Macmillan, Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1960

Kitty Newman

Cold War History Series
Dr Newman’s lucid and thoroughly researched account sheds significant new light on the role of Harold Macmillan in developing East–West détente in the late 1950s. She provides us with a much fuller picture than those who see the Cold War principally through the lens of Superpower relations.

Professor John W. Young, University of Nottingham

Dr Newman boldly suggests that in the late 1950s Khrushchev and Macmillan both believed there was a real opportunity to open talks on the German question. When these failed the Cold War continued. Only with access to ex-Soviet archives and a nuanced understanding of Macmillan’s aims, can readers appreciate that lost moment in recent history.

Professor Anita Prazmowska, LSE
This new study casts fresh light on the roles of Harold Macmillan and Nikita Khrushchev and their efforts to achieve a compromise settlement on the pivotal Berlin Crisis.

Drawing on previously unseen documents and secret archive material, Kitty Newman demonstrates how the British Prime Minister acted to prevent the crisis sliding into a disastrous nuclear conflict. She shows how his visit to Moscow in 1959 was a success, which convinced Khrushchev of a sincere effort to achieve a lasting settlement. Despite the initial reluctance of France and the USA, and consistent opposition from the Federal Republic, Macmillan’s subsequent efforts led to a softening of the Western line on Berlin and to the formulation of a set of proposals that might have achieved a peaceful resolution to the crisis if the Paris Conference of 1960 had not collapsed in acrimony.

This new volume also assesses Khrushchev’s role, which, despite his sometimes intemperate language, was to secure a peaceful settlement that would stabilise the East German regime and maintain the status quo in Europe, thereby paving the way for disarmament. Newman also shows how Khrushchev’s withdrawal from the Paris Summit was primarily caused by the ill-judged American reaction to the U-2 incident, rather than by pressure from Kremlin hardliners or the Chinese.

This book will be of great interest to all students of post-war diplomacy, Soviet foreign policy, the Cold War, and international relations and strategic studies in general.

Kitty Newman gained her PhD at the London School of Economics for her research on the relations between Britain and the Soviet Union and the Search for an Interim Agreement on West Berlin from November 1958 to May 1960. She also holds a Diploma in Russian from the University of Surrey.
In the new history of the Cold War that has been forming since 1989, many of the established truths about the international conflict that shaped the latter half of the twentieth century have come up for revision. The present series is an attempt to make available interpretations and materials that will help further the development of this new history, and it will concentrate in particular on publishing expositions of key historical issues and critical surveys of newly available sources.

1 REVIEWING THE COLD WAR
Approaches, interpretations, and theory
_Edited by Odd Arne Westad_

2 RETHINKING THEORY AND HISTORY IN THE COLD WAR
_Richard Saull_

3 BRITISH AND AMERICAN ANTICOMMUNISM BEFORE THE COLD WAR
_Marrku Ruotsila_

4 EUROPE, COLD WAR AND CO-EXISTENCE, 1953–1965
_Edited by Wilfred Loth_

5 THE LAST DECADE OF THE COLD WAR
From conflict escalation to conflict transformation
_Edited by Olav Njølstad_

6 REINTERPRETING THE END OF THE COLD WAR
Issues, interpretations, periodizations
_Edited by Silvio Pons and Federico Romero_
7 ACROSS THE BLOCS
Cold War cultural and social history
Edited by Rana Mitter and Patrick Major

8 US PARAMILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH VIETNAM
Insurgency, subversion and public order
William Rosenau

9 THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE CRISES OF
THE 1960S
Negotiating the Gaullist challenge
N. Piers Ludlow

10 SOVIET–VIETNAM RELATIONS AND THE ROLE OF
CHINA 1949–64
Changing alliances
Mari Olsen

11 THE THIRD INDOCHINA WAR
Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia, 1972–79
Edited by Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge

12 GREECE AND THE COLD WAR
Frontline state, 1952–1967
Evanthis Hatzivassiliou

13 ECONOMIC STATECRAFT DURING THE COLD WAR
European responses to the US trade embargo
Frank Cain

14 MACMILLAN, KHRUSHCHEV AND THE BERLIN CRISIS,
1958–1960
Kitty Newman

Kitty Newman
For my husband, John
## CONTENTS

**Acknowledgements**  
x  
**List of abbreviations**  
xxii  

### Introduction  
1  

1. **The background to the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1960**  
5  

2. **Soviet policy on the Berlin question, November 1958–February 1959**  
24  

3. **British reaction to the Soviet initiative on Berlin, November 1958–February 1959**  
39  

4. **The Prime Minister’s visit to the Soviet Union, 21 February–3 March 1959**  
63  

5. **Britain seeks to convert her Allies to the Macmillan Initiative, February–May 1959**  
83  

