Crisis Over Berlin

A Study Produced by the Historical Office, United States Department of State

Crisis over Berlin was produced by the Historical Office of the Department of State at the request of Martin J. Hillenbrand, a senior Foreign Service Officer and scholar of Germany. Hillenbrand requested the document in his capacity as Deputy Head of the Berlin Task Force (BTF), an interagency body charged with coordinating responses to the Berlin crisis. Hillenbrand’s formal request of March 4, 1963 notes that the BTF found military histories of the crisis operationally helpful. Hillenbrand also hoped a State Department project focusing on the diplomatic aspects of the crisis would be, “useful in the future when the history of this particular foreign policy problem comes to be written.” The Historical Office accepted the tasking on March 22, 1963. Dr. Arthur Kogan was relieved of his other duties to fulfill Hillenbrand’s request. In conversation with Kogan, Hillenbrand emphasized the historical import of the project, requesting a “thorough” account of “some length.” Kogan received extensive access to highly classified Department of State documents for the purpose of creating the most comprehensive possible account. To address Hillenbrand’s request for a comprehensive account, Kogan designed an eight-part study covering the period November 1958-December 1962. Kogan transmitted the draft of Part I to Hillenbrand on August 21, 1964. Hillenbrand extensively involved himself in the project, critiquing Part I in detail. Kogan noted, “Your comments and suggestions regarding Part I were most helpful and they have been fully taken into account in the drafting of the final version.” While waiting for Hillenbrand’s comments on Part I, Kogan finished drafts of Parts II, III, and IV. Hillenbrand, newly appointed Minister to Bonn, brought Kogan to Berlin in June 1965 so he could take an aerial tour of the city and speak to key actors in the Berlin crisis. Soon after the completion of this trip, Kogan was appointed Chief of the Research Guidance and Review Branch of the Historical Office. Kogan’s new duties prevented him from working extensively on the Berlin study; he noted regretfully on January 24, 1967 that Hillenbrand’s revisions to Parts II, III, IV, and V had not been included and that his work on the draft of Part VI was incomplete. Kogan sent Part VI to Hillenbrand on June 14, 1967. Writing that he would not be able to undertake the final two sections of the study, he expressed his belief that the present study, extending to September 1961, was sufficiently detailed to accomplish Hillenbrand’s goals. The final copy of Part II was sent to Hillenbrand on August 11, 1969. The transmission letter for Part II stated that Parts III, IV, V, and VI, “will be given the final treatment before many months.” In March and April of 1970, Hillenbrand, then serving as Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR), sent final versions of the Parts I through VI to senior officials in EUR, the Executive Secretariat to the Secretary of State, the United States Embassy in Bonn, and the NSC. Hillenbrand’s enduring
fondness for the project led him to request declassification of the study, and in his memoir, *Fragments of Our Time: Memoirs of a Diplomat*, Hillenbrand praised Kogan’s valuable and detailed work.⁶

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