸ Before Khrushchev's ultimatum a statement made by Walter Ulbricht, the leader of the GDR, had already prepared the ground for Khrushchev's actions. He demanded the termination of the Western occupation of Berlin. Initially the US and the UK wanted to respond with a strong protest, but they backed down due to France's reluctance. Simultaneously, Willy Brandt urged the FRG to break off

³¹ Barker, Elisabeth. *"The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962, (1963)*

³² *Crisis over Berlin American policy concerning the Soviet threats to Berlin, 60*

³³ *A constructed peace the making of the European settlement, 1945-1963, (1999), 251*

³⁴ *A constructed peace the making of the European settlement, 1945-1963, (1999), 251*

³⁵ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 13*

³⁶ *Crisis over Berlin American policy concerning the Soviet threats to Berlin, 63*

³⁷ *The Berlin Crisis and the Cold War. Thomas A. Schwartz, (1997)*

³⁸ *A city torn apart, building of the Berlin Wall, symposium, (2011)*

diplomatic relations with the USSR, but they dismissed his proposals.³⁹ In reality, Soviet intentions were not truly to push the Allies out of Berlin, but rather to try and contain West Germany's potential to become stronger than its Eastern counterpart.⁴⁰ They were also worried about the refugee flow from the East to the West which needed to be reduced.⁴¹

The Soviet Secretary accused the Allies of violating the wartime agreements and held them responsible for increasing tensions in Europe by building up the West German military forces and equip the Bundeswehr, the West German army, with nuclear weapons.⁴² The West German army was based and created according to the U.S. Army blueprints. The "Prussian type" of the Wehrmacht was left behind and the army was redesigned according to the American model.⁴³ The Bundeswehr's role, though, was not quite defensive. Western Allies were planning to use West Germany's army as a time valve against a Soviet attack, an embankment that would stall the Soviets and direct them towards certain spots so that they would become worthwhile nuclear targets. The US built the German army from the scratch and provided it with the essentials. Even though they introduced new war tactics and theories,⁴⁴ the American administration was not confident that Berlin was defensible in the event of a conflict.⁴⁵

As a first measure, more for show rather than for truly practical reasons, the Western powers sent another 11.500 troops to Berlin, with seven thousands of them being Americans.⁴⁶ Eisenhower perceived the presence of US troops in Berlin as an essential requirement to deter and oppose the Warsaw Pact forces. However, he did not want to engage the US in a situation where the European troops would only be comprised of American soldiers. He tried to gradually reduce the number of American troops in order to persuade the Europeans and mostly the Germans to build their own defenses and to live up to their NATO obligations and participate in its operations.⁴⁷

The Bundeswehr matters and the amount of American intervention in this new setup created the first frictions between Adenauer and Kennedy. German officials were skeptical towards the American influence on the German army,⁴⁸ as they were left out from key decision-making, and the role Bundeswehr would dramatize in the Berlin events. Furthermore, the thoughts of Washington to possibly retract a great number of US troops triggered Adenauer's skepticism towards the reliability of the US' security guarantees and defense capacity.⁴⁹ Moreover, the rearmament and the fear of a nuclear disaster negatively affected the popular support for the FRG administration and provoked criticism of the government's security policy.⁵⁰

³⁹ *A free city. Khrushchev's November proposals, Allied response and a Foreign minister's conference, November 1958-1959*

⁴⁰ *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: A Super-Ally, a Superpower, and the Building of the Berlin Wall, 1958-61*, H. Harrison, (2000)

⁴¹ *A constructed peace the making of the European settlement, 1945-1963*, M Trachtenberg, (1999), 252

⁴² *Avoiding the slippery slope*, William Burr, (1994), 1

⁴³ "The Battle Over "Innere Fuehrung"." In *Rearming Germany*, Naumann, Klaus, (2011), 203-220

⁴⁴ *GIs in Germany: The Social, Economic, Cultural, and Political History of the American Military Presence*, Junker, Detlef, (2013), 74

⁴⁵ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 29

⁴⁶ *The case against the flexible response, Berlin policy and planning in the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations*. Kori N. Schake, (1997), 2

⁴⁷ *US national security policy from Eisenhower to Kennedy*. Robert J. McMahon, 2010

⁴⁸ "The Presence of American Troops in Germany and German-American Relations, 1949-1956." *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945-1955*, Thoß, Bruno, (1993), 412

⁴⁹ *Department of State, Memorandum of conversation. German Defense contribution and US-German relations. 10/4/56*

⁵⁰ *Deterrence and defense. The stationing of US troops in Germany and the implementation of forward strategy in Europe, 1950-1967*. Thoß, Bruno, (2013), 59-60

The Ultimatum

On November 27th, 1958, Khrushchev issued his ultimatum. He called upon the Allies to settle the Berlin problems on his terms within six months, otherwise he would sign a peace treaty only with the GDR, establishing it as the only legitimate political existence in Berlin, therefore ending the Allies' rights in Berlin.⁵¹ This new statement would create great future tensions, while the problem of the USSR signing a unilateral treaty with the GDR would take up much of the US' diplomatic resources.

The risk and the threat level were quite significant, something which was demonstrated by the actions of Dulles, the US Secretary of State. Even though the Secretary was famous for his lack of flexibility in talks and his uncompromising opinions, he demonstrated a considerably flexible approach to the deadline crisis. He believed that a policy of flexibility was the only solution. Even though Dulles was confident that Khrushchev would not escalate the crisis into a war, he considered him as more unpredictable and dangerous than Stalin. As a result, he was more vigilant, taking more precautions and leaving him a wider margin for error.⁵² On the other side, the USSR Chairman tried to force his proposition regarding the solution to the Berlin's question. The centerpiece of his proposal was a 'free city' status. The Soviets asked for the conversion of West Berlin into an independent political unit without being integrated into any state. Moreover, they spoke about a self-governing city which would handle its own economic, administrative and other affairs.⁵³

Khrushchev did not directly threaten the US regarding the Berlin situation, but instead tried a more indirect and a subtle way to press for the developments he was eager to see in the region. The basic step that the Soviets would take towards that solution was to pass the control over access routes to East Berlin to the East Germans. The possibility of the GDR interfering with Allied travel into Berlin provoked anxiety in the West and made the 'Berlin Question' a high-priority matter.⁵⁴ Moreover, the Americans believed that this agreement would pave the road for West Germany to separate itself from its Western alliance, something which would be catastrophic for the West. Moreover, the new measures would create tensions to Berlin and gradually will deteriorate it, economically and politically.⁵⁵ The Berlin life was affected after these provocations and the Soviet statements. During 1958 bank withdrawals increased more than anticipated. Also, there was a drop in industrial orders accompanied by the postponement of deliveries. Finally, the Berlin stock market declined quite impressively, too.⁵⁶

Eisenhower and Dulles agreed that East Germany's effort to substitute Soviet authority and control Allied travel would be the breaking point at which they would, eventually, resort to the use of force. In 1959 during a close session of the Senate Foreign Relations committee in March, Secretary of State Christian Herter declared that Washington will make use of nuclear weapons in a case of a conflict in Berlin.⁵⁷ Dulles believed that US superiority in nuclear strike power gave the US an advantage.⁵⁸ Also, he believed that this superiority would deter the Soviets from resorting to war, deeming Khrushchev's ultimatum an intimidation move, a bluff, rather than a concrete political plan. Therefore, he believed the Soviets would not resist a constitutional show of force at the checkpoints in Berlin.⁵⁹ Even though Eisenhower did not want to find himself engaged in a war in Germany, he

⁵¹ *Battleground Berlin*, Murphy Kondrashev and Bailey, 1997, 363

⁵² *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 29

⁵³ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 13

⁵⁴ *Avoiding the slippery slope*, William Burr, (1994)

⁵⁵ *A constructed peace, the making of the European settlements 1945-1963*. Marc Trachtenberg, 1999, 259

⁵⁶ *Report on the Communist Bloc, during 1958*. CIA Archive. Publication date, unknown.

⁵⁷ *Avoiding the slippery slope*, William Burr, (1994), 2-3

⁵⁸ *Deterrence and defense. The stationing of US troops in Germany and the implementation of forward strategy in Europe, 1950-1967*. Bruno Thob. (2013), 55

⁵⁹ *Avoiding the slippery slope*, William Burr, (1994)

realized that in case of a Soviet attack the US could not act in any other way but going to war using all of their resources. Otherwise, the US would not be able to hold Berlin as well as their influence there.⁶⁰ The basic thinking behind the US' Berlin contingency plan regarding a Soviet attack was a full-scale nuclear response.

It is important to mention that the Americans, with the cooperation of the Allies in August 1954, had already approved a primitive contingency plan for initiation in the event that Soviet forces would hand control over the Berlin access routes to the GDR. This plan authorized Western military personnel to treat GDR personnel at the checkpoints as Soviet agents. The US administration was aware of the possibility of the GDR taking over control of the checkpoints and the access routes to Berlin. In the case that the GDR would disregard the warnings made by the US and it took over the control of the checkpoints and refused passage to Allied convoys and trains, they had orders to return to the starting point as part of the contingency plan. The Americans perceived the act to demonstrate determination of staying and preserving their Berlin status as vital. Also, they believed that making use of military force would put Soviet stamina and intentions regarding Berlin to the test.⁶¹ President Eisenhower believed that US' status in Berlin was at stake, and the US had to stabilize their position there. He was of the opinion that a confrontation was possible so long as the Allies were willing to demonstrate determination to stand their ground in Berlin. Eisenhower, just like most of his consultants and US officials, believed that the US' strategic superiority would prevail.

Washington officials believed that use of force could help preserve the Allies' confidence in West Berlin, deter Khrushchev and subsequently prevent a crisis from unfolding. The Eisenhower administration believed that the preservation of the connections between the US and Berlin as well as the FRG were of vital importance. In case the Allies were to lose their frontline position in the Cold War, West German and Western European confidence in US security guarantees could erode. They feared that Bonn would shift towards neutrality and would make alternative security arrangements with Moscow. Eisenhower forwarded the idea that if the US lost Berlin that would be the end of the US. The whole of Europe would end up in the hands of the Soviets and the US would face extinction⁶².

Eisenhower did not want to back down in Berlin,⁶³ but at the same time he understood that the US' position in Berlin for the moment was quite fragile, so he opened a window of communication with Eastern officials.⁶⁴ Eisenhower showed a more flexible approach towards the situation, in contrast to the strict approach the Pentagon and State Department were pursuing. However, he refused to recognize the East German regime for the sake of stabilization. Eisenhower's government dismissed these propositions, believing that it would have the same consequences as an Allied failure in case of a Berlin confrontation.⁶⁵

There is one more important factor in US-German relations – the mayor of West Berlin, Willy Brandt. On September 1st, 1958, the US mission in Berlin endorsed Brandt's proposal of a protest escalation. Willy Brandt played a key role in the communication between the two nations, acting up to some level independently. The US was frequently in touch with him, consulting Brandt directly on some matters. Willy Brandt undeniably was an important figure in the German situation, as he was the mayor of the city most important for the West's survival yet at the same time also the most complex one. The US found valuable consultants and specialists in the faces of German officials. The

⁶⁰ *A free city. Khrushchev's November proposals, Allied response and a Foreign minister's conference, November 1958-1959*

⁶¹ *Avoiding the slippery slope, William Burr, (1994)*

⁶² *Avoiding the slippery slope, William Burr, (1994)*

⁶³ *Operations coordinating board, Washington D.C. Progress report. United States policy on Berlin. CIA Archive. April 30, 1954*

⁶⁴ *A constructed peace, the making of the European settlements 1945-1963. Marc Trachtenberg, (1999), 259*

⁶⁵ *Avoiding the slippery slope, William Burr, (1994)*

spirit of cooperation between the two sides thus reached interesting levels of honesty and unity.

Mayor Brandt presented the use of new practical countermeasures that West needed to take. Some of these measures would be a discouragement of West Germans from participating in the Leipzig fair as well as imposing tighter controls on the travel of East Germans, especially the ones who promoted the propagandistic actions of the Eastern state within the Federal Republic.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the Allies wanted to escalate their countermeasures by setting a selective embargo regarding some important products, but later they called it off as impractical. The US wanted to escalate the countermeasures to a crushing point, but the Allies opposed this and did not consent. The GDR managed to overcome some of the countermeasures by establishing trading and economic cooperation with other nations, many of them also being NATO members.

In response to this, in February 1959 the Soviets showed they were planning to remove their last military forces from East Berlin. The KGB and military intelligence were shifting to non-military cover. At the same time, they built new facilities outside Berlin, more precisely in Potsdam. Although the Soviet actions and the fact that most of the Soviet organizations and agencies were moved to Potsdam seemingly demonstrated willingness on their side to give up control to the East Germans, it was nevertheless a trick from the Soviets. They intended to force the matter using this distraction and force the Americans into rash moves. In reality, they were not retreating - everything was a bluff played by the Soviets. On September 1st of the same year, everything was re-established and the Soviets were still in control of Berlin and East Germany.

As the two powers were spiraling into a crisis, in March 1959 the Soviet Union decided to compromise slightly in order to lead the two sides towards an agreement, as the Americans showed persistence that they were not willing to abandon Berlin. The Soviets accepted the presence of small numbers of troops from the Allied powers in order to preserve Berlin's status as a 'free city.' However, the US would not have the right of interference in the city's internal affairs, while at the same time they insisted on a clause that Soviet troops should be stationed in West Berlin as well. This proposition took place at the Geneva foreign ministers' meeting which took place from May until August 1959.

The main objective Western Allies had during the meeting was to lead serious negotiations in order to achieve an agreement with the Soviets. They wanted to create a more viable status quo in Berlin. They intended to improve their position in Berlin and to bring balance and harmony to the city. Even if the talks broke down, Western Allies wanted to leave the conference with an ethical advantage and firmly stand their ground, closing any attempt to question their authority in Berlin.

Four powers participated in the conference, as well as two advisors, one from the West and one from the East part of Germany, although their role was of inferior importance. The Soviets wanted to bring the GDR to the negotiating table in order to force a recognition of the East German regime from the West, but that was not achievable due to the objections set by the Allies. Western Allies need to protect their right and oppose anything that would lead to the infringement of their rights in Berlin. Moreover, they should make it clear that they did no intent to recognize the GDR nor to accept talks and cooperation with the East German regime.

However, the meeting did not yield a fruitful outcome and the talks did not proceed further, as both sides were not willing to back down on their demands and rights nor to compromise. Berliners so far had been pessimistic regarding the talks in Geneva, as they believed that the US would need to proceed to making concessions in order to reach an agreement, something the Americans were opposed to. Eventually, the four powers turned to discuss about an interim agreement for Berlin, a ban on hostile propaganda and subversive activities in West Berlin and the preservation of existing communications by the Soviet Union with West Berlin, as they proposed the

⁶⁶ *Crisis over Berlin: American Policy concerning the Soviet Threats to Berlin, Part VI, 18*

creation of an all-German committee to deliver a peace treaty and a reunification of the city within a year.