101  

7. **East–West negotiations on an Interim Agreement for West Berlin, September 1959 until the Paris Summit Conference, May 1960**  
122  

8. **The U-2 Crisis, May 1960**  
145  

### Conclusion  
167  

**Appendices**  
179  

**Notes**  
187  

**Bibliography**  
211  

**Index**  
220
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have long had a deep interest in Russian history. In 1983, at a time when tourists had few contacts with the Russian people, I led a school visit to Moscow and Leningrad, and became fascinated by the country and people. In subsequent visits in 1989, 1991 and 1994, I witnessed a country undergoing momentous change. With the advent of glasnost, and the gradual though sporadic release of archival material in the 1990s, came the opportunity to gain a Russian perspective on the major East–West crises of the Cold War.

As I had studied, and later taught, International History at the London School of Economics, I was aware that in recent years there had been very little coverage of the Berlin Crisis, and particularly the period 1958–1960 and the efforts of both British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to achieve a compromise settlement of this long-running East–West problem, so I decided to research the subject. This book is based on my PhD, which was funded by an LSE scholarship endowed by the late Mrs Zauberman, for which I am most grateful, and I would like to thank Professors Michael Dockrill and John Young for recommending publication.

I should first and foremost like to express my gratitude to my two supervisors at the London School of Economics, both of whom gave me constant inspiration and encouragement. Initially, Professor Donald Cameron Watt’s deep insights into Soviet and British policy were very valuable, and thereafter Professor Anita Prazmowska’s advice, guidance and suggestions were so helpful at all stages of research. I also very much appreciated the advice and comments from Professor John Young on the manuscript. My thanks must also go to colleagues and friends in the International History Department of the LSE.

The main sources for British policy on the Berlin Crisis are British Government records released by the Public Record Office between 1989 and 1994 under the thirty-year rule. This has revealed crucial Cabinet documents, throwing extensive light on Macmillan’s initiative on Berlin. I would like to thank the staff at the following libraries: the Public Record Office in Kew; the LSE Library; the British Library; the University of London Library; the Institute of Historical Research; the Institute of Contemporary British History; Ms Patricia Methuen and her staff at the Liddell Hart Centre at King’s College London,
which holds the US National Security archival material; the Churchill Archive, University of Cambridge; and the Bodleian Library, Oxford. In Germany, Dr Antje Sommer of the Archiv der Sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn and Frau Räuber at the Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv in Berlin were particularly helpful. I am also grateful to the staff at the Archive of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and the Storage Centre for the Preservation of Contemporary Documents, in Moscow. During my visits to the Soviet Union, Professor Chubarian and his colleagues at the Institute of Universal History, Russian Academy of Sciences, and the staff of the Institute of the USA and Canada Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, gave me every assistance and encouragement in my research, as did those whom I interviewed and who are named in the bibliography.

My Russian friends Tanya Zhdanova and her late mother, also Tanya, and Irina Shishkova and her family were unstinting in their hospitality in Moscow, and gave me advice and help in dealing with so many research problems and opportunities in Moscow. My thanks are also due to Dr Stuart Ward, who advised on some difficult computer problems. Finally, my work could not have been completed without the encouragement of all my family, and I should particularly like to thank my husband John. His constant enthusiasm for the project, his knowledge of German and his contribution to the editing process were invaluable.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVPRF  Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Federation
CAB    Cabinet Papers
CDU    Christian Democratic Party
CND    Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
COS    Chiefs of Staff
CWIHP  Cold War International History Project
DDR    German Democratic Republic
DEFE   Ministry of Defence Papers
DOD    Department of Defense (US)
DOS    Department of State (US)
FO     Foreign Office
FRG    German Federal Republic
FRUS   Foreign Relations of the United States
GDP    Gross Domestic Product
HMG    Her Majesty’s Government
ICBH   Institute of Contemporary British History
ICBM   Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile
IRBM   Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
JCS    Joint Chiefs of Staff
MID    Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NSA    National Security Archive
NSC    National Security Council (US)
PPS    Parliamentary Private Secretary
PRO    Public Record Office, Kew.
SIA    Survey of International Affairs
SPD    German Social Democratic Party
TsKhSD Centre for the Preservation of CPSU Central Committee files.
USSR   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
INTRODUCTION

On 1 May 1960, Gary Powers, piloting an American U-2 spy plane, took off from a secret base in Peshawar, Pakistan, with a brief to overfly and photograph an ICBM Missile facility at Plesetsk, 600 miles within the Soviet borders. On that fateful day, only two weeks before the first East–West summit since 1955, Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, was surveying the May Day procession from the Kremlin. He received a message that the U-2 plane had been shot down by a Russian SAM missile, and that the pilot had baled out, landing in a collective farm. Powers was captured by the Russians and taken to Moscow, where he subsequently faced trial. At the opening meeting of the Paris Summit, a furious Khrushchev demanded that President Eisenhower, who a few days before had belatedly admitted personal responsibility for authorising the 1 May spy flight, should apologise for the hostile infringement of Soviet airspace and retract his statement that the US had the right to continue such flights in the future. Eisenhower refused to comply, so Khrushchev and his delegation stormed out of the summit.

