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CHRONOLOGY
INTERFERENCE ON BERLIN-HELMSTADT AUTOBAHN
9-11 OCTOBER

OCI#-3055

MARIENBORN--9 October

- 1111Z (0711) US convoy of dismount size arrived at Marienborn but refused to dismount because of rain. Refusal was in line with established procedure. Soviet assistant Checkpoint Commander insisted that convoy would not be cleared until personnel dismounted.
- 1336Z (0936) Rain ceased. US personnel dismounted and were processed through checkpoint.

MARIENBORN--10 October

- 0759Z (0359) US eastbound convoy 27, consisting of 16 or 18 vehicles and 58 or 61 personnel, including drivers and assistant drivers, arrived at Marienborn. Sov OIC insisted personnel dismount, US OIC refused.
- 0910Z (0410) US westbound convoy 24, consisting of 28 or 25 vehicles and 73 personnel, arrived at Marienborn and went through the same routine. Neither convoy was of dismount size.
- 1028Z (0628) US westbound convoy 25, consisting of 27 vehicles and 109 or 117 men, arrived at Marienborn and pulled in behind convoy 24, with orders not to submit for processing until convoy 24 had been cleared. Convoy 25 was of dismount size.
- 1110Z (0710) US Checkpoint Alpha protested to Marienborn Soviet Commandant Spiridonov, who replied that if US would dismount vehicles in convoy 27 with 5 or more personnel in rear, convoy 24 need not dismount. Convoy 25 would still have to dismount, he implied. US refused.
- 1511Z (1111) On orders from Gen. McConnell, convoy 25 moved ahead of 24, dismounted, and was processed through to West Germany. This was after rain stopped.

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1530Z Chief USMLM delivered protest to SERB (GSFG) in
(1130) Potsdam.

1900Z Upon authority Gen. McConnell, acting CINCUSAREUR, and
(1500) with clearance from Bonn, USCOB authorized delivery to
SERB (GSFG) and Spiridonov of ultimatum to effect
that if clearance procedures had not begun by 2030Z,
convoys would proceed without clearance. Ultimatum
actually delivered to SERB, not to Spiridonov, ap-
parently.

2000Z Gromyko arrives at White House for previously scheduled
(1600) talk. Gromyko agreed to send a message to Moscow "in-
fluencing" course of events on autobahn.

2045Z US Autobahn operations officer delivered ultimatum to
(1645) Spiridonov extending deadline until 2245Z.

2225Z On orders from USCOB, convoy 24 held up civilian traffic
(1825) moving into checkpoint area from east, while German
customs police stopped eastbound traffic at interzonal
border, thus cutting off all traffic flow into checkpoint
area.

2230Z Sovs pulled truck across three westbound lanes and
(1830) stationed 1 officer and 5 EM (armed) between truck and
convoy 24. Five armed Sov soldiers replaced East Ger-
man customs personnel in the checkpoint shack.

2240Z Sovs told US Autobahn operations officer they were willing
(1840) to clear convoys by counting personnel in vehicles (i.e.
without dismounting) if the US would move its vehicles back
in line and thus stop blocking traffic from the east. This
was done.

2245Z Ultimatum scheduled to expire.
(1845)

2312Z Convoy 27 (eastbound) cleared Marienborn.
(1912)

2402Z Convoy 24 (westbound) cleared Marienborn.
(2402)

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~~SECRET~~BABELSBERG--11 October

0353Z
(2453) Convoy 27, released from Marienborn at 2312Z, arrived at Babelsberg and was detained by Sovs until personnel dismounted. US OIC again refused to dismount and contacted USCOB.

0431Z
(0031) US Provost Marshal officier delivered verbal protest to Soviet Babelsberg Commander. He replied he had instructions not to clear convoy until personnel dismounted.

0615Z
(0215) Westbound convoy 28 dismounted (because of dismount size) and cleared thru Babelsberg. It continued down Autobahn toward Marienborn.

0726Z
(0326) Westbound convoy 29, also of dismount size, left Berlin for Babelsberg with orders to dismount, be processed, then remain in area pending release of convoy 27. At last report it was at Babelsberg having arrived 0826Z. Reports conflict on whether it had been processed.

0745Z
(0345) Helicopter reconnaissance revealed no Soviet or East German reinforcements in area.

0845Z
(0445) Gen. McConnell, Deputy CINCEUR, authorized ultimatum be delivered to Soviets at checkpoint and at GSFG to effect that if convoy 27 not cleared within two hours, it would proceed without clearance.

0910Z
(0710) Soviets reportedly gave convoy 27 a half hour to dismount or else Soviets would close the Autobahn.

0945Z
(0745) McConnell's protest and ultimatum delivered simultaneously to SERB (GSFG) and Soviet Commander Babelsberg.

