

December 10, 1948 Central Intelligence Agency Memorandum for the President on the Situation in Berlin

Citation:

"Central Intelligence Agency Memorandum for the President on the Situation in Berlin", December 10, 1948, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CWIHP archives. https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/116188

Summary:

CIA Memorandum for President Truman on US position on Soviet actions in Berlin.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

40° 50°CC

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENC WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

approved for release through the HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM of the Central Intelligence agency KI

W.D. Essen

10 December 1948

MEICRANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

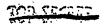
The recent action of the USSR in recognizing an east Berlin government is representative of the shift which has taken place in the Krenlin's estimate concerning its capabilities in the Berlin dispute. Originally, it appeared that the Soviet Mockade of Berlin was designed primarily to gain western power concessions regarding western Gernany and secondarily to force the US, the UK, and France to evacuate Berlin. The refusal of the western powers to regatiate under duress has apparently convinced the Krenlin that its chance of gaining the primary objective is remote. Soviet strategy is now concentrating upon the secondary objective, with a view to forcing the West either to evacuate the city or to negotiate on terms which will make the western position in Berlin ineffective and eventually untenable.

Stringent blockade In pursuit of this objective, the USSR cry now impose a more stringent blockade of the western sectors of Zerlin. The USSR con cite the recent "illegal" elections in the western sectors, or the possible introduction of the western mark as the sole legal currency in the western sectors, as an excuse to throw a cordon around the western sectors, as an excuse to throw a cordon around the western sectors. The successful sealing-off of the "estern sectors of the city, combined with the establishment of the east Zerlin government, would seriously damage both the political and the economic position of the western powers in Zerlin.

Political effects In the political realm, the effect of this double action would be to: (1) destroy all pretense that Berlin'is a unified city, thereby making UN agreements on overall Berlin affairs all but impossible to implaient; (2) hanger the administration of Berlin's western sectors by cutting off the operation of public utilities and services on a city-wide basis; (2) dispirit pro-western elements in both the east and west sectors; (4) diminish Berlin's accessibility as a political sanctuary for anti-Communist Germans and Soriet deserters; and (5) reduce the amphilities of the western powers for amporting anti-Communist factions in the Soviet Lone.

Tod dicort

Declarefied by Letter from NAC:



Economic effects | The economic effects of this action would be to: (1) drastically reduce commerce between the east and west sectors, which now permits the blockeded Berliners to maintain a minimum business activity, thereby making it necessary to considerably empand the airlift; (2) increase physical hardship and curteil business activity through the probable stoppage of public utilities now supplied from the Soviet sector of the city; (3) cut off thousands of Berliners who live in one sector and work in the other from free movement to and from their work; and (4) force the western powers to make the western mark practically the sole currency for their sectors of Berlin in order to support the trade formarry conducted in eastern marks and to overcome the currency shortage.

Soviet position. The intensification of the Soviet blockede of Perlin, combined with the establishment of the Joviet sector government, will considerably bolster the bargaining position of the USE. In response to future UN recommendations, the USE ner insist, as a condition to further negotiations, either that UN action is applicable only to the western sectors of Perlin or that the Soviet-controlled regime of eastern Berlin must be recognized as the sole legal government for the city. More likely to seem an expealing solution to the neutral nations in the Un, however, would be a claim by the USER that the Soviet-commated administration of eastern Jorlin must be neighed into any Perlin government. Acceptance of this claim could permit the USER to regain an indirect control over key positions in the western city government, leading to a probable future assumption of complete administrative power. Such control would enable the USER ultimately to realize its objectives in the Perlin dispute.

Regullularity

E. H. EILLETOFFER

Rear Admirel, USH

Director of Central Intelligence

Top receive