Prior to the opening of Eastern bloc archives, and the advent of glasnost in Russia, the prevailing historical consensus has been that Khrushchev had decided to cancel the summit before leaving Moscow for Paris because his aims of détente and disarmament were opposed by the Soviet Army, factions in the Praesidium, and the Chinese. As Khrushchev was therefore unlikely to agree to a satisfactory compromise on Berlin, he used the U-2 incident as an excuse to break up the summit. The central argument of this book is that, despite the U-2 incident, Khrushchev arrived in Paris still hoping that he would reach agreement with the West on an Interim Agreement on Berlin. New evidence from the Soviet and ex-DDR archives, which only became accessible in the 1990s, indicates that, in May 1960, Khrushchev was so keen to achieve disarmament and détente that he was prepared to make key concessions on Berlin to the Western powers. Furthermore, he had the support of Walter Ulbricht, the leader of the DDR. The documents on the agreed negotiating position and intentions of the Western powers on the eve of the Paris Summit show that, had the summit gone ahead, both sides might well have reached a compromise on Berlin. Thus, the collapse of the summit was an even greater landmark in East–West relations than previously recognised.
In 1994, Dr William Burr, of the National Security Archive in Washington, commented that ‘he would like to know more about events in the 1959–1960 phase of the Crisis’. This book attempts to fill this gap, and deals with Britain’s role in East–West relations during this phase of the Berlin Crisis. It traces the roles and motivations of Khrushchev and Macmillan in their search for an Interim Agreement on Berlin from November 1958 to May 1960, within the wider context of their common long-term aims of détente and disarmament. The analysis of Soviet and ex-DDR policy from 1959 to 1960 is based on archival sources in Moscow and Berlin, and on interviews with participants in the crisis. It also draws on the invaluable research of scholars of the Cold War History Project in Washington, the work of both Russian and Western historians and, most importantly, on Khrushchev’s memoirs and on the studies by his son Sergei, a nuclear scientist who was very close to his father, and his son-in-law, Alexsei Adzhubei, Editor of Izvestiya, who was also his foreign policy advisor.

Khrushchev’s personal account of his period of power in Russia was secretly dictated to his son when he was under constant watch by the KGB. It was smuggled to the West in 1970, and only published in the Soviet Union in 1990. After the Brezhnev coup in 1964, within the Soviet Union Khrushchev became, in Orwellian terminology, a ‘non-person’, known only for his uncouth shoe-banging in the UN or his harebrained schemes to grow corn in Asia. Until the fall of the Berlin Wall and the advent of glasnost under Gorbachev, his era was dismissed in Soviet history books as one of ‘voluntarism’ or ‘subjectivism’, and Khrushchev himself was hardly mentioned. It was as though this innovatory statesman, who released millions of Soviet people from the Gulag, revolutionised Soviet foreign policy in 1956 by his denunciation of Stalin and his adoption of the doctrine of peaceful coexistence with the West, and initiated the Berlin and Cuban Missile crises, had disappeared from history.

The present consensus that Khrushchev dominated Soviet foreign policy decision-making is confirmed in this study of the Berlin Crisis. It contends that Khrushchev, despite his arbitrary behaviour and colourful language, sought a peaceful settlement of the Berlin and German problems based on the status quo, which would stabilise the East German regime and eventually lead to peace and disarmament, and an end to the Cold War. Both Macmillan and Khrushchev were pragmatic and flexible in their quest for a modus vivendi on Berlin – unlike their respective Allies, Adenauer and Mao Tse Tung, who opposed compromise with the opposing side.

In contrast to the Soviet Union, the US, the dominant Western military power, did not control decision-making process in the negotiations of the three occupying powers of West Berlin, so the tortuous process of intra-alliance negotiations involving civil servants, top-level diplomacy and summit meetings is examined in depth. Macmillan and his foreign secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, played a leading mediatory role in all these negotiations, which by the eve of the Paris Summit led to an agreed and more flexible Western position on an Interim Agreement on Berlin.
Macmillan and Khrushchev sought a compromise because they recognised that Germany and Berlin were at the epicentre of Cold War tension in Europe. In a nuclear age, there was an ever-present danger that an incident in Berlin, which was of symbolic importance to both sides, might escalate to nuclear war. This danger had intensified by the late 1950s, following America’s decision to involve her NATO Allies, including the Federal Republic, in nuclear sharing. The common fear shared by the Soviet Union, Britain and France was that the Federal Government would gain control of its own nuclear weapons, and the evidence shows that their apprehension was certainly justified. Berlin was a powder keg waiting to be lit.