The Western Powers came up with a counterproposal on June 16th. They proposed the Western troops remain at their existing levels of 11,500 men, with a clause for possible future reductions if the conditions became better and there was a continuity in unrestricted access to West Berlin for all persons and goods.⁶⁷

The State Department essentially treated Soviet diplomatic communications as propaganda. It believed that the Soviets' memo was a means of negotiation not only regarding Berlin, but also German and European security. Dulles explicitly denied any recognition of East Germany or acceptance of the East German regime's control in East Germany as a substitute for the Soviet control.⁶⁸

The Geneva meeting did not solve the tensions and problems in Berlin, as the behavior of GDR later demonstrated. Next year, in July 1960 the GDR planned to provoke incidents and unrest in West Berlin to give a basis to Khrushchev's claims that the Berlin situation could lead to dangerous accidents. In the same year, six thousand members of SED, the German Socialist Party, were stationed in West Berlin. Moreover, they set the foundations to send great numbers of East Berlin's worker's militia (Kampfgruppen) to West Berlin quickly through the railway system which was being controlled by the GDR. On August 30th, 1960 the GDR announced that controls from West to East would be imposed on West German residents.

These controls continued until the midnight of September 4th. The GDR's initiative took the West Germans, West Berlin authorities as well as Western Allies by surprise. During that week hundreds of West Germans were denied the permission to travel to East Germany as well as from West Berlin to East Berlin. Border controls also reduced the numbers of refugees arriving to the West. The number dropped by more than 25% in comparison with the preceding weeks. The US were moved by the new actions and the willingness of the Soviets to provoke unrest in Berlin. The US intelligence prepared a report regarding the contingency plan the US army should follow in case the Easterners were moving towards a full-scale city seizure attempt. American troops were to take defensive positions around the US community to safeguard American lives and properties. The US administration was disturbed by the capabilities of hostile elements to enter from East to West Berlin. Even though they never believed that the Soviets would escalate their military actions towards West Berlin, they were positive that East Germans could seize control of vital civilian installations.

US-West Germany's Relations

The end of the Geneva meeting and the eventful 1959 followed Adenauer's visit to the White House in March 1960. During his visit Adenauer met with many US officials as well as President Eisenhower. The Chancellor again expressed doubts about American protection and guarantee of safety in Berlin. President Eisenhower dismissed the Chancellor's worries and assured Adenauer that US influence and power in West Germany was not getting weak nor would the US back down. He stated that American troops would not withdraw from Europe until further progress on disarmament was made. The president also informed Adenauer that the American flag would continue to fly over Berlin until an agreement, acceptable by both West Berlin and West Germany, was obtained.

Another subject of great conversation were the political measures that needed to take place in Berlin next. Adenauer proposed the option of a referendum among West Berliners to decide

⁶⁷ *Crisis over Berlin: American Policy concerning the Soviet Threats to Berlin, Part VI, 32-65*

⁶⁸ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 18-31*

regarding the legal status of Berlin until its re-unification. The US administration saw that idea positively and accepted it. The US administration then proposed supervision of the referendum by a neutral supervisor, such as United Nations. However, Chancellor Adenauer declined, and the elections plan did not take off.⁶⁹

The start of the intense diplomatic interaction between the US and the West Germany starts in 1961 when Kennedy took the presidential office. The US as well as US-FRG relations, and most importantly the Cold War, were entering a new era with Kennedy's presidency. JFK, imposed a different policy than Eisenhower on some matters, also handling US foreign policy on Germany differently. Moreover, the Berlin situation and the Berlin question changed completely during the year Kennedy took over the US administration.

President Kennedy started his mandate with Willy Brandt's visit in Washington on March 13th, 1961. That meeting took place before Adenauer's visit in April and it was the precursor of the later extensive talks between Kennedy and Adenauer. This meeting was scheduled mostly due to Khrushchev's statements at the start of the year. The USSR Chairman stated that the USSR would continue to support ongoing national wars of liberation and highlighted that Western powers should end their "occupational regime" in West Berlin. Kennedy took office during a turbulent time when the Berlin crisis seemed to spiral dangerously.⁷⁰ In the meeting both politicians discussed the Berlin matter in depth. Kennedy admitted that Berlin was the most difficult challenge the West was facing.

One of the main concerns of the US administration was the budgetary policy. Kennedy discussed with Brandt some of the ways the US and Germany could control and can cooperate regarding the 'war' expenditures.

Kennedy continued Eisenhower's doctrine and stated that was vital for the US to maintain an army in Germany. Furthermore, he supported the policy that the Americans should reinforce their forces stationed in Germany, in contrast to Eisenhower's reductionist policy.⁷¹ However, Kennedy stated that the two nations perceived the planning and participation differently. His main goal was to speak about contributions, a matter that would extensively occupy American diplomatic thinking and planning during the upcoming years. Kennedy wanted to point out that the US were the nation that revived post-war Germany and he believed American investment had to yield something back for the US to balance their budgets. The burden of such military expenditure was quite heavy for the already overstretched budget of US. The FRG was the most exposed member of the alliance and the US guaranteed its safety.⁷²

For that reason, Kennedy, proposed economic cooperation with the FRG. He committed the US to keep up with the military expenditures in Germany, as long as Germany accepts to provide financial aid to underdeveloped countries in the third world on behalf of the US. He also proposed the participation of West Germany in US military maintenance through equipment supply. Brandt agreed to these proposals fully and expressed the opinion that the US and Germany should cooperate closely.⁷³

In April 1961 Brandt's visit followed Adenauer's visit to Washington as well. As far as Germany was concerned, Kennedy wanted to rally the troops and learn where FRG would stand in case of a Berlin emergency. The US President pointed out that Germany's share in military

⁶⁹ *Crisis over Berlin: American Policy concerning the Soviet Threats to Berlin, November 1958-December 1962, Part VI, 69-70*

⁷⁰ *A brief history of the Berlin Crisis of 1961. Neil Carmichael, 2011*

⁷¹ *10. Memorandum of conversation. Willy Brandt visit in Washington. March 13, 1961. Kennedy library, National Security Files. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 file.*

⁷² *US-German relations: An alliance turned normal. Article by Fritz Stern, 1986*

⁷³ *10. Memorandum of conversation. Willy Brandt visit in Washington. March 13, 1961. Kennedy library, National Security Files. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 file.*

expenditures and equipment disposal was not sufficient so far⁷⁴ as well as the Germans' commitment to the alliance. Up to this point, in Kennedy's eyes FRG seemed to be participating dully in the alliance, mostly by claiming rights and safety but without contributing accordingly by fulfilling their obligations. The US at this point seemed to be in a difficult position financially, as they were carrying the burden of maintaining a huge army force in Berlin and orchestrating the safety and defense of Western alliance, whilst the allies did not seem to put the common good above their countries' interests. The Western alliance's common interest at this point was argued to be the most critical part for the survival of the Western civilization, because in case of a loss in Berlin the Soviet Union would allegedly end up occupying the whole of Europe. The US felt isolated because the allies had not realized the importance of the Berlin situation, while the FRG was pushing and using the Berlin matter for their own national benefit.

Talks between Kennedy and Adenauer at the start of 1961 revealed an upset Chancellor who believed that the West was at the verge of a collapse in the face of the 'red threat.' At that moment the US did not control NATO and neither have they achieved to unite Europe and its nations against the common enemy for the sake of the Western alliance's survival. The Western Allies - France, UK and US - were all heading in different directions, even though there was a mutual understanding regarding some important subjects - something which was about to change soon. Adenauer phrased his concerns regarding NATO and its dynamics as well as Western alliance's cohesion.⁷⁵

The Chancellor was willing to commit Germany to the alliance once he would get persuaded by the West about its purposes and commitments. On the other hand, the US expected Germany to cooperate and participate in NATO, with the United Nations, the World Bank and other institutions helping Germany's reformation and re-introduction into the West's alliance.⁷⁶ Moreover, Adenauer pointed out that NATO needed the US' leadership and strict control. He declared that, unless the US took some drastic measures, the Western alliance as well as the Transatlantic alliance would lose its purpose and power. He believed the US was the only nation that could guarantee the safety of Western Europe. American administration realized soon that West needed reinforcements and a more substantial communication and cooperation. Kennedy declared that he would try to get a hold of NATO and try to make the Transatlantic alliance stronger, dedicating money and efforts to it.⁷⁷

Moreover, Kennedy stated that West would not tolerate any infringement on Western rights in Berlin by the Soviets. The president expressed to Adenauer the determination of the US to stand their ground in Berlin and their loyalty towards the city and the FRG. Also, he went forward to say that the US were still determined and committed to the use of nuclear weapons in case of an emergency in order to defend Berlin and West Germany - a statement of absolute commitment and determination on behalf of the US to hold their ground.⁷⁸ Despite Schick's allegations that the US were not willing to use nuclear weapons,⁷⁹ here we saw new historical facts that escaped the historiography so far, proving that the US administration was willing to proceed toward the use of nuclear weapons in case of a Soviet attack.

However, the Germans were not fully convinced regarding the US-Germany co-operation. They claimed that Germany was being left out in the cold regarding Berlin decisions to which they did not have rights according to international law, but in practical terms they believed the US should

⁷⁴ According to international law FRG did not have any rights on Berlin

⁷⁵ Memorandum of conversation. President Kennedy- Chancellor Adenauer meeting, Washington April 12, 1961. NATO and East- West Relations. Department of State, Conference Files Lot 65D 366, CF 1835

⁷⁶ The United States, Germany and the multilateralization of International relations. H.W. Brands.

⁷⁷ Telegram from the department of state to German embassy in Washington, 1961

⁷⁸ Memorandum of conversation. President Kennedy- Chancellor Adenauer meeting, Washington April 12, 1961. NATO and East- West Relations. Department of State, Conference Files Lot 65D 366, CF 1835

⁷⁹ The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 181

act differently.⁸⁰

The United States administration reassured German officials that the US were in Berlin to protect the freedom of West Berlin and they did not have any intention of being forced out of Berlin. They were determined to use all means to make sure that would not happen.⁸¹ As Acheson would state one month later, Berlin was vital for the US' prestige, but more importantly also for its survival.⁸² Kennedy also proposed a transfer of troops and garrisons to Berlin to show the Soviets that the US were committed to move carriers and reactivate the reserve army in order for the USSR to be persuaded about the US' intentions regarding the use of nuclear weapons as contingency measure regarding the Berlin status.⁸³

Kennedy's presidency works as a turning point in Berlin contingency planning. Even though Khrushchev withdrew his ultimatum in September 1959, the tripartite planning continued until 1960. The Allies firmly believed that the West would sooner or later need contingency measures to deal with new Soviet provocations and hostilities. By March 1961 Khrushchev came up once again with new Soviet plans regarding Berlin. Acheson, who at the time was Kennedy's special advisor, believed that political and economic measures could not do the whole job and there should be some military counterweights⁸⁴.

Towards the Wall

As a next step, during the summer of 1961 Soviet mobility started being visible. The US and Germany were watching the actions in East Berlin with caution. The FRG realized that the Soviets were escalating their actions and Berlin was going towards turbulent times.

FRG committed to building up their military forces, even though the Germans were going through a pre-election period, something which would make things more difficult for the administration to handle budget-wise, but the circumstances demanded immediate action. At the same time, the FRG promised to NATO that it would fulfill all its requirements⁸⁵. The FRG realized that the US was an essential ally for their country's safety and well-being, as they started to see the division of the world and perceive themselves as the mediators in this extreme war.⁸⁶

The final act of the pre-Wall period started on June 4th, 1961. A summit took place in Vienna where the four powers would meet. Kennedy would also meet Khrushchev in a personal encounter in order for the two leaders to exchange views and ideas regarding the Berlin question. Khrushchev had welcomed the new US administration and showed signs of moderation and willingness for cooperation.

However, since the early beginnings of the talks, the Soviet leader showcased a stance of inflexibility. He was eager to see German unification. He demanded a peace treaty that would reunite the Germany under Soviet terms. The Western Allies dismissed these proposals and the summit reached a turmoil. Khrushchev, in a pitch to push for reunification, stated that unless the other Allies agreed to German reunification on Soviet terms, he would sign a unilateral treaty with the GDR, thus violating the post-war agreements on the Berlin status. Western Allies responded with

⁸⁰ 18. Memorandum of conversation. Department of State, Secretary's Memorandum of Conversation: Lot 65 D 330, Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 file.

⁸¹ 26. Position Paper Prepared in the Department of State. Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 66 D 110, CF 1905. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 file.

⁸² 42. Record of meeting of the interdepartmental coordinating group on Berlin contingency planning. Kennedy Library, National security files. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 file.

⁸³ 42. Record of meeting of the interdepartmental coordinating group on Berlin contingency planning. Kennedy Library, National security files. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 file.

⁸⁴ Berlin Contingency Planning: Prelude to Flexible Response, 1958-1963, S.M. Maloney

⁸⁵ 95. Memorandum of conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 396.1-PA/8-561. Secret.

⁸⁶ Vienna and the Wall. Kennedy's First Months, Vienna Summit, the Acheson Plan, and the Berlin Wall, January–August 1961

a complete refusal to accept or tolerate any infringement on Western rights in Germany and Berlin as established in the postwar agreements. The summit ended without any productive outcomes or substantial results. Later on August 7th Khrushchev proceeded to escalate his challenge by issuing a warning that he would make use of nuclear weapons against the West in the case that the United States pushed the USSR to its limits and did not adhere to the unilateral treaty of USSR with the GDR⁸⁷.

For the moment, even though there were some problematic aspects with US-FRG relations and some suspicion from the German side regarding the commitment and determination of the US to stand their ground in Berlin, both states cooperated harmoniously. Kennedy got in touch with both German leaders and they agreed to new measures and strategies while they found common ground on budget and military compensations. At the same time the Germans saw the US as their only hope to survive and keep Berlin free and intact despite Soviet hostilities.

CHAPTER 2: The Wall is a reality

Above all, don't shoot at your fellow countrymen!

Willy Brandt, August 16th, 1961

On August 12th, 1961 the Governor of East Germany Walter Ulbricht issued a new order. He ordered massive restrictions on the East Berliners' movement from East Berlin to the Western section⁸⁸. The citizens who wanted to cross the border were obliged to file for a permit to travel to the West. This permit was designed as a sham, as the regime practically gave instructions for the permits to be turned down by the East German police and administration⁸⁹. On the contrary, West Berliners and Allied personnel could get in and out of East Berlin. As a precaution to handle possible internal uprisings the Soviet army deployed tanks and armored vehicles as well as motorized rifle divisions all over the city⁹⁰. Moreover, the regime on that day announced that 107 border crossing points and checkpoints would shut down, with only 13 remaining in operation. Finally, the GDR administration also decided to erect a wall to seal off East Berlin from the rest of the city.

On the night of the 13th to the 14th of August the East Germany shut down completely all of the roads leading into West Berlin. Even before August 13th, 1961 all the streets that were crossing the border were blocked to vehicular traffic or were under heavy East German surveillance⁹¹. On August 13th East German police with armored vehicles and tanks were deployed alongside the entire Soviet sector's border⁹². During the night a barrier began to appear. The length of it was 26 miles, covering the whole of the East-West Berlin border. In addition, barriers were made from barbed wire and uprooted trees. The train tracks were destroyed and sealed off whilst the roads were torn up and ditches were dug alongside the barrier. Furthermore, East German police evicted the occupants of the houses situated alongside the border. On police orders the doors and the windows facing towards the West were barricaded and sealed. Even the entrance of the famous Church in

⁸⁷ *A brief history of the Berlin Crisis of 1961. Neil Carmichael, (2011)*

⁸⁸ *The Berlin Wall and the battle for legitimacy in divided Germany, Pertti Ahonen, (2011)*

⁸⁹ *Berlin wall: A defiance of human rights, International commission of jurists, Geneva 1962, 29*

⁹⁰ *The US military response to the 1960-1962 Berlin Crisis by Dr Donald A. Carter, 2018*

⁹¹ *The Berlin Wall, CIA Geographic Intelligence memorandum, February 1962*

⁹² *The US military response to the 1960-1962 Berlin Crisis by Dr Donald A. Carter, 2018*

Bernauer Straße facing the border was walled up. This was the church where Berliners from both sides used to meet and attend ceremonies. Moreover, gardens, summer houses and sheds obstructing the construction of the barrier were obliterated⁹³.

