

that the only stiff talk by the Russians to him was on the first day of his recent Geneva meeting with Gromyko. Gromyko had read from a paper on that occasion and the rest of the several days of conversations appeared to be an effort to soften the impact of the prepared statement. Even as Gromyko was reading it, he pointed out that the statement did not take into account things which he had already said that same day.

Mr. Hillenbrand, in response to the Secretary's question, said he considered the difference between Gromyko's statement on the first day and on subsequent days to be more a difference of tone than of substance.

The Secretary recalled that when he had rejected Gromyko's threat, Gromyko had not come back and redoubled it.

The Secretary stated he supposed that all intelligence services were alerted with their antenna out to sense any indications of a new Soviet move. Our intelligence service had been alerted.

Lord Hood asked what was next as regards the exchanges with Dobrynin.

The Secretary said that they owe us comments on two propositions, namely, the proposal regarding a Deputy Foreign Ministers' forum and the matter of non-dissemination involved in the Irish Resolution. He did not expect that Dobrynin would be giving us further comments on the test ban question in the near future.

93. Memorandum From William Y. Smith to the President's Military Representative (Taylor)

Washington, August 9, 1962.

SUBJECT

Briefing for the President on Berlin¹

IN ATTENDANCE

The President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary McNamara
Deputy Secretary Gilpatric
Mr. McCone
General Lemnitzer

Source: National Defense University, Taylor Papers, Box 38, 505 Berlin Contingency Planning, Top Secret. Initialed by Smith. A similar account drafted by General Gray is *ibid.*

¹ The briefing was held at 10:35 a.m. (Rusk Appointment Book; Johnson Library)

Ambassador Dowling
Mr. Bundy
and various "horse holders"

1. The briefing you tried to arrange in August 1961 finally came off a year later. The intervening period has been used both to widen the areas of agreement and to sharpen those of disagreement among the Allies. Mr. Ausland's briefing followed the attached text² very closely. Only two interruptions of significance occurred at points indicated in the text.

2. The first major interruption occurred when Secretary McNamara observed that the Allies still could not agree on what sort of mobilization was needed in Phase II (non-combatant actions after significant blockage of access) and that this agreement was not likely to be achieved until consensus had been reached on what military measures to take (e.g., when to use tactical nuclears) in Phases III and IV. The President asked what the difficulties were in reaching agreement with our Allies. In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

a. Secretary McNamara acknowledged our European Allies wanted to use nuclear weapons earlier in the military operations than did we. In response to the President's question as to whether the Allies chose this course in order to eliminate the need for economic and military build-up actions, Secretary Rusk and Secretary McNamara agreed that the Allied feeling came from several sources:

(1) The Europeans prefer to rely on the early use of nuclear weapons because of their deterrent effect.

(2) The Germans especially fear that reliance on conventional strategy would enable the Russians to seize part or all of Germany and then negotiate.

b. Secretary McNamara said he thought the European arguments were wrong for three reasons: they overestimated the strength of the USSR; they imply that their salvation rested on the early use of tactical nuclear weapons without understanding the effects of these weapons; and finally, they afforded the Allies an excuse not to build up the conventional forces they had agreed to in the NATO Council.

c. The President wondered how much real difference there was in our positions, since we were only asking our Allies to build their forces to 30 divisions, and the planning for these goals rested on an assumption of early use of tactical nuclear weapons. Secretary McNamara replied that analysis last summer had shown that with 30 divisions we could hold a considerable period of time—not months, but at least some weeks.