The Berlin Crisis of 27 November 1958 began when the Soviet Union sent a Note to the US, the UK and France, the occupying powers in West Berlin under the Quadripartite Agreement of 1944, setting a six-month deadline for a solution to the Berlin problem. The Note was perceived by the Western Alliance as a unilateral ultimatum. It proposed that West Berlin should be converted into a ‘free city’ with Western access guaranteed, but that if, after talks with the Western powers, no agreement was achieved by 27 May 1959, the Soviet Union would sign a peace treaty with the DDR, and control of Western access to the city would be transferred to the East Germans.

Under Eisenhower, the US defence of Western Europe against Soviet encroachment was based on total support for Adenauer, who believed that any concessions, even de facto arrangements with the DDR on West Berlin, would imply that the German people had to give up any hope of German reunification. As a consequence, if the Western Allies agreed to Soviet demands, the initial reaction of the US and the Federal Republic was that it would amount to de facto recognition of the DDR, which they had hitherto avoided, because this would fatally undermine their official goal of German reunification. Khrushchev, on the other hand, regarded the emergence of two German states and the preservation of the status quo in Eastern Europe as vital long-term goals. In reality, this was the preferred option of both de Gaulle and Macmillan, though one which the French President would not acknowledge in public because he had forged a new Franco-German accord with Adenauer in 1958.

This book also counters some recent negative assessments of Macmillan’s record in East–West relations. These have included many criticisms, including the following: that his Berlin policy was unrealistic, pursuing ‘the chimera’ of an independent, mediatory role for Britain at a time of national decline; that he supported summitry even though there was little likelihood of an agreement, as Soviet intransigence had become apparent even before the U-2 incident; and that his policy was driven entirely by the need to court public opinion before the General Election. In addition, some critics contend that the Prime Minister’s policy was reactive and appeasing towards the Soviet Union, and detrimental to the Western Alliance and to his potential economic partners in Europe, France and Germany.

The picture of Macmillan which emerges from this book on East–West
relations is, on the contrary, very positive. In 1958, the Prime Minister recognised that the Soviet Union’s major objective was détente with the West. His view chimed with that of Winston Churchill who, in the 1950s after Stalin’s death, also believed that the Soviets were genuine in seeking peaceful coexistence, and that this was best achieved through the mechanism of summit conferences. Macmillan realised that Khrushchev’s aims in launching the Berlin Ultimatum in 1958 were defensive and, as a result of his own personal experiences in two World Wars, he appreciated Soviet fears of a resurgence of German economic and military power in the future. Against the background of the Pentagon’s contingency planning on Berlin, which assumed that a confrontation at the checkpoints would quickly escalate to general war and a nuclear attack on the Soviet bloc, Macmillan set about achieving a more flexible yet viable approach to Western contingency planning. The Prime Minister cannot be labelled an ‘appeaser’. The Soviet evidence shows that during his visit to Moscow, and subsequent negotiation, Khrushchev saw the Prime Minister as flexible and pragmatic, but firm on key Western principles regarding West Berlin – namely the maintenance of the freedom of its citizens, and freedom of Western access to the city. The British documents demonstrate that, far from being ‘reactive’ throughout this phase of the crisis, the Macmillan administration consistently took the initiative, gradually convincing its alliance partners both at official and ministerial levels of the importance of achieving an Interim Agreement on Berlin. His policy had the support of his COS, the Foreign Office, the Opposition and the British public, who overwhelmingly sought disarmament and détente.

After Macmillan’s successful visit to Moscow, Eisenhower decided to meet Khrushchev in face-to-face talks at Camp David in September 1959, where he too became convinced that Khrushchev was serious in his desire for an agreement on Berlin and East–West détente. Meanwhile, Khrushchev’s policy of massive cuts in the Soviet Army in 1960, in the face of opposition from within the Army and the Party, boded well. Most importantly, the US and the Soviet Union, following the successful outcome of prolonged arms control talks at Geneva, were on the verge of a breakthrough on a test-ban treaty, which was on the agenda for the Paris Summit.