1020Z
(0620) Two Sov units w/ 8 APCs were brought into Babelsberg area.

1045Z
(0645)-
1100Z
(0700) Convoy 27 reportedly attempted to proceed without clearance but was blocked by 4 of the Soviet APCs which had been brought into area. Eleven others were now standing by. This probably blocked eastbound lanes. GDR vehicles (number and type unknown) blocked westbound lanes but were disassociated from any actions against convoys.

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1300Z JCS met to work out recommendations for President.
(0900)

1335Z JCS meeting ended.
(0935)

1400Z Secretary Rusk delivered verbal protest to Soviet Am-
(1000) bassador Dobrynin in Washington. Earlier US Ambassador
Kohler had delivered oral protest to Soviet Foreign
Office in Moscow.

1530Z Received recommendations of 3 Western Commandants in
(1130) Berlin

1. Free-style mechanism to be set in motion.
2. Commandants to direct protest to Yakubovskiy.
3. US convoys to stay in place.
4. British and French convoys (presumably from Berlin)
to join them.

1550Z Watch office called; CINCEUR message of 1134Z (0734 EDT)
(1150) to say US and Sovs had met, presumably in Potsdam, and Sov
rep had said Sovs were not going to yield one inch--from
DIA by phone.

1623Z JCS instructed McConnell that USAREUR was not to move any
(1223) further convoys over the autobahn which are of such a size
that they will not dismount.

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Add #1 To AUTOBAHN CHRONOLOGY
11 October 1963 (Continued)

OCI-#3055/A

1150Z (0950) A USMLM official was given following message by acting chief SERB to transmit to C/S, USAREUR: "Convoy commander...must follow normal procedure for verification like other convoy commanders have already done or the column will not be allowed to proceed....This decision is final."

1203Z (0803) Bonn Quadripartite Group instructed Gen. McConnell to alert Free Style probe in place but not to move it.

No Time Gen. McConnell ordered all elements of Free Style force (Type C) to be placed on "a high state of readiness at their home stations until further notice." This apparently in response to above item.

1300Z (0900) Secretary of State Rusk called in Dobrynin "To express our concern about this entirely unwarranted Soviet action."

1737Z (1337) AP reports Department of State spokesman told press re Rusk-Dobrynin meeting "We have no reason to think that the Soviets will not reconsider."

1346Z (0946) A Soviet MIG circled three times over the convoys at Babelsberg.

1610Z (1210) Report from State Ops

Bonn tripartite group suggest following solution to allow face saving by Soviets:

1. Meeting of reps of Soviet and US at Checkpoint, this to be suggested in a letter to Soviets by General Freeman for General Yakubovsky. General Baker Chief of Staff for General Freeman will represent US, and state US not altering excepted procedures and cite convoys that have been passed by Soviets previously.
2. Bonn group suggested to the French and British that they send similar letters to General Yakubovsky in which they express amazement and astonishment regarding situation. The French and British reps have accepted and prepositioned these messages with their appropriate reps for passage.

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(1217)

WO [] telephoned further information on the meeting of the 3 commandants this morning. They agreed that (1) the three Allied commander-in-chief in Europe should deliver a protest to GSFG commander-in-chief Yakubovsky; (2) the two convoys should remain in Babelsberg (there will be no difficulties about supplies); (3) the commandants considered that there might be some merit in sending convoys like US convoy 29 to Babelsberg--ice. to process and remain in place; (4) they considered that the time was not right for Backstroke and believed that there would be more merit in (2).

1758Z
(1358)

Co. Geissen reported that J-2 (Col Sherritt) had talked to Gen. McConnell and that he understood that Freestyle had been ordered to stand by near Helmstedt and Backstroke in Berlin but neither had received orders to move. (Col. Geissen wondered whether the Sovs were confused about our procedures.)

1930Z
(1530)

White House has approved Freestyle and has approved meeting at Checkpoint of General Baker with representative of General Yakubovsky. Baker instructed to say that we are willing to discuss question of access after convoy passed. (By telephone [])

1810Z
(1610)

Noon meeting at White House with JCS

1. Freestyle to be examined
2. Backstroke to be thought of but not given serious consideration
3. Babelsberg meeting of Generals approved
4. A dismountable convey to be sent out; not clear whether from Berlin or West Germany
5. Tripartite protest to be drafted for delivery in Moscow.

