

TAB

STATE

- A Laos
- B The Congo and the African Situation
- C Cuba, the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean
- D Algeria and US Problems with France
- E Berlin
- F Nuclear Test Talks and Disarmament

DEFENSE

- G Appraisal of Limited War Requirements Versus Limited War Capabilities

TREASURY

- H Coordination and Development of basic economic, fiscal and monetary policies.



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Topics suggested by Mr. Kennedy

SECRET

BERLIN

Continuing Soviet objectives appear to be separation of Berlin from West Germany, establishment of the so-called "free city", incorporation of Berlin into East Germany, consolidation of the East German and Eastern European regimes, and extension from this base of Soviet control throughout Germany.

Since November 1958, the Soviets have threatened to conclude a "separate peace treaty" with East Germany, designed to give it full control over access to Berlin. More recently, the USSR and East Germany have adopted a more subtle erosion of the Western position. The separate treaty has been subordinated to claims that East Germany is already fully sovereign, except for certain temporary obligations of the USSR relating to Allied garrisons in Berlin. It is very difficult to demonstrate that the real issue in each minor incident is the survival of free Berlin. Recent vigorous German-US-UK-French countermeasures, directed mainly against East German trade with West Germany and other NATO countries, seem to have halted this erosion for the time being. The Soviets may soon shift the emphasis again, however, possibly pressing for a summit conference to discuss proposals looking toward the "free city".

No acceptable and negotiable formula has yet been devised to solve the Berlin problem separately from a solution for Germany as a whole. The West has repeatedly been blocked by Soviet insistence upon gains at the expense of vital Western interests. A complicating factor has been the need for US-UK-French-West German agreement. The principal Western tactic has been to gain time and demonstrate determination to protect West Berlin, while seeking a basis for solution. The problem is increasingly one of convincing the USSR that the Western Powers have the will and the means to maintain their position. Khrushchev has asserted disbelief on this score. Many Western European leaders consider it out of the question to respond to Soviet encroachments with nuclear weapons. Compelling legal arguments support the Western position, and the Soviets appear aware that overt aggression could jeopardize their broader "coexistence" objectives as well as possibly involve a risk of war.



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