² Not found.

d. As an aside, the President asked whether we had asked the Germans to build their conventional forces to 750,000 men as reported in the *New York Times* this morning. The *Times* article sounded so authentic and precise that the President questioned if it had been backgrounded. It had not been. Secretary McNamara pointed out that the story was wrong on two counts: we had indeed asked the Germans to increase their forces, but not by any definite number, and the Germans had not refused. Furthermore, Defense Minister Strauss had requested Secretary McNamara to ask him to build up Germany's conventional forces. Mr. McNamara did so, and that's how our request came about.

e. The President asked why Adenauer didn't stand up and support US positions before De Gaulle. The answer was that the Germans are sure of our support, but are not as sure of the French; therefore they defer more to French whims. But they do not always give in. The President said that perhaps we spent too much time reassuring our Allies. Ambassador Dowling commented that the time will soon come when indeed we should ask the Germans if their protests are serious and to let them know that we are becoming concerned about their motives in all this discussion.

3. The second interruption occurred when the President asked whether there is as much disagreement between the US and our Allies on the use of tactical nuclear weapons as there seems to be. He would agree with the Europeans that if the Russians started a mass attack against Europe, we almost would be forced to use nuclear weapons against the first Russian who came across the line. Therefore, our disagreements seemed to be exaggerated. We seem to be involved in a theoretical argument with our Allies; and no one ever gives on these. He questioned if we couldn't find some way around the impasse, say by telling our Allies that we would agree to the early use of tactical nuclear weapons if they would build up 30 divisions. We could do this, since the 30 division figure assumed the early use of nuclear weapons. Such an approach would put the pressure on them. The following points were then made:

a. Secretary McNamara said if we agreed to the early use of nuclear weapons, our Allies would say this obviated the necessity for going to 30 divisions, just as Kissinger's article had done in the July issue of *Foreign Affairs*. (Kissinger actually said that more than 30 divisions would be needed to implement successfully a strategy employing tactical nuclear weapons.)

b. Secretary McNamara also said it was wrong to assume the early use of nuclear weapons since, as Secretary Rusk had stated earlier, all the heads of governments would want to know the conditions which

justified the use of nuclear weapons and to reach this decision would require time and some conventional defensive efforts.

c. The President said that if there were no Berlin situation, he would be inclined to agree with the Allies on the use of tactical nuclear weapons. It is the Berlin situation in which we might become involved in actions to restore access which makes the European position invalid.

d. Secretaries McNamara and Rusk agreed that the Allied reluctance to build up conventional forces sprang from two basic factors: they believed that nuclear strategy offered the best hope of insuring deterrence, and also they did not want to spend the money.

2. Several other matters were discussed briefly:

a. The President asked what we would do in the next couple of months in Berlin planning. The answer was to get greater Allied agreement on military mobilization plans. Secretary McNamara said he expected progress in the next 4–6 weeks.

b. The President asked how our planning stood to meet a Russian action for signing a GDR peace treaty over some weekend. The answer was we have fairly good plans, but that this is considered an unlikely event. The Russians will want to exploit the signing of the peace treaty and perhaps call some sort of peace conference. Thus, although the signing of a peace treaty may occur, it is unlikely to occur suddenly.

c. The President asked what we should do if the Russians take the Berlin problem to the UN. Secretary Rusk said this might not be all bad because the general philosophy at the UN is: "Continue talking, don't shoot." The President asked if we couldn't somehow tie any Khrushchev proposal to a plebiscite in West Berlin which would let the Berliners choose whether they preferred their present status, the USSR proposal of incorporation into East Germany, or becoming a free city under the UN. Although there was no specific discussion of these proposals, there was general agreement that a plebiscite would turn out advantageous for us, and that whatever the Russians did at the UN, we would attempt to play up the lack of free determination of the East German people in these events.

d. In response to a presidential request to Secretary McNamara about whether Congress should be asked for powers to call up additional reserve forces this fall, Secretary McNamara said he thought such a request should await the adjourning days of Congress. During the interim he would talk to Senator Russell and Congressman Vinson to let them know that the Administration would probably ask for authority to call up 50,000 to 100,000 men if needed. During this brief discussion, Secretary McNamara gave one of his numerical recitations of what we had called up last year and how we stood at the present time. It was impressive for his knowledge of details, if not for its overall impact.