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Add #2 To AUTOBAHN CHRONOLOGY
11 October 1963 (Continued)

OCI-#3055/B

- 1445Z (1045) Two inquiries by Soviet officers since 10 October Marienborn incident as to when US convoys dismount. Col. Sergin quoted as saying that he didn't mind if only "a few" men in a truck wouldn't dismount, but he implied he objected to whole truckloads failing to dismount. (From Heidelberg)
- 2030Z (1630) Zorin summons Kohler. Says Kohler had misrepresented situation. Claims US change in procedures caused incident "in violation" agreed understanding that personnel in convoys of more than 5 vehicles were obliged to dismount. Zorin notes that #27 is comprised of 18 vehicles and 61 men, and #29 of 27 vehicles and 140 men. (We carry #27 with 16 to 18 vehicles and 58 to 61 men; #29 we note is of dismount size.) "Sov Government has no intention of doing anything to worsen existing relationships."
- 2140Z (1740) CINCEUR Flash: Recommendations of 3023 (JCS to CINCEUR) being done. Details below:
1. Free-Style had been alerted in Helmstedt to be ready to assemble on 4-hour notice.
 2. Back Stroke: Alerted but not assembled (in Berlin).
 3. Freeman to seek meeting for US C/S w/GSFG C/S.
 4. No concur (Dept 1311 11 17 48) concerning release of "formula." (i.e., exactly when US dismounts or not)
 5. Large US convoy to be dispatched asap.
 6. 29 to stand fast.
- 2300Z (1900) East Germans harassing civilian traffic at Marienborn, as they did last night. Allied military traffic (POVs) passing w/o difficulty.
- 2355Z (1955) Freeman - Yakenborsky later delivered -- suggests Baker meeting at Babelsberg. Col. Banov will transmit immediately.
- 12 Oct (0015) State Cable (11 Oct) Khrushchev seen in car in Yalta area on 7 Oct.
- 0640Z (0240) Berlin Duty Officer "knows of no scheduled meeting." (In answer to question from NMCC on Gen. Baker meeting with Sovs at Babelsberg)

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0705Z Frankfurt DO says Gen. Baker enroute Berlin. Awaiting
(0305) Soviet acceptance of scheduling for meeting. (NMCC by
phone.)

0820Z Heidelberg says Gen. Baker still in Heidelberg. (NMCC by
(0420) phone.)

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OCI-#3092

CHRONOLOGY OF
BRITISH CONVOY STOPPAGE

15 October

- 0515Z Westbound British convoy #15 consisting of nine vehicles and 28 men--non-dismount category--reported to Babelsberg. Soviet officer refused since it was small convoy and dismounting not required.
- A second British non-dismount convoy #16 was ordered by UKCOB to remain at the Allied checkpoint at Dreilinden.
- 0530Z Sergin and interpreter arrived on scene. Sergin said if the occupants of the three vehicles containing respectively four, five, and five men dismounted for count convoy would be cleared. The British officer refused.
- 0620Z British Assistant Provost Marshal arrived and told Sergin that the rules concerning clearance of convoys was quite clear, had been worked over the past year, and that he had no intention of dismounting the men. Sergin replied that there never had been such a rule and that he was now saying that all convoys of five or more vehicles must dismount. The British officer refused to have the men dismount. During this exchange Sergin affable and friendly.
- 0645Z A US administrative convoy #33 (non-dismountable) of four vehicles and eight personnel passed through Marienborn.
- 0720Z Sergin made telephone call and on returning to convoy he rudely stated that if convoy would dismount it would be cleared in 30 seconds. British officer refused.
- 0930Z CINC EUCOM notified US, UK, French, and German officials that in view of the situation at Babelsberg it might be necessary to assemble a FREESTYLE FORCE (Type C) and requested them to alert at a high state of readiness all elements of their forces, including command and control elements.

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Add #3 to AUTOBAHN CHRONOLOGY
12 October 1963

OCI-#3055/C

1100Z General Baker still in Heidelberg. (NMCC by phone)
(0700)

1115Z NMCC called (Basher). General McConnell to General Taylor.
(0715) Convoy 27 released without dismounting. Convoy 29 standing
 by until #27 all the way through, then proceeding out to the
 West.

1140Z NMCC called. Verbatim statement of Soviet checkpoint
(0740) commander at Babelsberg to US convoy commander, "I am
 tired of playing games. I will clear you without dismounting."

1146Z Convoy #27 cleared checkpoint at Babelsberg.
(0746)

1150Z Convoy #27 entered West Berlin.
(0750)

1210Z Convoy #29 bound west cleared Babelsberg.
(0810)

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- 0955Z US administrative convoy #33 cleared Babelsberg.
- 1128Z Reuters reports British Brigadier General D.L. Darling, Head of the British Military Mission at Potsdam delivered a protest to GSFG. Text not available. (R-36) UKCOB to deliver same protest at same time to Soviet checkpoint commander.
- 1430Z Soviets released British convoy 15 under normal procedures.