On August 15th cement and other materials began to give the barrier the characteristics of a wall. Furthermore, the same day the East German regime proceeded with the application of new measures, this time regarding the West Berliners' right of access into Berlin.

West Berliners were now required to obtain permits for their vehicles before entering into the other side of Berlin. These permits were issued at only two of the thirteen crossing points. The new rules were imposed for West Germans and Berliners, but not the three Western allies. Moreover, the Soviets made a statement that they would obstruct and maybe seal off the traffic between West Berlin and West Germany, in case the West German government would proceed to break the Interzonal Trade agreement. However, that obstruction of traffic would not stand for military travel between the FRG and West Berlin. This was a response to Chancellor Adenauer's statement that Bonn would impose the break the Interzonal trade agreement in case a solution for the Berlin situation cannot be found. Finally, the East Germans prohibited telephone communication between West Germany and East Germany as well as between West Berlin and East Berlin⁹⁴.

Reasons behind the construction of the Wall

The main reason that led to the construction of the Berlin Wall was the GDR's attempt to eliminate or dramatically reduce the refugee flow from East Germany to the West. Up to that point 4 million East Germans had escaped to West⁹⁵. The refugee flow was interrupted abruptly with the erection of the wall, with the GDR being seemingly unable to regulate it by other means. The days before the start of the wall's construction the GDR had used five thousand policemen and members of the communist youth to help with refugee deterrence, but it did not seem to be enough. The GDR has also used propaganda and intense police controls without success. The wall was a pitch of the GDR for survival.⁹⁶ It was a result of the increased and uncontrollable refugee flow with consequences for multiple aspects of the GDR's existence. The refugee flow had created great economic losses and deficits in the GDR whilst damaging the prestige of the Socialist camp, as the East Germans escaping were the demonstration of the failure of the socialist regime in Germany⁹⁷.

Therefore, the Berlin Wall was erected in order to disrupt freedom of movement within the Greater Berlin area. By that measure the USSR took a firmer and a stricter stance, preparing the ground for the signing of a unilateral treaty with the GDR, as had been announced since the Vienna conference⁹⁸. The Soviet Union tried to create a fertile ground for signing a peace treaty with the GDR and progressively push for a free Berlin under that treaty. Moreover, the Wall showed determination and most importantly it was perceived as a show of force and superiority from the Soviets. Khrushchev tried to establish his power in Berlin, but most importantly he wanted to be able to affect and dictate Berlin's fate without any possible response from the US⁹⁹.

⁹³ *Berlin wall: A defiance of human rights, International commission of jurists, Geneva (1962), 31*

⁹⁴ *Berlin Situation Report, CIA, 15 August 1961*

⁹⁵ *A brief history of the Berlin Crisis of 1961 by Neil Carmichael, (2011)*

⁹⁶ *Bitter Measures: Intelligence and action in the Berlin Crisis, 1961, Dr. Donald P. Steury, CIA*

⁹⁷ *The Berlin Wall and the battle for legitimacy in divided Germany, Pertti Ahonen, (2011)*

⁹⁸ *Department of State, Central Files, 862.181/8-1361*

⁹⁹ *Special National Intelligence Estimate submitted by the Director of Central Intelligence, 24 August 1961*

What the Wall symbolized

The Wall was a proof of the difference between the two worlds. It was a demonstration of the GDR's failure to motivate its citizens to stay and live within its limits. The Wall was a symbol of not only the problematic and oppressive environment the GDR had established, but also the fact that the GDR was only able to disrupt refugee flow with the last-resort plan, that is with brutal force violating the human rights of the East Berliners. An example of the extreme violations of human rights was the first reaction of the regime towards people who tried to flee East Berlin the day the construction of the wall started. Many people were shot or captured whilst trying to escape. The GDR was unable to offer a minimal degree of justice, freedom and welfare to its citizens and the use of extended force seemed to be the only viable option.

Furthermore, the Berlin Wall did not only affect East Berliners but the whole of Berlin and all of the Berliners. With the rise of the Wall the Soviets cut it off from the world, dividing Berlin in two different and distinct pieces. That had resulted in the destruction and violation of the Greater Berlin status, as agreed during 1949. Moreover, Berlin transformed from a whole city with different sectors into two different entities with a clear division between them and different political and ideological orientations. Consequently, the Wall not only demonstrated the failure of the Eastern regime to offer rights to its citizens but also the real rights the East Berliners had in reality. The Wall, a symbol of such an illiberal expression, showed that the GDR became an authoritarian regime and did not value its citizens and their lives¹⁰⁰.

After the construction of the Wall the balances both in Berlin and internationally changed. The Cold War passed towards a new phase, a phase of escalation, fear and preparation for the worst. The Berlin Wall was the landmark of this new reality its existence brought into life. Germany was divided for good, but most importantly Berlin became the battleground of the Cold War. Not all Berliners enjoyed the same freedoms anymore. The GDR decided to seal off East Berlin from the rest of the world, not only by destroying the fundamental rights of East Berliners¹⁰¹ but also by destroying the settlements and the status the Allied powers created after the war. Furthermore, the Berlin Wall changed the relations between the two great powers the US and the USSR as well as changing the dynamics of their co-existence in the region. Their actions escalated and the confrontation radicalized through ultimatums, diplomatic channels and standoffs. The wall became a symbol of the division and a true change towards the new Berlin status and a new phase of the Berlin question¹⁰².

What the Wall changed for Germans and the German life

Since the new arrangements of the postwar years Berliners and the Germans realized that their city's and nation's fate was not completely in their hands. They knew that Berlin was running a risk to receive East Berlin and Soviet hostilities and their rights will be compromised by the Soviets, however, in their mind Berlin was still one city.

East Berliners would go shopping and would attend theaters in West Berlin, while relatives and families used to visit each other in both parts of the city. Even though there had been frequent crises in Berlin before, the Wall built on August 13th came as a shock. The Wall disrupted their

¹⁰⁰ *Berlin wall: A defiance of human rights, International commission of jurists, Geneva (1962), 11-12*

¹⁰¹ *Bitter Measures: Intelligence and action in the Berlin Crisis, 1961, Dr. Donald P. Steury, CIA*

¹⁰² 117. *Telegram from the Mission at Berlin to the Department of State*

everyday life, as the Berliners could not change sides nor keep up with their everyday tasks. More importantly, many families and relatives were separated. The Wall tore the city apart. Furthermore, the nature of the transportation changed as well. The Berliners witnessed a real Cold War division, losing a part of their identity¹⁰³.

First reactions to the Wall

Surprisingly, the population stayed relatively calm and sober on both sides. Due to the demonstration of the Soviet force East Berliners were hesitant to act and protest. On the other side, West Berliners were worried. Berliners seem to lose faith in the 'Free World's ability to help them. They saw the Wall as a window for West to withdraw from Berlin. For Berliners the reaction to the Wall was essential for the survival of the city as they knew it.

Moreover, the depression among the population was deepening¹⁰⁴. During his first communications with US administration mayor Brandt expressed the fear of desperate actions on the part of the population, warning that during night hours large numbers of people might assemble on both sides of the sector boundary. He was right to feel insecure regarding the people's temper. During the day more than three thousand people gathered in front of the Brandenburg Gate, shooting at and insulting the East German police whilst throwing stones and bottles. West German police made considerable efforts to disperse them¹⁰⁵. After that notice West Berliners were advised to stay calm and continue their everyday life and avoid getting entangled in dangerous actions.

Mayor Brandt, in a hot temper, talked to the Allied command of Berlin on August 13th after the imposing of the restrictions announced by the GDR regime, asking for radical direct diplomatic response for the sake of preserving the Four-Power agreement of 1949¹⁰⁶. He called for strong US protests and vigorous steps that would drive the Soviets to retract their actions and restore freedom of movement within East Berlin¹⁰⁷.

On August 14th, 1961 the German minister of foreign affairs met with the US ambassador to Germany as well as the British and French ambassadors. The minister believed that the Berlin travel restrictions were the start of an orchestrated Soviet plan to prepare the ground for new Berlin agreements and an application of the 'free city' doctrine. Even though the Allied forces had different ideas regarding the motives behind the Wall's construction, they agreed to take two immediate steps regardless. The first step would be a written protest by the Berlin command which would be followed by memorandums to Moscow. The second step they agreed on was a wide and strict ban on East German travel¹⁰⁸. Furthermore, the Washington sent protests regarding the Wall in addition to the protest commandants had already sent. These three actions were the first basic retaliatory measures the US decided alongside the UK and France. The US further examines undertaking measures such as cutting off cultural exchanges or breaking off the US-Soviet air agreement. The

¹⁰³ *Berlin wall: A defiance of human rights, International commission of jurists, Geneva (1962), 33*

¹⁰⁴ *The President's Intelligence checklist, CIA archive, 16-17 August 1961*

¹⁰⁵ *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall: A hell of a lot better than a war. Author: Smyser W. R., (1999), 108*

¹⁰⁶ *105. Telegram from the Mission at Berlin to the Department of State, August 13, 1961. Department of State, Central Files, 862.181/8-1361. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File*

¹⁰⁷ *Crisis over Berlin, American policy concerning the Soviet threats to Berlin, November 1958 - December 1962, Part VI, 89*

¹⁰⁸ *106. Telegram from the Embassy in Germany to the Department of State. Bonn, August 14, 1961. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/8-1461. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File*

exploitation of propaganda was determined as one of the most important steps¹⁰⁹.

However, Berliners started feeling betrayed by the powers which protected Berlin. In the past even the Commandants used to protest firmly against People's army parades, but now that an occupation took place and the vast majority of the crossing points were sealed, they did not respond with any radical response, something which caused displeasure among West Berliners.

During the same time right after the construction of the Wall there were immediate reactions from West Germans and the West German troops. During the construction of the first barrier with barbed wire politicians in West Berlin asked the military Allied commanders to remove the wire by force. Simultaneously, German army officers came up with a plan to take down the wires and the barricades with bulldozers. This initial German reaction was in contradiction to the claim contained in Schick's book where he asserts that the FRG administration remained silent during the Wall's construction¹¹⁰. The US forces represented by troop commander General Frederick O. Hartel dismissed these ideas and plans, something which provoked displeasure among the troops and mostly among the West Berlin population and politicians. The Americans explained that the proposed plan was not acceptable due to the fact that the Wall was being constructed around a meter within the Soviet sector, therefore in order for West Berlin troops to take down the wires they would have to cross into the Soviet-controlled space, something which would make them de facto aggressors.

Even though the Americans had indications that the GDR might resort to extreme solutions in order to disrupt the refugee flow, surprisingly they seemed to be unprepared for the occasion and they did not have the capabilities to answer efficiently and rapidly. Even though they filed a protest immediately and responded diplomatically with great speed, this was not enough as a Berlin contingency plan was supposed to be more radical. Their response was more of a typical diplomatic response rather than an essential response that made an impact¹¹¹. The US showed a minimized and a truly uninspiring response to the events, something non anticipated and not well received by the West Berlin society. West Berliners complained and criticized the US response as non-efficient one lacking strategic capabilities, asking for a firmer stance.

The American mission in Berlin warned the US State Department about the feelings West Berliners were developing towards the US due to its anemic response. The Berlin mission urged the US government to take a stance and make more decisive moves or they risk getting on the verge of losing their foothold in Berlin as well as the local people's support while the spirit in the city seemed to be plummeting¹¹²¹¹³. Moreover, mayor Brandt was disheartened after his meeting with the Berlin Commandants. They dismissed all his proposals and he felt that the Western Allies had abandoned Berlin¹¹⁴. Also, Brandt's right-hand man Egon Bahr had a fallout with the US mission in Berlin when he learned that the US knew about an upcoming Soviet radical action and had not developed a contingency plan, something which made the two sides' relations even worse.

¹⁰⁹ 107. Telegram. Document of State, Central Files. Department of State, Central Files, 762.0221/8-1461. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 file.

¹¹⁰ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, 1971, 166

¹¹¹ *The US military response to the 1960-1962 Berlin Crisis by Dr Donald A. Carter. The U.S. Army center of military history*

¹¹² *The US military response to the 1960-1962 Berlin Crisis by Dr Donald A. Carter. The U.S. Army center of military history*

¹¹³ 111. *Minutes of Meeting of the Berlin Steering Group. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Berlin, Steering Group. Secret. Berlin Crisis File 1961- 1962*

¹¹⁴ *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall: A hell of a lot better than a war. Author: Smyser W. R, 2009, 108*

At the same time there was a rivalry between West Germany and Berlin. Adenauer was irritated about the fact that Brandt made the headlines on the topic of the Berlin Wall crisis whilst Adenauer did not have the chance to become the symbol of the Berlin's protection, in light of the German elections approaching.

Why US had a weak initial response

Possible explanations regarding US' stance could be found in multiple aspects of the complex Berlin question. A considerable reason was the avoidance of escalation. The only outcome of a demonstration of force from the US would be countermeasures from the Soviets, something which would escalate into a war – a war where both sides could most likely not avoid the use of nuclear weapons. In addition, the Americans believed that the Wall did not cause any infringement on the rights of the Western forces and was not worthy of a strong response. Moreover, it seemed that the US administration did not share the concerns of the FRG regarding Berlin and the Soviet claims¹¹⁵. As Kennedy said when he was informed about the incident, why would Khrushchev build a Wall if he wanted to occupy the whole city. Kennedy believed that the Soviets just wanted to consolidate their ground and would not make further claims¹¹⁶.

On the contrary, the Germans were the supporters of a high-intensity response. They believed that an initiation of contingency planning was an unavoidable scenario and they wanted to be as ready as they could possibly be. This German proposition caused problems to the US' strategic planning and diplomatic maneuvers.

The US' main response to the Wall

On August 15th the Steering Group Committee alongside high-ranking US administration officials and the CIA deputy head had a meeting to discuss the Berlin situation and their stance regarding a response to Soviet actions.

They examined the already executed or proposed ideas which they believed were pale and weak. Their estimation was that their initial reactions truly did not bring about any great results, therefore they started shifting their thinking towards a more forceful response. The US seemed reluctant to escalate their response towards the Wall, as they believed that the Soviets had a certain motive that was dictating their policy and action planning. The Soviet motives were the interruption of the refugee flow and consequently the survival of the GDR as well as the peace treaty Soviets wanted to endorse. The Americans acknowledged that a US response - whether firm or not - would not affect the situation with the Soviets greatly as it would only build a foundation for future events and talks. However, the US' response needed to be firm for the most important reason - they needed to demonstrate their force to Berlin, their support towards the city and the Berliners, and most importantly to demonstrate decisiveness not to back down in the face of Soviet challenges.