The failure of the Paris Summit, following the misguided and inept reaction of Eisenhower’s administration to the disastrous U-2 incident, dashed Khrushchev’s and Macmillan’s hopes of an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and ushered in an era of instability and heightened danger in East–West relations. Thus, it may be seen as tragic lost opportunity, which delayed the implementation of détente and disarmament and unnecessarily prolonged the Cold War.
THE BACKGROUND TO THE
BERLIN CRISIS, 1958–1960

In 1958, the crisis envisaged by Western leaders was not the possibility of the Russians erecting a Berlin Wall to close off the Eastern sector of the city, as happened in 1961, but of Khrushchev signing a peace treaty with the DDR and thereby forcing the Allies to deal with the DDR – a state which they had not recognised. In this eventuality, Allied leaders believed the East Germans would be likely to obstruct Western traffic and threaten the freedom of the city, which was the front line of NATO and the West during the Cold War, and which the US was ultimately prepared to defend in the last resort with nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Western agreement to the Soviet proposals would have amounted to de facto recognition of the DDR and acquiescence in the ‘two Germany’ solution and the status quo in Europe, which by 1958 was the preferred Soviet option. The Soviet initiative was thus perceived by the Western powers as initiating the most important Cold War crisis since the Berlin airlift of 1948–1949 as, in the event of a crisis, the Eisenhower administration did not envisage an airlift but a series of measures which could potentially escalate to nuclear war.

The motivation of Khrushchev and Macmillan during the crisis and their promotion of an accommodation on Berlin should be seen within the wider context of two factors: first, their common, long-term foreign policy objectives of détente and disarmament; and second, the wider question of Berlin and Germany’s place in post-war Europe and the relations of the US and Western Europe with the Soviet Union.

Nikita Khrushchev’s personality and foreign policy objectives

Khrushchev’s main objectives were to reform the Soviet Union by shifting manpower and resources from the defence to the domestic sector of the economy, and to achieve his policy of peaceful coexistence with the West by negotiating at a summit a settlement of the German question and, ultimately, détente and disarmament. Because of his long-term goals, Khrushchev was prepared to envisage a provisional settlement on Berlin as long as the West promised negotiation. Khrushchev maintained that without determining the future of Berlin it was
impossible to solve the German problem and ensure the status quo of borders and the demilitarisation in Europe.¹

Nikita Khrushchev was born into a peasant family in Kalinovka, Kursk, in 1894, and started work in the Donbass mines at the age of fifteen. He was soon involved in the Donbass Workers’ Movement, becoming a Bolshevik sympathiser, a member of the Communist Party by 1918, and later, during the Civil War, a political commissar in the Red Army. In 1929 the local party sent him to the Industrial Academy in Moscow, where he came to the notice of Stalin. Thereafter, he rose rapidly through the Party ranks to become number two in the Moscow Party in 1932, First Secretary in the Ukraine from 1938–1949, and a member of the Politburo in 1938. Not surprisingly, he was deeply implicated in the Stalinist regime, as symbolised by Ernst Neizvestny’s sculpture on his coffin showing half of his face in light and the other half in darkness. Khrushchev himself readily admitted the dual source of his personality. Before his death, he told the poet Evgeny Yevtushenko: ‘one man inside me understood something, the other something completely different’.² Thus, his conception of the wider international scene was limited by his communist preconceptions, but his breadth of vision allowed him to strive for a new order in domestic and foreign policy.

After Stalin’s death in 1953, Khrushchev became First Secretary of the Communist Party and a member of the collective leadership. He rose rapidly to the top, demonstrating his immense cunning, ambition and flexibility on policy by ousting and superseding Lavrentii Beria and Georgii Malenkov in 1953, Viacheslav Molotov in 1955, and Nikolai Bulganin in 1957, whom he replaced as Soviet Premier. Khrushchev’s views on the new course the Soviet Government should adopt after 1953 were common to the collective leadership. They sought the relaxation of internal terror, the easing of draconian rule in Eastern Europe, and concentration on raising living standards for the long-suffering Soviet people by transferring resources from defence to economic reconstruction. Indeed, Khrushchev has sometimes been seen as the harbinger of perestroika and détente under Mikhail Gorbachev. Nikita Khrushchev, his grandson, has recently observed that ‘he was the last romantic of communism’.³

An essential concomitant to his programme was a reduction of tension with the West. At the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev denounced Stalinism and enunciated a revolutionary approach to international affairs, based on his belief in the inevitable failure of capitalism and the emergence and ultimate triumph of socialism in the world system through peaceful competition. His prediction was based on the correlation of forces in favour of communism, demonstrated by the extension of Marxism–Leninism to Eastern Europe; the growth of the military and economic power of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis the West; the decline of colonialism; and the subsequent emergence of anti-Western nationalism in the Third World.

