

Book-Essay

In this essay Khrushchev's position on the Berlin wall is analyzed and the series of actions which he took to maintain peace and negotiations with United States over Berlin situation. The essay defends Khrushchev on the decisions he made to create Berlin border separating East and West Berlin after getting no positive results with his attempts to maintain peace with USA with President Eisenhower and President Kennedy taking power as new United States president.

Khrushchev was a person who wanted peace and harmony among Berlin and USA. In his speech during the New Year gathering he utters "The Soviet Union makes every effort to have friendly ties with all peoples"¹. His many speeches including the secret speech at 20th Congress of the Communist Party clearly suggested of him making every effort possible to maintain peace and harmony with the United States. Khrushchev has also gone against Cold War started by Stalin back in 1948². Khrushchev was having stress on the Berlin situation because United States did not agree on his negotiations over the Berlin situation which included peace treaty with East Germany. Now the hopes of negotiations and peace were held on the new president of the United States by Khrushchev³. These speeches and thoughts of him clearly reflect his will to maintain peace through talks and to not step into any war which can result in loss of lives and economy of the country. In 1960, CIA had employed several psychiatrists, psychologists and other experts to inspect Khrushchev through films and intelligence reports and even went ahead to research on rumours of his blood pressure problems. Khrushchev was also pressurized to solve the Berlin problem as soon as possible by the Ambassador Kroll. The situation

for Khrushchev was that he had to make a decision no matter how hard he wanted to stop the war due to pressure and also getting his negotiations rejected. Later, Khrushchev announced that he planned to remove the postwar agreements at the field house ⁴. This was expected due to his eagerness to solve the Berlin problem and failure to come to any negotiations. This suggested that Khrushchev was now ready to escalate the war scenes to resolve his Berlin queries. He was having an upper hand as compared to Stalin in terms of the nuclear power to rage the war. He was working on "Operation Atom" in which he would make nuclear weapons standing on East German territory which enabled him to counter any U.S. attack and to even damage cities like London and Paris in retaliation though he had not announced any dates to implement this plan. ⁵ Khrushchev was always trying not to rage this cold war but one of the sources which forced him to do so was President Eisenhower's ignorance towards Khrushchev's Berlin negotiations. ⁶ On the other hand, U.S. already removed Potsdam accord in 1955 by attaching West Germany in NATO and planning to provide nuclear weapons in future which in a way makes Khrushchev's actions on Berlin justifiable. The third source of Khrushchev's Berlin crises was the increasing refugee bleed in Berlin. These were the solid reasons and sources for him to start the crises in Berlin. ⁶ Again Khrushchev gave the West a chance to approve his negotiations on Berlin by offering them six months of time and not disregarding the Potsdam agreement. Later on, after this he was back on his track to resolve the problems of the cold war through talks by insisting Humphrey to solve the Berlin problem which could lead to de-escalation in cold war. ⁷ Khrushchev also made a trip to the United States to discuss the Berlin crises and to escalate negotiations with Eisenhower which led to a cut down of 1.2 million Soviet soldiers by Khrushchev. ⁸ This was again an act of de-escalation of war situation by Khrushchev.

All of Khrushchev's efforts to make peace were started to go in vain because after his United States trip, Soviet air missile shattered a spy aircraft over Ural Mountains. After that the Soviet air defence system failed to detect the CIA's plane. These incidents again in one way made him to revive his thoughts on Berlin.⁹ Due to this tolerance of Khrushchev, Walter Ulbricht had no trust on him in case of the Berlin situation and he also criticizes him for his patience on the Berlin situation.¹⁰ The West came to know about the critical actions planned by Ulbricht and his pressure on Khrushchev.¹⁰ "In short, Ulbricht was telling Khrushchev: You got us into this mess, and you have the most to lose if we don't survive, so now help get us out".¹¹ This clearly suggests pressure on Khrushchev for taking actions which he was not willing to take on Berlin situation. Again, Khrushchev had tried to negotiate things with President Kennedy but by the side Ulbricht was ready with his plans and waiting for Khrushchev's negotiation talks to get failed with Kennedy. Later, Khrushchev disregarded the Kennedy's nuclear weapons disarmament until the Berlin situation is resolved.¹² After that Khrushchev gave the control over to Ulbricht who was Stalinist to go ahead with a green signal to go for a solution because of poor negotiation situation.¹³ The solution which Ulbricht found was preparations of closing down the Berlin border but in a top-secret way.¹³ The orders of all the necessary supplies were given to the Western countries none noticed or suspected the reason behind bulk orders and Ulbricht had also done a good job keeping this project known to very few of his colleagues whom he trusted greatly. Khrushchev and Ulbricht were on their way to get the approvals of the members for the closing the Berlin border. Until August 9, Ulbricht was ready with all the materials and supplies after filling the necessary gaps to go ahead with the plan of the wall. At the end the police and military received orders to close the border, close the public transportation, stop passengers and trains between East and West Germany and to form a human chain in 30 minutes to close the border.¹⁴

In conclusion, Khrushchev was pressurized and forced in a certain way to act on the berlin situation resulting in the berlin wall due to repeated failed attempts to make negotiations and peace treaties with the United States and West. Taking account of the history to his efforts, his thoughts, his actions it can be clearly concluded that Khrushchev always attempted to make peace through talks, negotiations and peace treaties. Although at some points he took certain actions which escalated war and military operations but at first but later he also reversed those decisions and again introduces peace in the situation. After many unsuccessful attempts to resolve the berlin situation and internal pressure he handed over this situation to Ulbricht who was more like Stalin which led to the berlin wall. Taking account of Khrushchev's actions and orders throughout the history he may not have chosen to take this steps for building wall but was forced to do because of several reasons.

Footnotes

1. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 30
2. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 31
3. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 34
4. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 39
5. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 40
6. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 41
7. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 45

8. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 49
9. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 51
10. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 99
11. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 117
12. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 185
13. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 259
14. Kempe Frederick, *Berlin 1961*, 286