The next step the US needed to undertake was a military response. They started examining the idea of reinforcements of Berlin garrisons¹¹⁷. At the same time the Secretary of Defense McNamara started investigating the possibility of troops' redeployment with the help of the

¹¹⁵ *Berlin strategy, Kennedy inherits the crisis*, 73

¹¹⁶ *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall: A hell of a lot better than a war*. Author: Smyser W, (2009), 106

¹¹⁷ 111. *Minutes of Meeting of the Berlin Steering Group*. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Berlin, Steering Group. Secret. Berlin Crisis File 1961- 1962

Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and the possibility to put them close to the Brandenburg Gate. However, that was a high-risk scenario because it could lead to the GDR's extensive actions as countermeasures¹¹⁸.

A decisive factor towards the American response proved to be a letter from Willy Brandt sent on August 16th, 1961 to president Kennedy. Brandt expressed the disappointment of West Berliners by the pale US reaction, saying that doubts were rising regarding the Allies' and most importantly the US' determination to react and protect Berlin. Brandt stipulates in his letter that inactivity on the part of the Allies would create a great crisis of confidence in Western powers, and secondly that the inactivity and the ill defense would help the Soviets develop an exaggerated self-confidence regarding the effectiveness of their force and the success of the GDR regime, something which would drive them towards seeking more provocative actions in the future.

He also believed that the Wall was not only a matter of control of the refugees' flow, but also the first step of a Soviet masterplan. He believed that after the Wall a second step would take place. He claimed the Soviets wanted to make Berlin non-functional and bring the West Berlin section of the city to the verge of collapse. West Germans believed the construction of the Berlin Wall was more complicated than the Americans thought, as Adenauer would also demonstrate later during a talk he had with President Kennedy¹¹⁹.

Brandt deplored the US for a military demonstration and build-up because he believed that it was critical for the US to demonstrate that the West alliance would not tolerate any infringement upon Western rights¹²⁰. Brandt's letter was not received well by Kennedy who believed the German mayor crossed the limits of his position. This was another blow to the bilateral relations, as the Americans believed the Germans were becoming ungrateful due to the Wall situation and they had exaggerated reactions and demands as well as wrong estimations.

After days of consultations and meetings Kennedy proceeded with the idea of the military build-up as a response. President Kennedy decided for the reinforcement of the US military forces stationed in Berlin. He decided to send a battle group of 1500-1800 men into Berlin¹²¹. Moreover, he urged the matter that the Allies should contribute as well with some garrisons. He believed a number of 2500 men was achievable and would serve as a good demonstration of military unity and action. Based on the recommendations made by Secretary McNamara, on August 17th the Secretary of the Army Elives J. Stahr Jr. prolonged the service of almost fifty thousand enlisted men whose military service time was scheduled to finish between October 1961 and June 1962. Moreover, he called for the activation of 113 reserve units, totaling more than 23,000 men¹²². Finally, a new official protest by the heads of government of the three Western powers that had Berlin rights was decided. Kennedy demanded preparedness to seize civilian key points to West Berlin in order to counter any of the Bloc's actions¹²³.

¹¹⁸ 116. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara. Department of State, Rusk Files: Lot 72 D 192, Telephone Conversations. Berlin Crisis File 1961-1962

¹¹⁹ 216. Memorandum of conversation. Meeting between President Kennedy and Chancellor Adenauer. Washington, November 20, 1961. Departments of State, conference files: Lot 65D 366, C7 1994. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹²⁰ 117. Telegram from the Mission at Berlin to the Department of State. Berlin Crisis File 1961- 1962

¹²¹ Tanks at Checkpoint Charlie: Lucius Clay and the Berlin Crisis, 1961-62. Article by Ingo Wolfgang Tauschweizer

¹²² 118. Record of Meeting of the Berlin Steering Group. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Berlin, Steering Group. Secret. Berlin Crisis File 1961- 1962

¹²³ 118. Record of Meeting. Kennedy library, National Security files, Germany. Berlin Crisis 1961-1961 File.

Despite the new military actions and the further responses, Berlin's morale and trust towards the US ally did not seem to improve significantly. Berliners were still not feeling safe and believed that US should have taken a firmer and stricter stand. The US' reaction to the Berlin Wall damaged its foothold in Berlin and its image among Berliners, but most importantly it created tensions in its relations with the FRG due to the FRG's expectations regarding the US' determination and action planning. The Berliners believe they were abandoned by the US and they criticized the Americans for their failure to respond immediately and effectively to the East's actions.

German concerns would be reinforced by Soviet actions some days later. On August 23rd the GDR regime announced that West Berliners would need visas, in order to enter East Berlin. Consequently, the GDR proceeded by attempting to open two offices in West Berlin whose responsibility would be to issue these visas. However, that did not work out, as mayor Brandt vetoed that action in order to avoid the GDR establishing an official presence in Berlin.

After that incident West Berliners could not enter East Berlin unless they had a special permission. Through the visa requirement Ulbricht tried to find an excuse to set up official branches of the GDR in West Berlin. That was a step towards an official division the GDR wanted to achieve. He wanted to have a branch in West Berlin to showcase that West Berlin was a different entity. Brandt of course did not allow that to materialize. On the same day East German police warned citizens from each side not to approach the barrier at a distance smaller than 100 meters, while on August 30th Khrushchev announced the continuation of a nuclear weapons test. He wanted to extract a reaction from the West towards a settlement for Berlin through fear as he did not manage to create that ground via the construction of the Wall.

Tensions in the US-FRG Relations

There was growing mistrust between FRG and US. The FRG was disappointed by the US' lack of radical response and they also complained intensively about the lack of US military presence in Berlin. Despite the intense FRG objections, the US could however not force a significant change in this present situation and if they pushed the matter the only direct solution was war, something they were not in favor of.

The president believed that West Berliners should become the symbol of freedom and West's representation¹²⁴. In order to control the damage more and regulate the feeling of displeasure among Berliners Kennedy proceeded to more new military actions. For Kennedy the preservation of the US' image in Berlin and the strengthening of it was crucial for US' position and influence in the area. Therefore, in addition to the previous military actions, he made another commitment towards the US' determination in Berlin. He commanded the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Lyman L. Lemnitzer to dispatch a reinforced battle group to Berlin in order to unite with the Berlin garrisons.

Additionally, the US responded to the restrictions of entrance from the East Germans imposed on West as well as the 100 meters' distance from the barrier notice. On August 23rd the commanders of the three Allied garrisons in Berlin, in a demonstration of their freedom of action, placed their troops on alert and established checkpoints near the border-crossing sites, creating a no man's land, commanding extensive patrols along the length of the Wall and the newly constructed crossing points. Two American tanks guarded the Friedrichstrasse crossing point while British and

¹²⁴ 120. Letter from President Kennedy to governing mayor Brandt, August 18, 1961. Kennedy library, National security files, Germany, Berlin. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

French troops were positioned alongside the barrier. The command was running on three patrols along the Wall each day while a mobile reserve rifle platoon mounted the armored carriers. Gradually, the patrols and the forces minimized until September 26th when they gave control over patrolling back to the West German police and the troops returned to their barracks.¹²⁵

Kennedy's actions regarding the US-German Relations

Kennedy realized that US-German relations were beginning to experience some great tensions and problems. The most important problem they faced was the lack of trust in the US on the side of the Germans. Therefore, Kennedy made another move that would improve the problematic situation between the two nations and the position of the US in Berlin. He decided on August 17th that Vice President Johnson and General Clay would depart for Bonn and Berlin.

On August 19th Lyndon Johnson arrives in Berlin. The Vice President was received in an atmosphere of tremendous popular enthusiasm and emotion. During Lyndon Johnson's visit to Germany on August 19th-20th 1961 the Vice President had a thorough talk with the FRG's administration as well as with Willy Brandt. The main reason for Johnson's visit was the increasing spirit of mistrust that started to surge among the ranks of the German political life. Johnson gave a firm response to Brandt regarding his criticism of President Kennedy and his administration's commitment to Berlin. The Vice President reminded Brandt that the US were making great sacrifices for Germany and they were prepared to do more as long as there was the necessary cooperation with the Allies. Johnson believed that the presidential actions have been enough so far, something also became obvious by Johnson's and Clay's visit to Germany on Kennedy's recommendation. Johnson committed that the US would support Berlin and Germany with all their power and resources, speaking of determination to not back down from the West's frontier.

The Vice President's visit had a great impact on US-German relations. It declared a change of US' stance towards a more strict and a decisive posture regarding Germany's actions and rhetoric. Moreover, he persuaded Brandt to show more determination and to inspire Berliners to demonstrate willingness to do more¹²⁶.

However, during Johnson's visit Adenauer and Kennedy had a fallout and their relations experienced great tensions again. When Johnson arrived in Berlin Adenauer wanted to join him as symbolic gesture to show that Berlin was of West Germany's interest, but Johnson refused. Adenauer believed the reason behind Johnson's refusal was the fact that Kennedy did not want to offend Khrushchev. Adenauer took that incident quite personally, something which the Chancellor would never get over completely.¹²⁷ It is also known that both leaders did not have the best relationship, even before Kennedy started his mandate. In 1957 Kennedy declared that Adenauer belonged to the past and that Germany needed to change government. He believed he had more common ground with Brandt who was a younger politician in comparison to Adenauer. Moreover, Adenauer had supported Nixon in the US election of 1960. The Chancellor regarded Kennedy's victory as frightening and he did not trust him, as he believed Kennedy still had a lot to learn before taking over the presidential mandate¹²⁸.

¹²⁵ 119. *Message from the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (Norstad) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.*

Eisenhower Library, Norstad Papers, Policy File, Berlin-Live Oak. Top Secret. Berlin Crisis File 1961-1962

¹²⁶ 121. *Report by Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson on his visit to Germany, August 19-20, 1961. Johnson library, Vice presidential security files, VP travel, Berlin. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.*

¹²⁷ *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall: A hell of a lot better than a war. Author: Smyser W. R., (2009), 106*

¹²⁸ *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall: A hell of a lot better than a war. Author: Smyser W. R., (2009), 50*

West Berlin's morale seemed to improve with the new US measures, but the Wall greatly damaged US-FRG relations. Even though Kennedy and Brandt seemed to have found a formula of cooperation for the time being after the great clash they had, the Adenauer-Kennedy relations were still in great tension. Following the new visa requirements and the nuclear test declaration, two weeks after the Wall on August 30th Adenauer - whose trust in the US was already at a low level - stirred new tensions regarding the US' reaction to the Wall.

The Berlin Wall was something the FRG could not accept and the US was on the receiving end of the reaction of the FRG's administration. Adenauer, who had lost a great part of his trust to Kennedy, accused the US of apathy regarding Soviet actions in Berlin and the Wall. It was a matter that the FRG would bring to the table every chance they would get from now on. The German leader said that West Berliners were disheartened by the US' actions. He also expressed worries regarding the US-Soviet talks while asking for more countermeasures on a diplomatic level mainly. Kennedy was quite negative about that approach.

Kennedy dismissed all the accusation made by the German government and showed his disappointment in the FRG's attitude towards their co-operation. The US administration seemed to get tired of the FRG's stance. They have declared their firm position and commitment not only to Berlin but to the whole of Germany and Western Europe. The US considered Berlin to be of utmost importance and a vital post against the Soviet threat. They believed that by preserving Berlin and Germany they would preserve the existence of the whole of the Western alliance. They equated Europe's and America's well-being with the preservation of Berlin. However, Adenauer and Brandt seemed not to believe their allies. The US were in a position where they risked their national and financial integrity and they received constant criticism in return. This would eventually, as will be demonstrated later, lead to serious turbulences between the two states' relationships when radicalism and tiredness would take over.

Adenauer called for great countermeasures in the face of Soviet hostility. He also complained about the preservation of Interzonal Trade despite the East German actions. The FRG was calling for retaliatory measures on equal footing with the East German hostilities. Adenauer seemed to want to push the situation towards a full-scale conflict, disrupting the US' strategic thinking on the matter. Kennedy again opposed these proposals. He started by stating that the countermeasures the US took, mostly due to Brandt's remarks, did not help sufficiently and the continuation of such a strategy could only lead to mistakes and problematic situations. This portrayal of Adenauer's actions and thinking contradicts the claims Williamson made in his book where he instead states that Adenauer was cooperative and stood by the side of US without creating problems or objections during the post-Wall period.¹²⁹

However, Adenauer stated that due to their underwhelming reaction to the Wall the US gave the Soviets the impression that the Americans were ready for a settlement in Berlin. This was an allegation which Kennedy again denied. This stands in opposition to Schick's claim where he presents the US administration as ready to settle and accept the existence of two Germanies¹³⁰. The president explained that this was a misinterpretation and declared that the FRG needed to show some faith in the US. Kennedy estimated that the Soviets were weak, and they just wanted to secure their position. His main interest was to persuade and urge Adenauer that their countries should try to maintain their bilateral solidarity. The president needed to keep the balance in their bilateral

¹²⁹ *First Steps Toward Détente: American Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1963*, Richard D. Williamson, 2012, pp. 133

¹³⁰ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962*, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 173

relations since Adenauer did not seem to aim in the same direction. He gave assurances and guarantees that the US were completely dedicated to Berlin and the American nation was prepared to do whatever necessary to maintain Berlin's integrity. The West and NATO were in a fragile condition at that moment as they were going through turbulent times, and the two nations needed to show reciprocal solidarity and unobscured cooperation¹³¹.

End of the first shock

Kennedy committed that he would send General Lucius Clay as his personal representative in the role of the American ambassador to Berlin in order to regulate US policies' implications and maintain Berlin's morale and confidence in the American. Moreover, Clay's presence there would help persuade the Soviet leaders to enter serious talks regarding Berlin. At first, Kennedy's idea was to appoint Clay as the US military commander in the city, however he dropped the idea because it would disrupt the command chain and the relationships in Berlin. Eventually, he appointed him as the President's Special Representative in Berlin with the rank of an Ambassador. Kennedy told Clay that he would be the senior American official in Berlin and he would be able to communicate directly with him and the Secretary of State. Clay's main task would require him to act as a mediator between the US and the leaders of Berlin and help to the implementation of US policy in Berlin.

The construction of the Berlin Wall prompted many changes in the European Cold War theater and shifts in the balance of power and rights as well as in the climate of the Cold War. The Berlin Wall sparked new tensions regarding Berlin, as the US-Soviet talks restarted from a new base and tried to find an agreement regarding the future of Berlin. These talks, however, would not be easy for the US, not only because they would create problems for US foreign policy in countering the Soviet threat, but most importantly they would again create tensions between the US and the FRG.

The two allied nations would hold different opinions regarding the Berlin matter and confrontation about the new situation would ensue, while the US' initial reaction to the Berlin Wall would become a trigger point for further turbulence between the two states at any given moment from the side of the FRG. Moreover, Soviet hostilities and the tensions in Berlin would not ease soon, as new reactions would lead to the Tanks Standoff at Checkpoint Charlie. The Wall had created a confrontation that changed the Cold War and mainly the Berlin situation and reality.

CHAPTER 3: The West experiences the Wall's consequences

I take pride in the words "Ich bin ein Berliner."