Khrushchev rejected the ‘inevitability of global war’, and even asserted that communism could be attained by parliamentary means. He preached the idea of
peaceful coexistence between capitalism and socialism, and emphasised the ideological and economic struggle for hearts and minds, rather than the military struggle between East and West. This reassessment of the international scene enabled Khrushchev to move from ‘an endless arms race towards arms control and disarmament’, and to broach the possibility of transferring several missile plants to peaceful production.4

In 1957, Khrushchev’s policies of destalinisation and reform within the Soviet Union, and his revolutionary attitude to foreign policy, provoked opposition to his rule. However, to ensure his dominance he thwarted the anti-Party coup by Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich, who opposed détente. He then sacked Marshal Zhukov from his post as Minister of Defence and replaced him with Marshal Malinovsky, who was totally dependent on him for his advancement. Thereafter, as Titular head of State, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and First Secretary of the Party, he dominated both the State and the Party apparatus. Whilst outwardly observing collective decision-making through the Praesidium, like Macmillan’s, his was the dominant voice in foreign policy.5

One can understand why in 1958, Sir Patrick Reilly, the British Ambassador to the Soviet Union, saw this superbly confident man, who had no serious challenger and who was the dominant voice in government, as a formidable adversary. He reported that Khrushchev appeared to be conducting foreign policy in public, and Gromyko’s role as Foreign Minister seemed in decline as Khrushchev favoured Mikoyan as his emissary abroad.6 Khrushchev’s dominance of foreign policy was confirmed by his son Sergei, his son-in-law and foreign policy advisor Alexsei Adzhubei, his biographer Yury Aksuitin (a former Communist Party historian and member of the Central Committee) and, more recently, Soviet and Western historians.7 The speculative ideas current in the West during the 1960s and 1970s that the divisions within the Praesidium as regards foreign policy accounted for the schizophrenic nature of Khrushchev’s foreign policy and forced Khrushchev’s hand on the Berlin question have largely been discounted.8

Khrushchev’s personality is thus central to any analysis of the Berlin Crisis. The overriding public impression of Khrushchev in the West, both then and now, is of a crude, reckless, uneducated and bombastic man, who enjoyed indulging in horseplay with unsuspecting foreign statesmen – as Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, discovered to his discomfort during his stay in Moscow.9 Undoubtedly these attributes were an intrinsic part of his personality, but as Western statesmen and diplomats became better acquainted with Khrushchev they recognised his natural abilities, his imagination, his wisdom, his humanity and, above all, his genuine and passionate belief in communism.10 Macmillan’s portrayal of the Soviet leader as a petulant and sometimes impossible but not unlovable extrovert provides the best key to his character:

Khrushchev is impulsive; sensitive of his own dignity and insensitive to any one else’ feelings; quick in argument, never missing or overlooking
a point; with an extraordinary memory and encyclopaedic information at his command; vulgar, and yet capable of a certain dignity when he is simple and forgets to show off; Khrushchev is a mixture between Peter the Great and Lord Beaverbrook. Anyway he is the boss and no meeting will ever do business except a summit meeting.11

Denis Healey considered that Khrushchev was:

one of the half-dozen greatest political figures of this century. His outstanding characteristics are pragmatism and self confidence . . . his faith is all the more formidable because it is not over dogmatic . . . summit conferences may have a special value in dealing with the Russians today, providing the West can produce leaders of comparable ability.12

Soviet Nobel Prize winner, physicist Andrei Sakharov, who came into contact with Khrushchev in connection with the development of the hydrogen bomb, believed that ‘his innate intelligence and an ambition to be worthy of his post ensured that his accomplishments would outweigh his mistakes and even his crimes in the scales of history’.13 Contemporary Soviet historians likewise consider his natural abilities were extraordinary and compensated for his great lack of elementary culture.14

Like his counterpart, Macmillan, Khrushchev, a dominant and extrovert statesman, favoured the personal conduct of important negotiations at summit level with a new generation of Western leaders whom he hoped would acknowledge the Soviet Union’s rightful place in the world. As David Dunn has observed, and as Khrushchev, Macmillan and President Eisenhower found during the Berlin conflict, it was an important means of breaking down the barriers of mutual suspicion in the Cold War, of educating their domestic constituencies and, most importantly, of summing up their opponents.15 After the Prime Minister’s visit to Moscow and his meeting with the President at Camp David, Khrushchev was keen to develop more informal personal relationships and regular meetings with them. Another striking aspect of the Soviet leader’s conduct of foreign policy during later stages of the Berlin Crisis was his use of secret diplomacy to avoid undue tension in relations with the West. According to Alexsei Adzhubei, his son-in-law and foreign policy advisor, his link with the White House was Pierre Salinger.16

Khrushchev’s desire for disarmament and rapprochement with the West may be attributed first to his desire to reduce Soviet defence expenditure in favour of economic development to benefit the Soviet people, and second to his fear of a nuclear holocaust. The Soviet historian Vladimir Zubok sees Khrushchev as the last ‘true believer’ among the post-Stalinist leaders, whose adherence to the ideals of the Revolution had little to do with fanaticism, Marxist theory or Leninist ideology, but a lot to do with his gut feelings about social justice derived from his peasant, working-class background and his experiences of the
deprivations of the ordinary people during the war and the Stalinist era. In the 26 February 2006 edition of the Observer, Marina Okrugina, now ninety-five, wrote of her full rehabilitation after her release from the Gulag in 1956, following Khrushchev’s famous speech: ‘we former prisoners were very thankful for Khrushchev’s bravery’. Détente and domestic reform for the benefit of his people were thus an intrinsic part of his reform programme, announced at the Twenty-First Party Congress in January 1959.

