

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification

Department of State

TELEGRAM

PL 32-1  
JANUARY 16, 1973  
1810L

INDICATE:

- COLLECT
- CHARGE TO

DISTRIBUTION

POL-3  
 MIN-2  
 USCOB  
 BBDE  
 EAS  
 G-2  
 ECON  
 USIS  
 ASAG-2  
 DCSI-2  
 CHRON  
 /16

CONTROL 0090

ACTION: Amembassy BONN

INFO: SecState WASH DC  
 CINCEUR FOR POLAD & OPS  
 CINCUS<sup>PR</sup>EUR FOR POLAD & OPS  
 USELMLO/CASTEAU

BERLIN 90

SUBJ: Gosener Graben

1. At last month's meeting of Allied Commandants, the British raised once more the question of the barrier ~~erected~~ <sup>erected</sup> by the East Germans in January 1971 some 800 meters inside boundary of Greater Berlin in vicinity of Gosener Graben. Addressees will recall that after almost a year of somewhat circular discussions with the Soviets -- supplemented by the despatch of letters from the three Ambassadors -- a French patrol, more or less accidentally, but nonetheless successfully, passed the barrier and returned without incident in December 1971. A British patrol also passed without incident in February 1972. Commandants originally agreed in principle to mount one ~~probe~~ probe of the checkpoint per Ally per year but, due to the various negotiations concerning

DRAFTED BY:

POL:HRPhelps:sfb

DRAFTING DATE

1/16/73

TEL. EXT.

APPROVED BY:

POLAD: CABorg

CLEARANCES:

USCOB: Col. RDRenick (substance)

Classified by: H. R. Phelps  
 Subject to GDS of EO 11652  
 Automatically downgraded at 2-year intervals.  
 Declassified on 31 December 19 79

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Berlin which occupied most of 1972, a US probe was never despatched and the patrols of all three Allies have, during past year, stayed well away from the area.

2. The British Commandant now wishes to reinstate Gosener Graben probe program as an assertion of Allied rights of free circulation in Berlin. However, we see very little to be gained from such an exercise. As situation stands now, we have on record unrefuted letters to the Soviet Ambassador stating that the Quadripartitely agreed boundaries of Greater Berlin cannot be altered unilaterally and that we do not recognize any change of boundary in the area in question. Additionally, the Soviets have stated orally that there has been no change in the boundary and Allied vehicles have on two occasions asserted our rights by going past the checkpoint and up to the agreed limit of Berlin. We have no operational need to traverse the small distance in question and believe that continued attempts to confront the Soviets on the issue would risk provoking an objectionable response which would create a situation less satisfactory than that now existing.

3. The French here tell us that they may recommend that the Allies begin sending patrols to the vicinity of the barrier to observe whether it is open or closed and whether the light is red or green; in event of open barrier and green light patrol would attempt to go through. In our view, this is least satisfactory of all options since, due to topography of area, a patrol cannot observe the checkpoint without itself being seen and thus would have tacitly accepted the barrier if it failed to go through. An attempt to take advantage of an open barrier and green light could easily lead to an uncontrolled confrontation.

4. We recommend that we be authorized to inform Allies that Ambassador wishes to leave things as they are at Gosener Graben. He believes it would be counterproductive to attempt any probes of the checkpoint at this juncture.

5. USCOB concurs.

GDS

DK  
KLEIN (AB)