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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN


1 July 1959

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DAILY BRIEF

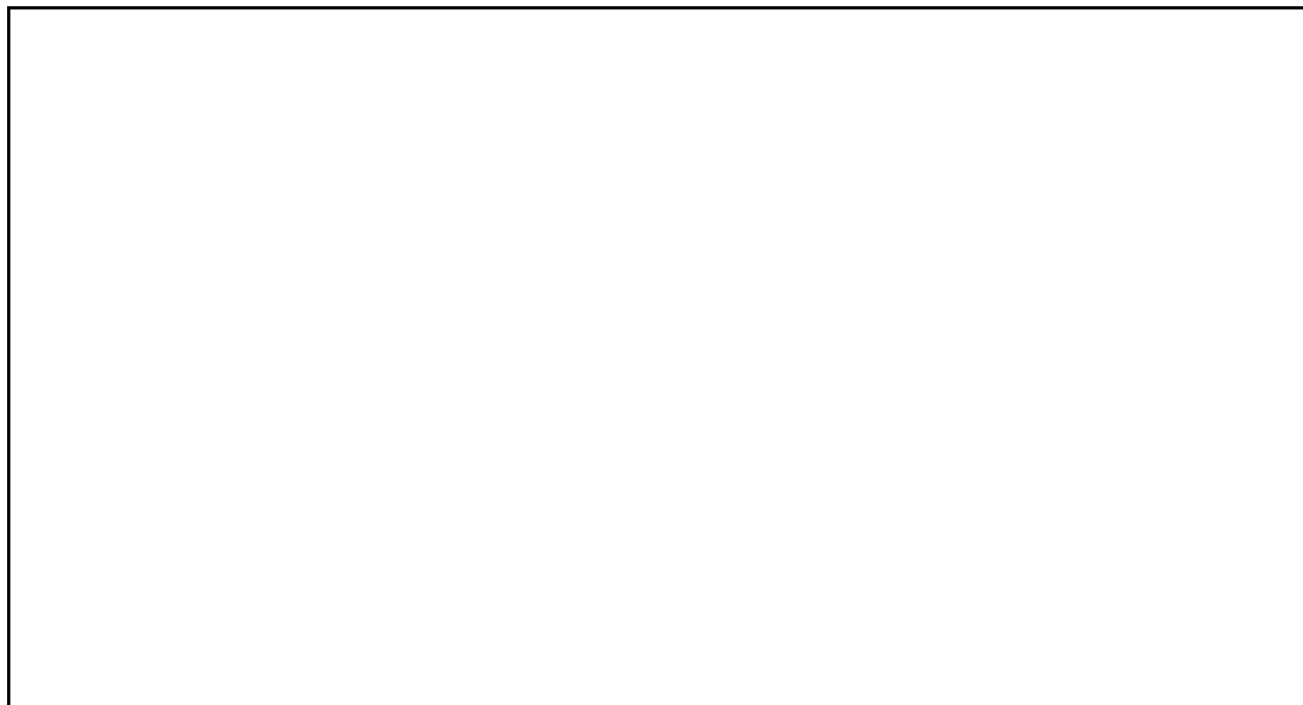


I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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USSR-Berlin: The acting Soviet military commandant in Berlin took the position on 26 June that Allied personnel traveling on the Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn are under East German jurisdiction after they pass the Soviet checkpoint. Replying to the US commandant's protest against three recent attempts by the East German police to control the movement of American officers on the autobahn, the Soviet official said that the incidents occurred "in places which are outside our sphere of influence," and therefore "should be settled with the proper authorities of the German Democratic Republic." This latest Soviet formulation is part of a long-term effort to erode Western access rights and to establish precedents for further assertions of East German authority. 

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

NO Israel: The current cabinet "crisis" is the result of pre-election maneuvering by minority parties in Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's coalition cabinet. Members of these parties have seized on an emotionally charged issue--the character of Israel's relations with West Germany which in this case involve an arms sale--to try to dissociate themselves from the policies of the prime minister's predominant Mapai party. The minority parties, in this way, hope to gain favorable positions for the parliamentary elections scheduled in November. Ben-Gurion, in another of his efforts to enforce full cabinet discipline, apparently intends to oust the minority critics from the government and to preside over a caretaker cabinet until the elections.

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VI. CONCLUSIONS OF SPECIAL USIB COMMITTEE ON BERLIN SITUATION

The USIB has taken note of the following conclusions reached by its special committee on the Berlin situation. The committee pointed out that its conclusions are to be used in context with all SNIEs relevant to the Berlin situation.

1. (a) Soviet diplomatic notes, Soviet and East German propaganda, and statements by East German leaders and officials have been generally mild and restrained and do not appear to foreshadow a serious effort to interfere with the West German presidential elections. Protest demonstrations and minor harassments are still a possibility.

OK (b) While there are no reliable indications of a bloc intent to deny Allied or West German access to West Berlin, or to seal off West Berlin in the immediate future, such action could be taken with little or no warning.

2. Soviet diplomatic activity relating to the resumption of East-West negotiations at Geneva continues to aim at weakening the Western position with a combination of professed willingness to reach agreement and threats of crisis and possible war if no agreement is reached.

3. During the recess of the foreign ministers' conference, ending 13 July, the USSR will not conclude a separate peace treaty with the GDR or turn over access controls to the East Germans. The Soviet Union will continue to use threats of such action as a form of pressure on the West; nevertheless, so long as the USSR estimates that there are any prospects for a summit conference, it probably will not take such action. The

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actual physical transfer of controls could be accomplished with little or no warning.

4. The West Berlin economy has thus far in 1959 been characterized by record high levels in production. Morale in West Berlin continues high.

5. There have been no significant changes in Soviet capabilities to respond to possible Western actions in the event of turnover, harassment, or blockade.

6. There were no major intelligence indications of Western allied diplomatic intentions, apart from information obtained through official contacts with US representatives. [REDACTED]

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