In early 1959 Khrushchev cut troop strength from 5,763,000 to 3,623,000, and in January 1960 a further 1,200,000 men were demobilised so that Soviet forces were only a half of those in Stalin’s time. Sergei Khrushchev said that his father’s aim was to free human and other resources for economic development, but these steps were opposed by the military, who felt they were losing their position and privileges:

Father was adamant. He knew their ways well and had no intention of dancing to a primitive military tune. Father’s view of the future only allowed for minimal deterrent forces, and he was in a hurry to put his plan into practice.

Khrushchev was acutely aware of the terrible impact of atomic warfare on the human race. He told a former Soviet Ambassador to Bulgaria that he was the only member of the Soviet leadership who had seen an atomic explosion, and that this experience had totally changed his view of the arms race. In 1954 a report prepared by four eminent nuclear scientists including Igor Kurchatov, Director of the Soviet nuclear effort since 1943, warned Khrushchev and the other members of the Troika that ‘mankind faces an enormous threat of extermination of all life on earth’. They recommended a ‘complete ban on the military utilisation of atomic energy’. In 1958, with Khrushchev’s specific authorisation, Kurchatov also encouraged Andrei Sakharov to write about the effects of radiation from the so-called ‘clean bomb’, and the dangers of nuclear testing, in an article in a scientific journal. Khrushchev recalled in his memoirs that as Head of the Soviet Delegation at the Geneva Conference of 1955, he realised for the first time that Western statesmen shared his fear. This conference ‘convinced us once again, that there was no pre-war situation in existence at that time and our enemies were afraid of us in the same way as we were of them’.

Further indications of the Soviet desire to promote disarmament were Khrushchev’s announcement on 31 March 1958 of a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, and the considerable progress which was achieved at disarmament sessions at Geneva. At Camp David, the Soviet leader told the President that part of the reason for his visit was to see whether some sort of agreement on disarmament could come out of their meetings and talks. Disarmament was also a constant theme at the 1959 Party Congress, and then in 1960 there was a breakthrough in negotiations for a Test Ban Treaty when the Russians indicated
that they would accept the American proposal providing for a phased treaty as long as it was accompanied by a moratorium covering those tests which were not banned. However, Khrushchev had a problem in convincing the West that he was sincere about disarmament and détente. This was largely because of his exuberant and often aggressive style, his use of earthy peasant vocabulary, and his resort to nuclear blackmail, so he could negotiate from a position of strength. He once made a very telling remark which personified his approach to diplomacy: ‘If I go to a cathedral and pray for peace nobody listens. But if I go with two bombs they will’.

From the outset, Khrushchev recognised that the nuclear stalemate had totally changed the Cold War. Retrospectively, he recalled his belief ‘that we could never possibly use these weapons, but all the same we must be prepared. Our understanding is not a sufficient answer to the arrogance of the imperialists.’ Khrushchev’s remark reflected his anger at the continued violation of his country’s air space by the American U-2 Programme. In his own estimation, he had already successfully used nuclear threats against the UK at the time of Suez. So, during the Berlin Crisis, the Soviet leader hoped his missiles would force the West to treat the Soviet Union with respect, promote Soviet national security and the world revolution, and even perhaps help assure universal peace (Soviet-style) through disarmament. The successful launch of ‘Sputnik’ on 4 October 1957 was an important factor in allowing Khrushchev to indulge in missile deception and nuclear bluff in his relations with the West.

In 1957, NATO’s plans to install IRBM bases in Europe (including West Germany) provoked an immediate Soviet campaign for arms control and disengagement, in the form of the Rapacki Pact and an East–West Summit Conference to resolve tension. However, it also gave rise to veiled nuclear threats. In the Soviet Note to the UK Government of December 1957, Bulganin said that he could not understand British participation in the NATO scheme in view of Britain’s extremely vulnerable geographical position and its self-professed inability to defend itself against modern weapons. According to Oleg Troyanovsky, one of Khrushchev’s foreign policy advisors and Molotov’s interpreter, Khrushchev’s natural inclination to conduct diplomacy from a position of strength was reinforced by the abortive Anti-Party 1957 coup, during which Molotov tried to reverse the existing foreign policy of détente. Khrushchev had this previously vocal but now suppressed opposition to his policy of détente in mind when he planned his showdown over Berlin. As Zubok argues, there were powerful domestic limitations, couched in strategic and ideological language, on how far any Soviet leader could go, especially regarding the sensitive German question. Beria’s downfall had served as an important lesson for Stalin’s successors, particularly Khrushchev, who later decided to break the lock on the Cold War by means other than German reunification.