President John F. Kennedy - June 26, 1963

The changes the construction of the Wall brought about created more changes and new events, which had an impact mostly on the West German mentality and the US' policy planning. These changes affected their bilateral relations deeply. The construction of the Wall, as previously mentioned, escalated and fundamentally affected the Berlin Crisis and the whole of the Cold War. The Berlin Wall gave birth to a series of chain events and incidents whilst creating new tensions.

¹³¹ 139. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Germany, September 4, 1961. Department of State, Presidential Correspondence: Lot 66 D 204. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

After the initiation of the new talks West Germany, which was still hurt from the way the US handled the post-Wall days and the way they reacted, acted with susceptibility toward US moves, actions and diplomatic statements, something which disrupted its cooperation with its greatest ally. On the other hand, the US changed the character of their Berlin presence. As the confrontation intensified and fear took over the FRG contradicted the new diplomatic policies the US tried to implement. At the same time, Adenauer changed his behavior and became more radical regarding his opposition to the US' policy.

How the Wall affected the post-Wall US-USSR TALKS

After the construction of the Wall the US started to invest in Germany even more, putting aside the problems and the budgetary issues the Berlin question involved for the US. On the other side, the Soviets were escalating their actions and claims while a change in their confidence became obvious. The pale US reaction to the Wall gave them the impression that they could configure post-Wall Berlin and Germany according to their interests.

The Wall brought the aspect of determination to the table. Both forces had the need to demonstrate their power and the magnitude of their presence in Berlin. The hostilities and the unilateral actions from the side of the Soviets led a reaction by the US. This reaction was met with radical thinking on behalf of the Soviets as they tried to create the circumstances of tension that would lead the US to back down eventually. In addition, the GDR alongside the Soviets used the Wall to disrupt life in West Berlin and intimidate the West.

However, on the diplomatic and the official levels the Wall affected more than the mentioned matters. The Wall was a direct violation of the Soviet government's commitment to the economic and political unity of Germany as well as of the commitment the USSR made to cooperate with the Allied governments to reduce the effects the administrative division created in Germany and Berlin. All these agreements evaporated through the unilateral action of the Wall's construction. These were agreements regarding the free movement of persons and goods as well as information. Furthermore, the Soviet Union violated the status of Greater Berlin as it was agreed in 1949 and showed that they saw authoritarianism and absolutism as the solution to the functioning of the German state¹³².

All these aspects of the Berlin Wall and the effects they have would reflect in the US-Soviet talks and subsequently also in US-FRG relations. The FRG changed their way of perceiving the Berlin matters, after the Wall incident and would have many objections during the US-Soviet talks to come.

Soviet mentality after the Wall

Even after the Wall and the complications that it created in the Berlin question, Khrushchev was still open to talks and a possible agreement with the US. Despite that, the Soviet Union was prepared to answer any possible retaliatory measure, even if that meant to respond in equal measure to a nuclear attack.

Despite his threats regarding the signing of a unilateral treaty, Khrushchev believed that a settlement for Berlin would be better for both countries¹³³. The problem then was that he did not

¹³² *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961, 568-569.*

¹³³ 162. *Letter from Chairman Khrushchev to President Kennedy. Department of State, Presidential Correspondence: Lot 77 D 163.*

want an agreement like the proposed agreements in 1959. He wanted a settlement in Berlin that helped the Soviet cause. He wanted to endorse the solution of Soviet-controlled Berlin. Khrushchev believed that West Berlin should become 'free' while the East part would preserve its status as a capital of the GDR. Even with the new established status of 'freedom' West Berlin would be able to enjoy ties with the West, with these ties being different to the present ones. Moreover, Berlin would be allowed to preserve its social and economic system. At the same time, the presence of troops of the three Allied powers would be possible alongside the presence of Soviet troops. The Soviet Union wanted to close the Berlin question fast, but only under its own rules¹³⁴.

However, Khrushchev was prepared to proceed with an escalation of the situation in case the talks did not prove to be a fertile ground for his ideas. In the case of the talks reaching a turmoil, he would soon endorse unilateral action of signing a peace treaty with the GDR. After the Wall it seemed that a unilateral peace treaty from the side of the Soviets with the GDR would complete the division of the Germany and consequently would turn Berlin into two different entities, with the schism becoming absolute and irreversible, making the possibility of a German reunification lose ground.

The US intelligence believed that the Soviets would probably resort to intimidating and blackmailing moves, such as completely and unconditionally closing off ground and air access to Berlin. In a climate of uncertainty the US was preparing for the worst outcome of the Berlin talks as well as probable intimidations from the side of the Soviets.¹³⁵

The Wall created an image of a completely authoritarian and absolutist Soviet Union, something that undermined the Soviet negotiating position and impact. In his attempt to create a foothold in the talks with the US Khrushchev tried to bring the factor of fear into the conversation. He believed that a demonstration of power and a willingness to not back down from any claim would help him achieve the necessary leverage with the Western powers. The USSR and the Warsaw Pact countries continued their nuclear weapons tests, a measure aimed at the disorientation and a demonstration of the regime's power rather than a concrete political statement on behalf of Khrushchev regarding Berlin situation¹³⁶. Moreover, the Soviet Union started harassments on a diplomatic level by stating that Western civilian airlines did not have the right of using Berlin's airspace as configured in the GDR and the Soviet talks during 1955.¹³⁷ That showed the rhetoric as well as the intimidation the Soviets tried to foster, which would bring terror and panic to the FRG.

US' intentions and contingency planning regarding the Soviet diplomatic maneuvers

The American administration as well as the Allies were facing the challenge of re-entering into talks with the Soviet Union under new circumstances. Moreover, they had to address some new problems. The Allied as well as the NATO assessments found the US' response to the construction of the wall inadequate on every level and the military force demonstration insufficient to make a meaningful impact on future talks and negotiations. Moreover, the US showed weakness by not imposing concrete and impactful retaliatory measures politically.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ *Public and private comments by Khrushchev on US replies to the Vienna AIDE-MEMOIRE, CIA Archive, August 24, 1961.*

¹³⁵ *Memorandum for members of USIB. General assessment of Soviet plans and policies related to the German situation. CIA Archive, September 29, 1961.*

¹³⁶ *Public and private comments by Khrushchev on US replies to the Vienna AIDE-MEMOIRE, CIA Archive, August 24, 1961.*

¹³⁷ *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary, CIA Archive, August 31, 1961.*

¹³⁸ *134. Editorial Note. State Department Archive, Office of the historian. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File*

The new talks would not only include political and diplomatic maneuvers but military ones as well. Both sides were preparing for the engagement in order to be able to face and respond firmly to every challenge they would create for one another. Military actions in Berlin and demonstrations of determination were interlinked with the diplomatic talks and the German mentality regarding these new negotiations. The Americans were not willing to make the same mistake and they were prepared for a firmer response in case of provocations.

The US started by declaring to the Soviet government that they would not back down from Berlin. Kennedy was adopting a more concrete stance regarding US presence in Berlin. The US declared that it would respond and undertake any action that would violate US and German rights to Berlin¹³⁹. Furthermore, they tried to persuade the Soviet government to adopt a more responsible stance towards Berlin in order to avoid the signing of a unilateral USSR-GDR treaty. Apart from their motives the US had to show determination, as the new US declarations were also provoked by another Soviet hostility.

On August 30th at the Friedrichstrasse crossing point the East German police detained a US military vehicle in East Berlin. The US army sent five mechanized infantry squads to the site, something which resulted in the release of the US vehicle. After the incident the US established a permanent army detachment and created the Checkpoint Charlie while the US army was used to help West Germans with border patrols¹⁴⁰. The West Berlin police was on the US' army side, now equipped with more powerful weapons than the ones before the Wall in order to be ready to respond to the East's challenges and threats¹⁴¹.

The new chapter of the Berlin Crisis and the post-Wall reality started with the arrival of General Clay to Berlin as the official President's representative there. President Kennedy put him in charge of the important duty of maintaining the American image and determination in Berlin. The new US movements and the firmer stance towards Soviet intimidations were intended to demonstrate US firmness regarding their support to Berlin and the FRG as well as to persuade the Soviets that the intimidation and hostilities from their side would only lead to a war and not to a US retreat. Moreover, Kennedy committed to an army build-up. He decided to send more troops to Berlin which would arrive approximately in October. He commanded the preparation and movement of two units, an infantry unit and an armored division with supporting forces¹⁴².

On September 12th the US administration reached a conclusion regarding the next steps they should follow regarding the talks with the Soviets. So far, the Soviets have only presented 'take it or leave it' proposals while hostilities from their side continued to take place. They were not willing to negotiate different terms to the 'free city' status of Berlin than the ones they had already set. The US decided to start the talks and maintain constant contact with the Soviets through diplomatic channels. Kennedy had decided a month ago that he would take the burden of the talks, leaving little space for the other Allies to dictate the course of the talks. The Americans tried to understand the Soviet position while keeping them away from the idea of the unilateral treaty.¹⁴³¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ 136. *Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/8-3161. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.*

¹⁴⁰ *The U.S. Military response to the 1960-1962 Berlin Crisis, by Dr. Donald A. Carter, 2018*

¹⁴¹ *Weekly chronology of reports concerning the Berlin situation, received during week of 10 Oct - 16 Oct. October 16, 1961. CIA Archive.*

¹⁴² 154. *Memorandum for the Record. National Defense University, Taylor Papers, Box 35, 6B NATO.*

¹⁴³ 176. *Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Germany. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Germany. Secret; Priority.*

¹⁴⁴ *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962 by Elisabeth Barker, (1963), 59-73*

However, the approach of the Soviets was not the only problem the Americans had. An important step the Americans need to figure out was how they would get Chancellor Adenauer on their side to push for the re-opening of US-Soviet talks.¹⁴⁵

After the conflict they had due to the US reaction to the Wall Adenauer's approach became more difficult. They need to persuade him and take get him on their side, a task which Kennedy did not find easy. Despite Schick's book's claim where Adenauer seems to demonstrate willingness towards the new talks, in reality he did not believe in the diplomatic approach as much as in the military and the economic one.¹⁴⁶¹⁴⁷ Schick made a wrong estimation, as Adenauer opposed the new talks greatly and did not concede to a diplomatic solution. Moreover, Adenauer has demanded repeatedly to be part of US policy planning regarding Berlin, something which made Kennedy's work harder. Kennedy was not willing to cooperate closely with Adenauer when it came to American policy planning regarding Berlin, as they did not get along great and Adenauer had a vastly different point of view.¹⁴⁸

Kennedy believed it was a critical aspect of the negotiations to have Adenauer on his side, something which was not easy to achieve after the Berlin Wall¹⁴⁹. The Americans were trying to minimize the damage caused to their foothold in Germany after their disastrous reaction to the Wall.

It was not only the fact that Adenauer believed the US had betrayed West Germany and did not act in a manner appropriate to the circumstances. The construction of the Wall also had great consequences to Adenauer's image in Germany. The consequences became obvious with the German elections on September 17th when Adenauer narrowly avoided defeat and he was forced to form a coalition government. This was another blow for Adenauer that made his mentality towards the US even more skeptical, as he held them responsible for the result.¹⁵⁰

Kennedy wanted to introduce Berlin steadily into the talks as a protected land of the FRG. He wanted to establish official recognized ties between the FRG and Berlin, something which would downsize Soviet claims and plans for the 'free' Berlin doctrine they pushed through. For that maneuver through, Adenauer was indispensable as he was prepared and capable to avert any Soviet claims regarding the legal separation of West Berlin from West Germany.¹⁵¹

Kennedy tried to endorse a change of plan regarding the US-Soviet talks as well, since the Wall changed the circumstances. He did not believe that a remark regarding the re-unification of Germany was of any importance at that moment, since the Soviets would have none of it. Kennedy tried to make a realistic planning for diplomatic moves. However, the fact was that US thinking about German reunification encountered great opposition and complaints within the FRG and the Berlin's social and political circles.

The Kennedy thinking had one more supporter - the US ambassador to Yugoslavia Keenan who was in constant communication with Soviet politicians and believed that bringing the matter of

¹⁴⁵ 147. Memorandum from President Kennedy to Secretary of State Rusk. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies, Department of State, General. Top Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹⁴⁶ 121. Report by Vice President Johnson, Johnson Library, Vice Presidential Security Files, VP Travel, Berlin. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹⁴⁷ The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962, Jack M. Schick, (1971), 173

¹⁴⁸ 130. Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/8-2661. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹⁴⁹ 145. Telegram from the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/9-961. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹⁵⁰ 188. Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 762A.00/10-2561. Secret; Eyes Only.

¹⁵¹ 145. Telegram from the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/9-961. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

German reunification into the talks was now pointless. He believed that the Soviets would resort to war in case the US demonstrated such an unrealistic and an inflexible stance¹⁵². Keenan's thinking and its application would however bring disarray and nervousness to the FRG and consequently would create one more conflict between the US and the FRG.

Germans were hesitant towards new negotiations and did not propose a clear plan nor have they declared their limits and red lines regarding the talks. However, they opposed greatly the US opinion about incorporating the matter of German reunification into the talks. The Germans believed that the US was betraying them by proposing something like that. This new conflict was another reason that made it crucial for the Americans to get Adenauer onto their side. Even though the US supported German reunification, due to the circumstances and mostly due to the Wall it could not guarantee nor make statements regarding that matter, as it was too far away from current reality.

Kennedy believed that it was vital for the US to demonstrate support to Germany and Berlin to ease the tensions and gain some German trust, a trust important for him and the outcome of the talks. He wanted to strengthen the position of West Berlin within the current framework of division caused by the Wall that seemed to intimidate West Berlin. Moreover, he wanted to establish a clearly recognized system of access without problems and mainly without harassments. For that reason, alongside its strategy regarding the negotiations the US also prepared a new Berlin contingency plan as well as a strategy of maintaining and pointing out US rights in Berlin without allowing for any infringement. This was vital for West Berlin's confidence in the US¹⁵³. In contrast to the opinion the current historiography presents so far, Kennedy was willing to proceed only towards a Berlin settlement that would favor the US and Germany. He completely dismissed any recognition of the GDR or any concessions regarding the fundamental rights to Berlin.

Regarding the negotiations, the three fundamental rights the US had was Western presence in Berlin, the freedom and viability of West Berlin and access freedom¹⁵⁴. However, within the US administration there were second thoughts regarding the negotiations and the common ground they could find with the Soviets. They believed that it was problematic to proceed to talks while Soviets were causing disruptions to air traffic. During the first talks, harassments of passenger planes flying above the GDR were undertaken by fighter aircraft. The US tried to persuade the USSR that intimidation would not help with the talks and the US would not back down nor would be blackmailed by force demonstrations¹⁵⁵. Moreover, it was impossible for the US to accept the presence of Soviet troops in West Berlin. The US was open to a peace conference that would lead to an internationally recognized end of the war, as long as there was an understanding from the other side, one that the Soviet Union had so far not demonstrated¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵² 158. *Letter from the Ambassador to Yugoslavia (Keenan) to the Under Secretary of State (Bowles). Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/9-2261. Confidential. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.*

¹⁵³ 172. *Letter from President Kennedy to His Special Representative in Berlin (Clay). Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Berlin, General Clay. Top Secret.*

¹⁵⁴ 152. *Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 396.1-WA/9-1561. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.*

¹⁵⁵ 150. *Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/9-1461. Confidential. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.*

¹⁵⁶ 155. *Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies, State Department. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File*

Allies and coordination

Kennedy implored the three Allies - the UK, the FRG and France - to coordinate some of the first steps they should take together in the talks with the Soviets and the contingency actions to which they might need to resort. He asked for the reinforcement of personnel in Berlin and at embassies and offices for the sake of communication and coordination among the four Allies. The US was building a more robust and a concrete system of cooperation since the failure of proper collaboration and the pale and slow response to the Wall. Moreover, he asked for the build-up of NATO forces and asked the Allies to do their part, as the US was doing more than its allies. The Allied cooperation was vital for the planning to be achieved when it came to contingency planning and urgent action at a national and the Allied level. Furthermore, it was critical for the ammunition and supplies balance, which the Allies might need to use in the occasion of the initiation of a contingency plan in Berlin¹⁵⁷.