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OCI-#3092-A

CHRONOLOGY OF
BRITISH CONVOY STOPPAGE16 October

- 0515Z Westbound British convoy #15 consisting of nine vehicles and 28 men--non-dismount category--reported to Babelsberg. Soviet officer requested convoy to dismount for headcount. British officer refused since it was small convoy and dismounting not required.
- A second British non-dismount convoy #16 was ordered by UKCOB to remain at the Allied checkpoint at Dreilinden.
- 0530Z Sergin and interpreter arrived on scene. Sergin said if the occupants of the three vehicles containing respectively four, five, and five men dismounted for count, convoy would be cleared. The British officer refused.
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- 0645Z A US administrative convoy #33 (non-dismountable) of four vehicles and eight personnel passed through Marienborn.
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- 0930Z CINC EUCOM notified US, UK, French, and German officials that in view of the situation at Babelsburg it might be necessary to assemble a FREESTYLE FORCE (Type C) and requested them to alert at a high state of readiness all elements of their forces, including command and control elements.

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0930Z

British Assistant Provost Marshal delivered a formal protest to Col. Sergin at Babelsberg as follows: "Your authorities have held up British convoy Number 15 for four hours and fifteen minutes by seeking to make an entirely unwarranted change in the procedures that have been accepted hitherto. I am instructed by the British authorities in Berlin to make a protest in the strongest terms against the action. I am also instructed to request that this protest be forwarded at once to your higher authorities. Soviet action in attempting to make an unwarranted change in the accepted procedure is solely responsible for the delay to this convoy and the Soviet authorities will therefore be responsible for the consequences if they persist in their present attitude." [redacted]

British Brigadier General D.L. Darling, Head of the British Military Mission at Potsdam delivered a protest to GSFG. Text not available. To be delivered at same time as note delivered to Soviet commandant at Babelsburg.

In reply SERB protested about action of British convoy commander in not complying with agreed procedure, and stated that Soviet procedures were as follows: (A) Warning of a column is passed to the control point in advance; (B) If there is no warning the column is not allowed to pass; (C) The column arrives and stops beside the Soviet personnel; (D) The crews get out of their vehicles and two men only are allowed to stay in each vehicle purely for Soviet convenience; (E) When this is completed the column is allowed through. SERB went on to say there are certain exceptions to this procedure when single vehicles pass through the men are not made to dismount. The column today did not wish to follow the accepted procedure. Chief Brixmis was told to explain to the column commander and future commanders of columns that the delay was unnecessary and the fault was that of the British authorities. Chief Brixmis rejected Soviet protest and read out the agreed British protest. One hour fifteen minutes of inconclusive arguments followed. SERB and Chief Brixmis agreed to report to respective authorities concerned. SERB ended by saying this is such a small matter that the British should be able to settle it. Chief Brixmis replied that it might be a small matter but important principles were at issue and the Soviet authorities should be able to settle the matter immediately by sticking to agreed procedures.

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 At conclusion of NAC meeting 16 October, UK permanent representative stated that UK convoy was held up that morning at Babelsberg by the Soviets, and that while the Soviet motives were unknown, the incident appeared to fall into the same category of those of last week. The acting Secretary General asked the council to remain on stand-by and in readiness to convene on short notice. [redacted]

0955Z US administrative convoy #33 cleared Babelsberg.

1040Z CINCEUR reported that Gen. Lemnitzer was in London and Gen. McConnell acting. The latter believed that the detention of UK convoy #15 was done on a directive from a higher Soviet authority, since Sergin knows that the number of vehicles has nothing to do with dismounting procedure. McConnell cited Zorin's statement to Kohler that convoys of more than 5 vehicles are dismountable. [redacted]

1110Z CINCEUR reported that Gen. Hublot, deputy to Gen. Aillert --at the instance of LIVE OAK--was suggesting to the Quai d'Orsay that the French schedule and send a convoy of more than 5 vehicles with less than 40 men (exclusive of drivers). Such a convoy would not be dismountable in accordance with French procedures. Gen. Hublot concurs but must await the Quai's decision. CINCEUR also noted that LIVE OAK had alerted FREESTYLE at home stations to be ready to commence movement to assembly area on four hour's notice. [redacted]

1430Z Soviets released British convoy 15 under normal procedures.

1640Z LIVE OAK reports CINCBAOR has approved return of elements of UK Berlin troops training in West Germany. Two companies will return by train today and remainder in clearly dismountable convoys on 17 October.

1720Z British convoy #15 arrived at Marienborn. Delayed while Soviets requested that personnel dismount. British refused.

1810Z British convoy #15 cleared Marienborn without dismounting.

1945Z British convoy #16 which had been standing by at Dreilinden checkpoint returned to West Berlin without attempting to clear through Babelsberg.

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