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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

12 October 1963

DAILY BRIEF

USSR-Berlin: The USIB Watch Committee met in special session at 1430, 11 October, to consider developments bearing on the Soviet detention of US Berlin convoys on 10 and 11 October and the accompanying "show-of-force" by Soviet troops at the Babelsberg checkpoint on 11 October

The Watch Committee has reviewed all available evidence pertaining to Soviet bloc military activities. We discern no general readying of Soviet forces in the vicinity of Berlin or elsewhere in East Germany or the USSR. We discern no Soviet military preparations to expand the current convoy incidents into a major confrontation or to initiate other major harassing moves against the allied position in Berlin

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[REDACTED]

*Berlin Situation: (As of 0430 EDT) The US
convoy remains at Babelsberg just outside Berlin.
The Soviets have been asked to send a senior offi-
cer to Babelsberg to discuss the situation. Their
reply is expected shortly. [REDACTED]

12 Oct 63

DAILY BRIEF

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USSR-Berlin: Soviet interference with US convoys on the Berlin autobahn may be aimed in part at drawing the West into negotiations on both access procedures and the broader question of the status of Western forces in West Berlin.

The USSR may be seeking to prepare the way for formally raising a demand for Western payment for the use of communication facilities on East German territory.

In talks with US and British leaders this summer, both Khrushchev and Gromyko referred to the need for a new tariff on Western military and civilian rail transport, autobahn tolls on Western military personnel and cargo transport, and payment for the use of communication cables crossing East Germany. The USSR almost certainly would attempt to use negotiations on these matters to press its demand for Western respect for East German "sovereign rights."

The Soviet leaders may believe that the test ban treaty and progress toward agreement on other issues of secondary importance have created an opportunity for reopening Berlin negotiations.

They may have calculated that a display of pressure on the sensitive Berlin access question was necessary to induce the US and Britain to disregard French and West German opposition to such negotiations at this time.

Gromyko firmly reiterated the Soviet position that access questions are linked to the status of West Berlin, German frontiers, and a peace treaty.

Moscow probably foresees a protracted period of negotiations and plans to follow a step-by-step approach.

using discussion of access procedures as an avenue for leading into the central problem of the status of Western forces in West Berlin

As part of this strategy, the Russians may envisage further sporadic harassment of Western communications as a means of underscoring the issues they intend to press as well as generating pressure on the West to agree to negotiations

Soviet officials in the past have made sporadic attempts to induce the US to change established autobahn procedures. They have always backed down, however, when faced with firm opposition to obstructions of passage on the access routes.