The FRG believed the Soviets would not back down and would resort progressively more to hostilities. That position was close to the French opinion which did not have great interest in flexibility regarding the Berlin talks due to the Soviet mentality. Therefore, the FRG believed - as the Chancellor had phrased in May and later Ambassador Grewe would repeat - the Soviets would take advantage of any conventional response to hostilities and would invade West Berlin, destroying the West's vantage point within the Iron Curtain. They believed that they should make a demonstration of their determination to use nuclear weapons and to get ready for the great collision¹⁵⁸.

The fear that was shared both by the US administration and the Allied nations was the prospect of war. They believe a war was a probable scenario the in the case that the Soviets would not accept to come to the negotiating table with more reasonable claims. In order to find a sweet spot in the conversations the Allies agreed on the solution of a peace treaty to be included in the talks but not on Soviet terms. However, Germany did not embrace the peace treaty possibility. As a counterbalance to Soviet proposals they proposed the possibility of 'free elections'¹⁵⁹. The FRG had some fears regarding Soviet movements. They believed that the Soviets wanted to achieve a decisive division of Germany with obstructed traffic movement, and that they would impose obstacles to travel.¹⁶⁰

The US-USSR talks begin

The matter of the Berlin air blockade prompted the conversations between the two powers under the new post-Wall circumstances. The US responded in a diplomatically tough way to the violation of access rights to West Berliners and Western Allies the Soviets try to impose. The US stated that they considered West Germany and Berlin as a whole unit for the purposes of air traffic. Therefore, any Soviet attempt to interfere with the traffic would be considered by the US as an aggressive act and a violation of existing arrangements.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ 171. Telegram from the Embassy in France to the Department of State. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/10-761. Confidential.

¹⁵⁸ 188. Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 762A.00/10-2561. Secret; Eyes Only.

¹⁵⁹ 151. Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/9-1561. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹⁶⁰ 171. Telegram from the Embassy in France to the Department of State. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/10-761. Confidential.

¹⁶¹ 152. Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 396.1-WA/9-1561. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

The first substantial talks took place on September 21st, 1961 between the US Secretary of State and the Soviet foreign minister Gromyko. It was again a commitment to the protection of Berlin and determination to stand their ground from both sides. The US asked for honest talks but declared they would not back down from an arms race if the USSR decides to go in that direction. Gromyko came up with a proposal of recognition of two Germanies. He proposed a peace treaty that would settle the problem by creating two new entities and establish West Berlin as a 'free' city, while reaffirming the presence of military forces of all powers, including the Soviet Union, in West Berlin with the possibility of an exchange of these troops with UN forces.

The first talks were concluded without a serious outcome, as the USSR seemed inflexible¹⁶². On the other side, the Soviets believed the US were stalling regarding the negotiations and they started to believe that the US did not have a particular interest in negotiating on a substantial level, since they did not propose something concrete as a base of fruitful transnational discussions between the two nations, as Keenan declared¹⁶³. This was something that even Khrushchev pointed out to Kennedy in a personal letter. He asked for US proposals in order the talks to proceed.

The Americans were examining the possibility of agreeing with the USSR on a peace treaty. The USSR was open regarding a bilateral peace treaty, but they put the recognition of the German borders by the US as requirement in respect of the sovereignty of the GDR as well as for the sake of the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons in Europe and an agreed status of 'Free' Berlin. The Americans were willing to talk on that basis if the USSR was flexible regarding the counterproposals and alterations of the established claims. The US wanted guarantees of the access rights and international supervision over Berlin while they asked for the internationalization of the Autobahn under the control of a body other than the GDR. The US would try to return to the diplomatic negotiations with these counterproposals in order to have productive talks¹⁶⁴. Moreover, they would try to endorse the idea of Berlin becoming West Germany's capital¹⁶⁵, something which would make the two entities more officially recognized.

The Soviets seemed to never have a very complex tactical plan. They focused on talks and a Berlin agreement in contrast to their stance that tried to provoke a total war. They would resort to war only if the talks ended badly, something which was encouraging with regards to the negotiations. They tried a mix of both intimidation as well as discussion. Moreover, they used the Berlin Wall as a symbol of Soviet determination in Berlin in combination with their tendency to demonstrate their force. The Soviets tried to weaken the fundamental positions of the US in order to push the Americans to yield towards the Soviet claims and find some acceptable terms and to force the West to concessions on all-German matters in return for a Soviet agreement on Berlin. The Soviets tried to endorse the mentioned fundamental Soviet interests in the talks. The US needed to respond to these tactics in order to avoid undermining Western rights in Berlin and Germany, and most importantly, try for a settlement that would keep the FRG's and West Berlin's confidence high¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶² 156. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in France. Department of State, Central Files, 611.61/9-2261. Secret; Priority. Limit Distribution. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹⁶³ 158. Letter from the Ambassador to Yugoslavia (Kennan) to the Under Secretary of State (Bowles). Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/9-2261. Confidential. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹⁶⁴ 165. Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies, State Department. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹⁶⁵ 166. Editorial Note. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.

¹⁶⁶ 168. Memorandum from the Secretary of State's Special Assistant (Bohlen) to Secretary of State Rusk. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/10-361. Secret.

German estimation of the Soviet thinking

Even though the US started to be more invest in all aspects of the Berlin question due to the confrontations and the provocations from the Soviets, the Germans would not stop to think of bad scenarios, something which would generate friction between the West German administration and Kennedy's government. The Germans had a firm opinion that Khrushchev tried to achieve the transfer of control to the GDR. This would lead to unpredictable events, as the GDR as a sovereign state would be able to change its laws and regulations uncontrollably. The FRG believed the GDR would apply a ban on goods transfer, but most importantly they would cut East Berlin off completely by forbidding entrance into the new entity even to the Allied powers' officials, while the USSR would deny any responsibility. Moreover, they believed a fundamental aspect of the Soviet's thinking was to destroy the ties between West Berlin and West Germany. According to West Germany the removal of the ties between the FRG and West Berlin would lead to the end of West Berlin. Walter Ulbricht believed that his mandate was under threat as long West Berlin remained under US influence. He wanted to push American influence and control in Berlin away, beginning with the Berlin Wall¹⁶⁷. However, that was a misjudgment on the side of the Germans, as Khrushchev would later admit that he was the one who had the idea and the will for the Wall to be constructed. The West Germans did not believe the Soviets were planning to back down or to settle for a sensible agreement. They were persuaded that the USSR would sign a unilateral peace treaty with the GDR¹⁶⁸. Moreover, the Germans had the impression that the talks were establishing the idea of the two Germanys, something they did not want. Brandt believed that a division would be made clear on a political level and would cause Berlin's morale to plummet¹⁶⁹.

Moreover, Germany believed that communication between the US and the USSR regarding the Berlin status was not possible due to differences in the meaning each side gave to the definitions and the status they tried to endorse. As the FRG minister of foreign affairs pointed out on September 15th, 1961 in Washington within the framework of Allied powers foreign ministers' conference. He stated that the Western powers had different standards and perceptions regarding freedom and access definitions. He supported that the Soviets did not embrace the democratic order the US had as a basis and they did not value political freedom and freedom of speech. Moreover, the ties the USSR mentioned were not the ties the West had in mind. West Germany believed that a change and a settlement of Berlin's status would mean the exodus of FRG and Western allies from Berlin and it would lead to the total loss of Berlin as the 'free world's distinct border. Losing Berlin was the beginning of a disaster for the West, something which the US found agreeable, even though the Americans dismissed the rest of German thinking on the matter. The US had different opinions about what consequences a settlement would have and where the talks would lead¹⁷⁰..

Furthermore, Germany did not support the tactics of the US to stick to three fundamental claims regarding Berlin's future - the presence in Berlin, protection of Berlin's freedom and the right

¹⁶⁷ *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall: A hell of a lot better than a war. Author: Smyser W. R., (1999), 103*

¹⁶⁸ 152. *Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 396.1-WA/9-1561. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.*

¹⁶⁹ *Weekly chronology of reports concerning the Berlin situation, received during week of 10 Oct - 16 Oct. October 16, 1961. CIA Archive.*

¹⁷⁰ 152. *Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 396.1-WA/9-1561. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.*

of access. They believed that would give the Soviets the chance to take advantage of these limited claims to configure the rest of Berlin's status and situation according to their will¹⁷¹.

The US-FRG conflict regarding the talks

On October 11th, 1961 the FRG expressed disappointment regarding the US-USSR talks. The West Germany was quite unsure and worried regarding the US policy towards Germany. The core of the FRG thinking was that the US did not want to hold Berlin more. They suspected that the US was keeping Germany until the Americans could reach a beneficial deal with the Soviets. The FRG was quite disturbed regarding the matter of Germany's reunification and the US plan to put it behind on the negotiations' agenda. At the same time, and without the US' support for the reunification plan, they believed that being urged by the US to form contacts with East Germans without the unification on the horizon was unachievable and intolerable on their part.¹⁷² The Germans believed these actions could lead to land claims from the GDR while it made the re-unification seem even more impossible to happen.¹⁷³ Some days before Brandt had also condemned the neglect of Germany's reunification talks by the US. He believed that a strategy like that would jeopardize the FRG-Berlin relations and Germany's relations with the West while it would open the door to the Soviets to introduce their own idea of German reunification - a Germany behind the Iron Curtain.¹⁷⁴ However, the core and the basis of German anxiety came from their wrong and unsubstantiated estimate that the US was going towards de facto recognition of East Germany, while describing US policy and actions as weak. Germany, through the statements of the FRG Ambassador in Washington Grewe, expressed that they felt abandoned and scared by a US policy they hardly recognized.¹⁷⁵

West Germany demonstrates an unproductive attitude towards the situation. The Germans resorted to panic-fueled actions and statements, living under the fear of the Wall. They were suspicious towards the US and its policy, something which derived mostly from the initial US reaction to the Wall where the Germans' 'Americanism' and pro-US feelings were seriously hurt and betrayed. The Germans were seeing dangers in every possible outcome while they protested whenever possible. However, they did not make suggestions nor took any further actions. In the case of derailing of the situation and the signing of a unilateral treaty from the side of Soviets West Germany believed that the Allies should respond with a Baltic and Black sea blockade. Moreover, the FRG proposed Berlin to become the 11th land, and to get incorporated into the FRG body¹⁷⁶. Also, Germany was pushing for the move of the UN's headquarters to Berlin, something which the US had dismissed many times.

¹⁷¹ 152. *Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 396.1-WA/9-1561. Secret. Berlin Crisis 1961-1962 File.*

¹⁷² 174. *Memorandum of Conversation Between Dean Acheson and the German Ambassador (Grewe). Department of State, Central Files, 611.62A/10-1161. Confidential.*

¹⁷³ 188. *Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 762A.00/10-2561. Secret; Eyes Only.*

¹⁷⁴ *Weekly chronology of reports concerning the Berlin situation, received during week of 10 Oct - 16 Oct. October 16, 1961. CIA Archive.*

¹⁷⁵ 174. *Memorandum of Conversation Between Dean Acheson and the German Ambassador (Grewe). Department of State, Central Files, 611.62A/10-1161. Confidential.*

¹⁷⁶ 174. *Memorandum of Conversation Between Dean Acheson and the German Ambassador (Grewe). Department of State, Central Files, 611.62A/10-1161. Confidential.*

The US' reactions to the German objections

The new German position and critical mindset caused an uproar on behalf of US as well as a disappointment and strong irritation. On the other hand, the United States believed that the FRG had crossed the limits and the criticism was too hard and unfair. The German remarks were not received well by the US administration, which already had a lot of headaches from the US-Soviet talks and the Wall's aftermath.

The United States tried to reassure Germany of their support and dismiss talks regarding the West Germany's alleged abandonment. The US believed that the idea of Germany's abandonment was out of place and proportion, since nothing near to that was truly happening. Even though the US recognized that the new talks might seem disturbing to the FRG due to the statements the Soviets and the Americans had made, they believed that the Germans did not have a reason to think that the US would recognize the de facto the existence of the GDR. However, as Secretary Rusk stated, the US administration was open to flexible talks in case Soviets recognized and gave something in return. An example Secretary Rusk gave was the dispute regarding the Oder-Neisse line regarding German borders. The Americans believed that the FRG needed to work out a practical negotiating position, free of utopian scenarios that did not lead anywhere. Moreover, the US demanded from the German administration to take the required steps to be able economically and politically to support the new plans and situation and play an active part in carrying out the agreed policy.

Simultaneously, the Americans dismissed the plan regarding the sea blockade, as it was not a product of original German thinking but a copy of a former American proposal. The Americans had already rejected that idea in the past, as they believed it would lead to further hostilities and escalation of the situation. In addition, the Americans did not accept the idea of Berlin becoming the 11th land. American diplomacy saw that German proposal as a completely naive stance. German thinking was going through some internal conflicts because the FRG was not ready to accept any risks regarding its status and position whilst wanting to proceed with highly provocative action which would create great tensions. Also, that proposal would put further burden on the US, as the Americans would be responsible for carrying it out without the Germans participating in it. The Americans were asking Germany to assume their responsibilities¹⁷⁷.

Why the US needed to respond to the Soviet hostilities to maintain Berlin

The new tensions between the US and the FRG came in a period when the Soviet Union's provocations had not stopped. Since the construction of the Berlin Wall East Germans continued to harass US forces and even the military and Allied diplomats - an action that brought about problems within the US administration and undermined the talks as well as West Germans patience¹⁷⁸.

Due to the anticipated German objections Kennedy had already initiated plans regarding the demonstration of firmness of the US' position in Berlin and in cooperation with Lucius Clay instructed the planning for determination show off in Berlin in order to persuade Berliners and the Germans about the American mentality regarding Berlin. Following the harassment of the US army vehicle on September 14th Lucius Clay believed the US should reclaim their rights by facing the East Germans with a number of tanks put across the checkpoint. Clay as well as the rest of administration

¹⁷⁷ 174. *Memorandum of Conversation Between Dean Acheson and the German Ambassador (Grewe)*. Department of State, Central Files, 611.62A/10-1161. Confidential.

¹⁷⁸ *A brief history of the Berlin Crisis of 1961* by Neil Carmichael, (2011)

believed that the move would give them leverage in the talks, but most importantly would improve the morale amongst West Berliners by indicating US determination¹⁷⁹. The criticism the US received from the FRG and the difficulty to keep West Berlin's morale afloat led the US to try and determine a new approach towards the continuing harassments from the Soviets. Preserving the access to the Friedrichstrasse crossing point was vital for the acceptance of the US and an approval from West Berliners.

West Berliners felt great tension and had a feeling of uncertainty, as they did not believe US was capable to defend the city efficiently anymore due to the way the Americans handled the Wall situation. Moreover, nationalism was on the rise in West Germany, a factor that would damage the West Germany-Western Allies' relations and their ties more as well as hurting the already damaged Americanism amongst the German people. Even after the new US commitments and the reinforcement of the army forces Berliners were still not persuaded by the American commitment. An American reaction to Soviet harassment was critical and necessary, otherwise the US was on the verge of losing its Berlin foothold. At the same time, the German and Berlin politicians were accusing the Americans of possible settlements and betrayal of Berlin to absolve themselves from responsibility. German politicians were hesitant and mostly unprepared to give a serious diplomatic response, and to handle the social problems the Wall created. Therefore, they tried to blame the US for their inactivity as a measure intended to help them survive the next elections politically¹⁸⁰.

Furthermore, the West Berlin and the FRG were getting nervous and they prepared to react unilaterally to Soviet challenges. Mayor Brandt was preparing new police forces equipped with powerful weapons to have enough retaliatory force against Soviet provocations and threats. Moreover, Adenauer was examining a plan of economic blockade of the entire Soviet Bloc which he believed would have effective results, a plan the US condemned multiple times in past discussions. Finally, the Bundeswehr was getting prepared for the event of fighting the East Germans as a response in case they challenged the establishment of West Berlin.

These German reactions were being caused by continuous Soviet provocations and infringement on the West Berlin border line and the Berliners' indignation regarding the Wall¹⁸¹. The FRG was leaning towards the scenario of a total war. They felt that US-Soviet talks would not have results and they felt the need to protect and preserve Berlin's sovereignty and FRG's dignity through war. The foundations of that opinion were set in May 1961 during the Kennedy-Adenauer talks when Adenauer alleged that the FRG recognizes the risk the Berlin talks involved and the FRG was ready to take that risk and burden. For that reason, the Germans did not believe that the US should back down to any of the demands regarding Berlin nor get entangled in long US-Soviet talks¹⁸².

The Checkpoint Charlie incident

Amidst the rise in the Soviet hostilities along the Wall and mostly due to the harassment US officials received on the crossing points Kennedy had already begun talks and planning for a contingency plan in Berlin. Moreover, the US understood that they needed to demonstrate their power and their

¹⁷⁹ 178. Memorandum from Acting Secretary of State Ball to President Kennedy. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, NSAM 107. Secret.

¹⁸⁰ 181. Letter from the President's Special Representative in Berlin (Clay) to President Kennedy. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Berlin, General Clay. Top Secret.

¹⁸¹ Weekly chronology of reports concerning the Berlin situation, received during week of 10 Oct - 16 Oct. October 16, 1961. CIA Archive.

¹⁸² 188. Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 762A.00/10-2561. Secret; Eyes Only.

determination, otherwise they were on the verge of losing Berlin's confidence. The Americans prepared plans for retaliatory measures in order to maintain their access rights in Berlin in case of a dispute caused by the Soviets. New troops were arriving in Germany while Kennedy asked for military persistence against Soviet challenges so the Soviets would be persuaded about the US' intentions in case of an escalation towards a nuclear war¹⁸³.

The Berlin situation escalated on October 22nd. The Assistant Chief of the US mission in Berlin Edwin A. Lightner Jr. who was going to the East sector was stopped at the crossing point at Friedrichstrasse and East German police requested his identification which Lightner refused to show. Lightner asked to see a Soviet officer, but the demand was dismissed. After that a US tank-infantry was sent to the checkpoint while armed military police escorted Lightner.¹⁸⁴

As a response to that provocation Lucius Clay initiated a plan of probes from the US' side¹⁸⁵. The next day he sent an American diplomat as a probe to pass the crossing point but again he was stopped, and East Germans asked for documentation until US military police escorted the diplomat to the other side. On October 24th the Soviets stopped 26 vehicles while General Clay continued to send US vehicles as probes to pass the checkpoint¹⁸⁶. The Friedrichstrasse incident created new tensions in the Berlin talks.

The US accused the Soviets of not upholding their commitments and caused another high-tension incident in Berlin¹⁸⁷. The Americans stated that they did not recognize East Germany while the Soviets responded by blaming the Americans for the crisis and their border provocations¹⁸⁸.

On October 27th the Americans proceeded to attempt one more pass with military escort, but this time things escalated. The Soviets, in a reaction to the multiple American probes, sealed off the sectors entrance with a tanks battalion. At the same time American tanks took their positions across the no-man's land, facing off the communist tanks. After seventeen hours and bilateral communications of the governments the standoff was ended and the battalions returned to their bases¹⁸⁹.

However, the Soviet Union seemed not willing to ease the tensions. They stated that the sovereignty of the GDR should not be questioned by the US and Americans needed to show their credentials at the border. Americans who did not want to recognize any power and sovereignty nor the existence of the GDR were examining new measures regarding their entrance to the East sector by force or even considering the possibility to agree with the producing documentation at the checkpoints.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ 185. Letter from President Kennedy to the Supreme Commander, Allied Powers Europe (Norstad). Eisenhower Library, Norstad Papers, Subject File, Kennedy, John F. Top Secret.

¹⁸⁴ 186. Telegram from the Mission at Berlin to the Department of State. Department of State, Central Files, 123-Lightner, Edwin Allan. Confidential; Priority.

¹⁸⁵ Tanks at Checkpoint Charlie: Lucius Clay and the Berlin Crisis, 1961–62. Ingo Wolfgang Trauschweizer, 2006

¹⁸⁶ A brief history of the Berlin Crisis of 1961 by Neil Carmichael, 2011

¹⁸⁷ 191. Telegram from the Department of State to the Mission at Berlin. Department of State, Central Files, 762.0221/10-2561. Top Secret; Priority.

¹⁸⁸ 192. Telegram from the Mission at Berlin to the Department of State. Department of State, Central Files, 862.181/10-2561. Confidential

¹⁸⁹ The U.S. Military response to the 1960-1962 Berlin Crisis, by Dr. Donald A. Carter. The U.S. Army center of military history.

¹⁹⁰ 194. Telegram from the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State. Department of State, Central Files, 762.0221/10-2761. Secret

What the tanks standoff confrontation meant for Berlin and the US' actions

The incident at Friedrichstrasse showed that a unilateral treaty between the USSR and the GDR was near. The East German police could proceed to unilateral actions, something which undermined the Berlin talks and the guarantees the Soviets gave regarding the Berlin completely. It seemed that the USSR tried to derail the talks as they tried to establish the Wall as an official boundary, giving the GDR the official power over controlling the area.¹⁹¹ The Soviets seems to be ready for the unilateral treaty and Americans were preparing for that outcome.¹⁹² Just like the Wall, the frontier control by the GDR and the extension of the GDR's power has again changed the status quo of Berlin.¹⁹³ These Soviet challenges led again to an escalation of the crisis, as the US prepared retaliatory measures. The US examined the possibility of establishing border controls and restrictions on Soviet entrance into West Berlin. They wanted to show determination as the USSR tried to spin the incident as a provocation on behalf of the US.¹⁹⁴

Moreover, due to the unofficial acceptance of the Wall by the US through their understated and pale reaction as well as their acceptance of the border crossings changes the Soviets made, the Americans believes that they could not demand free circulation around Berlin anymore. They realized that this was now an established de facto situation and the Soviets would not back down to that, therefore it was not viable to push it any further. However, the Americans believed they should proceed with self-denial of entrance to the East rather than to resort to the scenario of getting checked and humiliated by the East German police.¹⁹⁵

The US-FRG conflict regarding the US' tactics on Berlin

After the Wall and the standoff in Checkpoint Charlie as the final act of the Berlin dichotomy the Germans were not amenable to talks but rather closer to a radical solution - resorting to the war scenario. Again, this German stance came in contrast to the general view of the historiography claiming the FRG was a fan of the US-USSR talks. The Americans needed to persuade the Germans about the importance of the continuation of the US-Soviet talks and needed to plan a strategy on how to achieve it. The Americans believed that through negotiations they would manage to avoid unpleasant and escalated situations, such as the signing of the unilateral treaty on behalf of the USSR with the GDR. They believed that resorting to a discontinuation of the talks could only bring further confrontation, something that would damage the city's morale.

Breakdown of the talks would be interpreted as an abandonment from the German people while the hostilities would continue, something which would create a rise in German nationalism and militarism as Europe becomes a battleground of tensions. The Americans needed the help of

¹⁹¹ 198. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union. Department of State, Central Files, 611.61/10-2861. Secret

¹⁹² 202. Telegram from the Mission at Berlin to the Department of State. Department of State, Central Files, 762.0221/10-261.

¹⁹³ 208. Telegram from the Mission at Berlin to the Department of State. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/11-861. Secret

¹⁹⁴ 199. Telegram from the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (Norstad) to Secretary of Defense McNamara. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Berlin, Cables.

¹⁹⁵ 212. Memorandum from Colonel Lawrence J. Legere to the President's Military Representative (Taylor). National Defense University, Taylor Papers, Box 38, 510 Partition of Berlin. Secret.

West Germany to proceed to productive talks and to establish a better position within the negotiations.¹⁹⁶

In November Germany acted unilaterally and proposed to the USSR through ambassador Kroll more or less the same proposals the Soviets had already made. They proposed a settlement in Berlin. They believed that should be done through a four-power agreement on Berlin to provide freedom, viability and freedom of access to the city and with continued presence of the Allies. The only diversion the German proposal made from the Soviet one was that the Germans were proposing a settlement for the whole of Berlin while the Soviets supported the 'Free' Berlin status only for the West part. Furthermore, they believed that the treaty should be supported by another treaty between the USSR and the GDR that would recognize the agreements made with the Western Allies. Part of that procedure would be an agreement between Berlin with both the FRG and the GDR regarding the establishment of committees of disarmament within the city and a peace negotiation.

The Germans were resorting to these proposals as they felt it was the only way to reunite the city which was divided clearly and absolutely by the Wall. In discussions they had with the Soviets the Germans demanded that the Wall should come down, something the Soviets did not rule out in case of an agreement¹⁹⁷. The US were aware of these German actions' intent to push the Americans into a deal due to the fear the FRG had for the viability of Berlin and the liability of the US. These actions were a product of Adenauer's thinking. Even though so far historians seemed to believe that this unilateral action was ambassador's Kroll initiative, in reality, the US archive shows that Adenauer was behind that plot, despite his official denial of having any involvement in this incident after demonstrations from the Americans. Adenauer believed that the Americans did not have the capacity to hold Berlin in a case of a Soviet attack due to the apathy they had demonstrated in the post-Wall days while thinking Kennedy too young to handle the situation¹⁹⁸.

The Kroll incident was something that historians have not explored to its whole extent. The talks that covertly took place between the FRG and the Soviets under the US' nose with the purpose to sabotage the US-USSR talks and US strategy demonstrate how deep and to which extent US-FRG relations reached a decline and an unofficial dissolution after the construction of the Berlin Wall.

Conflict regarding the Berlin Status

Since the start of the US-FRG talks regarding the next steps of the Berlin negotiations, a new conflict of interest was spotted soon. Because of the planning of the new talks and the US' intention to become more flexible in its stance, the Germans raised some concerns regarding the American thinking. The Americans were investigating the scenario of a Berlin under the protection of the three Allied forces, but a city sovereign and free. However, the Germans believed that would undermine Berlin's rights and safety, since Soviets would take advantage of that new status. The Germans were going towards the direction of Berlin's incorporation into the FRG as the 11th land, a proposal the Americans had already dismissed.

Regarding that matter, on December 12th 1961 at the Quadripartite Foreign Ministers Meeting in Paris Willy Brandt put the matter of the legal status of Berlin onto the table. Berlin's status had already been established, but Berlin and the FRG's administrations seemed to have

¹⁹⁶ 215. *Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Adenauer Visit.*

¹⁹⁷ 210. *Editorial Note*

¹⁹⁸ 215. *Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Adenauer Visit.*

different feelings than the US. Brandt tries to persuade the Secretary of the US to put forward and to push for West Berlin becoming part of the FRG as the 11th land, instead of its current 'free land' status. The Secretary recognized the special relations between Berlin and the FRG, but he dismissed any endorsement of that idea in the negotiations. The Secretary openly asked Willy Brandt whether he had objections to the current status of Berlin due to the lack of trust in the US' commitment. Brandt responded that he did not have any doubt, but a part of the German administration did, including the Chancellor.¹⁹⁹

West Berlin was an independent land under the jurisdiction and control of the governors, as set after 1949. The UK, France and the US were the guarantors of Berlin. However, they recognized some practical, ethical and cultural ties with the FRG. The US did not want an incorporation of West Berlin into the FRG, as that would compromise the American claims regarding access into West Berlin because it was situated behind the Iron Curtain. For Berliners, preserving the ties with the FRG was greatly important. They did not want to consent to a 'free city' status. They saw that action as an abandonment from the Allies but most importantly from the FRG.²⁰⁰ The FRG was claiming Berlin as the 11th land, questioning the Military governors' agreement of 1949. On the other side, the US was not even near to that perception. At the same time, Berlin supported the current status where there were strong ties with the FRG but the Allies were protecting and guaranteeing the city's status. Historiography so far had not examined the conflict that arose between the US and the FRG regarding the Berlin status and the strategy they should follow regarding the US-USSR talks.

Furthermore, the West Germans believed the way the US was handling the talks would deter the Soviets from agreeing to West German access to Berlin, but only to an Allied access, even though the US dismissed that estimation. However, the FRG was opposing one more US proposal.

The US proposed to the West Germans to take up simple talks with the GDR on practical matters, such as repair works and traffic jams, in order to build a basic communication channel in case Soviets signed the treaty with the GDR and West would have to deal with the GDR. Even though that seemed like a simple and logical reasoning, the FRG denied doing so as they believed the US were trying to push them to take up the responsibility for the Berlin negotiations and they intended to recognize East Germany. In addition, the US wanted to get the United Nations involved in the Berlin talks matter, as they believed that would take the barriers of suspicion out of the situation, but the FRG turned that proposal down as well as they thought that the UN's entanglement in the GDR talks would practically mean that the UN recognized the GDR. Germans also opposed the presence of UN troops in Berlin as a guarantee for the end to Soviet harassment towards West Berliners. As a response Adenauer tried to endorse the establishment of the UN headquarters, activities and agencies in West Berlin, but the US did not find that as a viable solution²⁰¹.

However, the greatest problem in the US-FRG relations was the re-unification matter. For the moment the Americans dismissed this scenario as improbable and problematic, something which did not go down well with the Germans. In the personal discussion Kennedy had with Chancellor Adenauer on November 21st, 1961 in Washington there was a fallout regarding that matter. Kennedy tried to prove to Adenauer that such a claim was not possible and involved great risks and dangers. Kennedy tried to explain to Adenauer that in case the FRG incorporated Berlin and got on board for re-unification it would give birth to many problems in West Germany and the Western Alliance. The

¹⁹⁹ Memorandum of Conversation. QUADRIPARTITE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING Paris, December 10-12, 1961. Department of State, Central Files: 396.1-PA/12-1261. Secret.

²⁰⁰ 217. Memorandum of Conversation. Department of State, Central Files, 762.00/11-2161. Secret.

²⁰¹ 218. Memorandum of Conversation. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Adenauer Visit.

Soviets would try to influence the FRG and take a more neutral position and cut off ties with the NATO Alliance. Furthermore, the East Germany would always be under Soviet control, as there was no possibility of the USSR leaving the place. The FRG would need to align its policies with the ones of the Soviet Union for the sake of reunification. Despite Kennedy's arguments that was an idea that Adenauer did not embrace and dismissed these claims as nonsense.

The American based their allegations in past tendencies. In 1945 there had been a pro-Soviet feeling among the Germans for the sake of reunification, something which Adenauer, believed was not the case anymore. He believed the establishment of the Christian Democrat's party established the freedom and pro-Westernism in post-war Germany²⁰². The Germans believed that a peace treaty between the FRG and the four occupational forces of Germany was necessary as well as Germany's reunification and a settlement of the present borders. Moreover, Adenauer believed that by achieving a settlement and a positive response from the side of the Soviets they would bring down the Wall that divides Berlin.

Adenauer supported the improvement of the West-Soviet relations and proposed concessions towards achieving that. Moreover, he made a declaration regarding the nuclear disarmament of Germany the prohibition of production of such weapons in Germany. The Chancellor, even though he stated that he did not oppose US nuclear weapons presence in Germany, he made that declaration in a spirit of goodwill, something which caused the US problems and the US administration saw with suspicion, whilst also being in contrast to past declarations when he demanded Germany to have nuclear weapons via NATO.

The Germans believed that the US was retreating from Germany and they tried to come to terms with the Soviets. The US, however, had not demonstrated such an initiative. German thinking derived mostly from the post-Wall incidents and the US' apathy towards the Wall's construction as well as Adenauer's personal view of Kennedy. The US' unpreparedness caused more problems for US-FRG relations, as Germany required more US troops in Berlin, something which the Americans did not approve. The US wanted to set limitations to the forces stationed in Berlin in the new US-Soviet talks to 30 units, as the US could not provide more.

Adenauer disagreed with that idea, bringing his cooperation with Kennedy to a dead-end while he dismissed US estimates, accusing the US of diffidence. He suggested the West should bluff and should not set limitations, as they should intimidate the Soviets in case they wanted to attempt a new great harassment like the Berlin Wall²⁰³.

From that moment onwards, the official and personal relations between Kennedy and Adenauer reached a turmoil. From then onwards until the end of the Berlin Crisis and Kennedy's assassination the US administration started to cooperate closely with Willy Brandt, considering Adenauer as an unreliable and an unstable ally²⁰⁴.

²⁰² 219. *Memorandum of Conversation. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Adenauer Visit. Secret.*

²⁰³ 221. *Memorandum of Conversation. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Adenauer Visit.*

²⁰⁴ 215. *Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Germany, Adenauer Visit.*

CONCLUSION

Within the limits of European cooperation, economies, and strategies, during the Cold War, lies the Berlin question and West Germany's fate. The US from the start saw it as a vital condition that West Germany joins the Western allies in order to help its nation's rebuilding and to upgrade Germany's European role and diplomatic relations. Since the early days of Kennedy's administration, a complex relationship between the West Germany and the US is distinguishable. It could be said that West Germany became the locomotive of implication of US policy in Europe. Kennedy used Germany's question towards West's favor. The FRG not only became a representative of American policy and American thinking but also played the role of the mediator amongst European nations which at the time were not as synchronized and responsive as they should towards the new situation, regarding European and national security and safety. However, it seems that the German administration, during the last two years of the Berlin Crisis brought great headaches to the US president and his team.

The Berlin Crisis was one of the high points of the Cold War, creating great tensions, hostilities, and problems, but most importantly is one of the main turning points of the Cold War. Through the Berlin Crisis newly escalated hostilities were expressed from the Soviets to a point where the US could not ignore the danger anymore and needed to act. Most importantly though, these Soviet hostilities created a field of tension and conflict between the US and the FRG due to the different perceptions they had on the matter, and most significantly regarding the US' responses to the hostilities in Berlin.

One of the most famous and important product of the Cold War, during the Berlin Crisis, was the construction of the Berlin Wall. The night the Wall was erected, everything regarding Berlin changed. The Wall not only changed the US-USSR conflict and escalated the Cold War, but also defined the US-FRG relations until the end of Kennedy's and Adenauer's mandate.

Before thinking about the division, the Berlin Wall created, and the strong reactions from the German side, we need to understand and remember what Germany had gone through since the end of WW2. Germany was cut in half and most importantly it was divided ideologically, economically and politically, as well as culturally. All these changes had a great toll on Germans' identity. The new reality brought radical changes within German societies with the introduction of Americanism on one side and the Soviet socialism on the other. They had a feeling that the once powerful and important Germany was now reduced to a battleground.

The construction of the Wall was something the FRG and Willy Brandt could not swallow, and they were unable to face the new situation. It is natural that the Wall destroyed a part of the German identity, as the freedom of mobility of Berliners stopped and their daily life changed dramatically. Families were separated and people did not see each other for another 28 years, when the world was completely different.

The FRG always kept a stance of suspicion towards the US. We should not forget that even though they became partners, at the same time the Allies were the ones occupying Berlin, something which prevented the relations from entering a phase of complete normality. Since the Wall made its appearance however, the feelings of FRG towards US worsened notably. It was not only the weak reaction from the Americans that worried the Germans, but, most importantly, it was the realization of the existence of the Cold War itself. Germans understood that the existence of two different worlds was real and they had to live like that, as they knew that they could not do much, the FRG perceived the Wall as the end of Germany.

Fear, desperation and injustice were feelings that used to run through German administration cabinets but most importantly through the German society. After the Wall, the West Germans felt that they were alone once again since the end of the WW2, a feeling that not even the greatest American statements and military demonstration could mitigate. For this reason, the relation between the two states could not stay intact. The FRG was under panic, as they saw the Soviets proceeding to radical actions within their territory. This panic is what led the FRG to sabotage its own relations with its greatest ally and protector, the US. Adenauer, as the main protagonist of this inter-alliance conflict, proceeded to object to everything the US proposed as a solution. Furthermore, as Brandt and the whole German administration used to do quite often, he demonstrated intensively against the way Americans were handling the situation and were countering the red threat.

That stance that the West Germans adopted led to many new events and affected greatly the US' decision making. The most probable scenario is that there would not have been a Checkpoint Charlie confrontation unless it was for the West German reactions and the risks that brought for the US' influence on the region. The Americans escalated the Berlin Crisis, not so much due to the Soviets hostilities nor the construction of the Berlin Wall. Kennedy believed that the erection of the Wall was purely a precaution measure taken by the Soviets against the refugee flow and therefore he did not see the reason to proceed to radical actions regarding the Berlin question. What led to the escalation is the mentality and the strategy the West Germans followed that made the US to get entangled into situations that they did not want to get into. The arrival of the General Clay was not an arbitrary choice but a necessity. He was an aspiring General with great influence on Berlin's population and of great prestige. As the records of the Kennedy cabinet showed, Kennedy did not trust Clay in depth, but he assigned the role of the President's representative as he was the only one capable to pull off the new American policy in Berlin. General Clay was known in the White House circles for his firmness and his determination to respond to any Soviet challenge. The Americans did not want that, they were fearful that by responding to a Soviet challenge with equal force, a nuclear war will occur. The only reason they needed to do so, was their need to keep their alliance with the FRG intact and alive. However, one might ask, why was it that the Americans were ready to risk a nuclear war to preserve their ally? Eisenhower answered that sufficiently as mentioned in the text above. He believed that by losing Berlin, the US would lose the whole of Europe, and by losing Europe the US possibly would not survive in its current form or would not survive at all. The West Germans asked for complete sovereignty regarding Berlin, they wanted to be autonomous, without finding themselves within an alliance or a system. What the Germans did not know, and the Americans were well aware of that, was that no nation, no power, and no political entity within Europe and the World in general, could exist outside of Capitalism or the Socialist camp. In case the Americans were to leave the Berlin, then the FRG and the West Berlin were doomed to fail and to fall under direct or indirect Soviet control, turning Adenauer's nation into a puppet state.

The truth is that mistakes were made from the US side but that does not justify the German behavior. It is apparent through the events, the statements, the actions, the promises and the strategies, that FRG and Berlin were the number one priority for the US and that they did the best possible for their ally, not out of some urge to help a nation in need, but to protect their own benefits. The US and the FRG benefits were interlinked. The FRG and Berlin's integrity and security were not just a European matter. That is the fundamental US thinking that Germans did not understand, as they were too suspicious. It seems that this naive to say so, whether it was justified or not, German stance opened Pandora's box for many events that occurred during the Cold War

and changed the Cold War.

How did that happen though? How was West Germany and its 6-months-long reactions capable of changing the route of the Cold War? The answer comes from the text above. Putting everything into perspective, one realizes that the year of 1961 was the turning point of the Cold War. In April there was the Bay of Pigs incident in Cuba, which challenged the Kennedy's and the US intelligence's capabilities but, most importantly, it started a circle of challenges from both sides. However, the bay of pigs is not the incident that truly escalated the Cold War, everything started with the erection of the Berlin Wall. However, what is truly peculiar is not the action from the Soviets itself that changed this global confrontation but the responses of the US. The US' response to the construction of the Wall was quite anemic and weak. However, later as we saw the US triggered the events that led to the Checkpoint Charlie tanks standoff, they declared complete determination to any Soviet hostility and reinforced their military response in Berlin. Moreover, the Americans also, did not yield during the US-USSR talks. The difference to the US' strategy was obvious and happened fast and it did not happen only due to the Soviet actions. The US knew that the red threat was always present, and they were relatively prepared for that, even though the main solution to any Soviet attack would be the use of nuclear weapons. However, the greatest challenge the Americans faced during the Berlin Crisis, and this is what led them to change their policy and strategy, was to persuade the West Germans to stay within the Western alliance.

The FRG showed great resistance to the US' efforts, something that derived from Adenauer's political attitude. Adenauer lived through the great German depression during the inter-war period, a period of crisis which was provoked mostly by the treaty of Versailles and the post-War financial crisis Entente's treaty's terms brought in Germany. The Germans grew with suspiciousness and negativity towards the Allies and most importantly the US. Their feeling of injustice and indignation is one of the factors that led Germany to the WW2. That is what defined Adenauer's and the Germans post-War feelings as well. The world could be completely new and even though the Cold War was shaping a different world, people could not get rid of the past. Moreover, Adenauer, was convinced that Kennedy was not capable to be a US president, as he was untested and young in age.

Despite the best efforts from the US' side, Adenauer could not forgive the American apathy towards the Wall as he believed that all of the feelings that he tried to bury all these years, were true at the very end. This suspicion is what led US to bring more troops to Berlin, not only to demonstrate power to the Soviets but to persuade Berliners and Germans that they sacrifice their people and they are not willing to back down. Up to a point that worked but did not help greatly.

After the end of August, the new post-Wall talks started, and new series of problems begun. Adenauer did not want to proceed to talks as he believed the only way towards a solution was a firm stance that possibly would lead to a nuclear war. The Chancellor was ready to sacrifice a world as he knew it for the sake of Germany's prestige and identity. Americans wanted to do everything that was possible to avert a war.

The Checkpoint Charlie incident and the tanks stand-off alongside the continuous Soviet hostilities did not help the situation, also, regarding the US-FRG relations. Even though Americans made a statement of firmness and determination through their strong response and the garrisons' reinforcements, it was not enough as the US-German relations were already greatly hurt from the initial US response to the Wall. Not even the presence of General Clay and the new air he brought to the Berlin were enough to persuade Adenauer. Under great Soviet hostilities and problematic talks regarding Berlin, the FRG opposed to the US administration's policy. They opened the matter of the

Berlin status, they disagreed and created tensions with the US' strategy to drop the re-unification matter for the moment. Furthermore, Adenauer opened back door talks with the Soviets bypassing American authority damaging even more the alliance and US' bargaining position. The West Germans established diplomatic channels with the Soviets and proceeded to talks without the consent of the Americans always under the Americans' diplomatic radar through the Ambassador in USSR, the ambassador Kroll.

The only way for the US-German relations to work and avoid complete deterioration was the direct communication of Americans with Willy Brant. Kennedy and his cabinet believed that Adenauer was too old, too tired and too stubborn to be in charge of the German diplomacy, therefore, they turned their support towards a younger and more mild-mannered politician who started his appearance into German politics by criticizing the US' policy and the FRG-US alliance but at the end he realized that cooperation with the US was the only way to go.

The Berlin Crisis ended on 1963. During the last two years the US-FRG tensions affected greatly the Crisis' route and character. The five years while the Berlin Crisis lasted proved to be years of high tension, great conflict and high risks, years that changed the Cold War and the identities of the nations involved. The Cold War as we know it would have been a completely different story without the Berlin Crisis and its products the Berlin Wall, the Checkpoint Charlie and the tensions between the US and the FRG. A Wall into the heart of Europe seems as an extreme measure, an extreme measure that gave birth to extreme situations, great problems and dangers, but most importantly it put the US administration capabilities and the US diplomacy to the test, reaching them to their limits on a period when alongside Berlin, Cuba was a boiling pot.

Regarding possible future research, the most important aspect that this paper deals with and gives a better ground to, is further research to the US-FRG relations. A great opportunity for research is the continuation of the US-FRG tensions within the Berlin Crisis during 1962-1963. The historian can delve deeper into examining how FRG tried to sabotage the US-USSR talks, for example through leakages of confidential information and talks, and analyzing how Germany tried to act independently and go towards a dangerous affiliation with the Soviets.

Furthermore, it is quite interesting for someone to examine and to delve deeper into the protagonists' personalities and beliefs. The most intriguing part of the Berlin Crisis to be explored could be the German leaders and their in-between relations as well as their personal relations with the Americans. There is an unexplored field regarding the internal problems of FRG on a political level and the relations and ties the FRG and W. Berlin administrations had. There are indications that Adenauer and Brandt did not get along, while the both sides would collide in multiple aspects of the Berlin situation. Furthermore, during 1961 there is a growing tension within the ranks of West Germany due to the elections, the ones that Adenauer finally won. Willy Brandt had talks with Kennedy, regarding that situation while he repeatedly tried to attract the American supports as an opposite, to Adenauer, political force. Willy Brandt became the new imminent political power in Germany and became the center of the spotlight later during the 70s. The Brandt's Chancellorship on late 1969, and the political progress he made, can be explained through the complexities and the examination of the Berlin Crisis, the Berlin Wall and, most importantly, the role the US had into these.

Another, great field for exploration is the relations of the US and the FRG during the Berlin Crisis with the allied powers, that of the UK and France. These two powers define many aspects of the crisis, while adopting different tendencies during that time. It would be beneficial if someone conducted research regarding the FRG-France relations. Adenauer had developed personal relations

with de Gaulle, and he was the mediator between West and France into the alliance. France adopted different positions than the rest of the allies and Germany's role proved vital for the preservation of the alliance. Moreover, the French position and de Gaulle's opinions influenced Adenauer's mentality as well, and that is proved by the proposals that the FRG would come up with from time to time, proposals, which were similar to the ones the French side had presented. One more interesting aspect is the important role of Germany in persuading the UK to enter the EEC (European Economic Community) and to help the US to put NATO back on track.

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