Khrushchev’s attitude to the dangers of nuclear war and his subsequent adoption of the doctrine of peaceful coexistence also had a dramatic impact on Sino-Soviet relations. Adzhubei believed that Khrushchev needed to be cautious and
fearful of China in foreign policy, and Fedor Burlatsky, one of Khrushchev’s foreign policy advisors cast the Soviet leader’s problems in a colourful metaphor: ‘like the sword of Damocles the dark shadow of China loomed over the entire process of improving relations with the West’. Certainly, at crucial stages in East–West relations, on 3 August 1958 and after Camp David in September 1959, Khrushchev flew to Peking for talks with Mao. In his Annual Report for 1958, Sir Patrick Reilly informed HMG that for the first time ‘the Soviet Union had to take account of a partner of almost equal status but with different interests and above all a different attitude to the dangers of war’. The report also mentioned ideological differences, ‘with China outflanking the Soviet Union on the left’.

New evidence emerging from the ex-DDR and the Soviet and Chinese archives reveals the personal animosity which developed between Khrushchev and Mao. It is clear that the Chinese were totally opposed to the doctrine of mutual coexistence, and that Khrushchev was terrified of the Chinese being in a position to press the nuclear button. A study by Soviet foreign ministry experts during the 1970s characterised the years 1958–1959 as being ‘strengthened by the policy of peaceful coexistence and attempts to improve collective security not only in the West but also in the East’. Mao was offended by Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin, and by his attempts at relaxing tension with the West. Zubok and Pleshakov maintain that the attempt to reach an understanding with Washington precipitated the loss of the Soviets’ major geopolitical ally: Communist China. The Sino-Soviet rift must certainly be taken into account in any analysis of Khrushchev’s policy on Berlin.

In the past, the often schizophrenic nature of Soviet foreign policy-making regarding Berlin has been attributed to the fact that there was a power struggle within the Kremlin with conservative and reactionary forces, supported by the Chinese and Ulbricht opposing Khrushchev’s aim of détente. However, this position cannot now be maintained given the fact that both Adzhubei and Aksuitin, and Soviet historians such as Zubok and Pleshakov, have all emphasised Khrushchev’s primacy in decision-making. Aksuitin said: ‘it was impossible that there was an alliance as such between the hard-liners in the Party leadership, Ulbricht and the Chinese, though of course they could separately influence each other’.

Tension between Peking and Moscow possibly strengthened the East Germans’ hand in dealing with Khrushchev, as the DDR could use Chinese insistence on a more assertive approach to support their case for action over West Berlin. Hope Harrison considers that:

Khrushchev always saw and used West Berlin as a lever to compel the West to recognise the post war status quo and the existence of East Germany, and that Ulbricht saw West Berlin as more of a prize, although he was willing to exploit it as a lever until he got it as a prize.
However, even if Ulbricht was at times exerting pressure on Khrushchev regarding the West Berlin question, from spring 1959 until May 1960 the DDR was supportive of Soviet attempts to reach a modus vivendi with the West on the Berlin question. One thing is certain: that in trying to improve relations with both the US and China in 1959, Khrushchev was pursuing diametrically opposed objectives and, arguably, had to take the Chinese factor into account in his reaction to the U-2 incident and the Paris Summit.

Harold Macmillan’s personality and foreign policy objectives

Harold Macmillan, who acceded to the premiership in 1957, was an intelligent and independent-minded man who towered above his Cabinet colleagues, in spite of the fact that he was often plagued by ‘black dog’ depressions and deep personal unhappiness. He was an indefatigable worker and a consummate politician, ambitious, ruthless and courageous – characteristics that were invaluable in re-establishing the fortunes of the Conservative Party during his first administration from 1957 to 1961, in the aftermath of the Suez disaster. He always acknowledged that his greatest interest was in foreign affairs and, as Sir Frederick Bishop, his Parliamentary Private Secretary, commented in The Times: ‘his view of both national and international interest was always strategic, based on his own deep reading of history’.43 Like his Soviet counterpart, Nikita Khrushchev, he dominated the formulation of British foreign policy, so an appreciation of his overall objectives and the position of Britain in the late 1950s is essential to any analysis of British foreign policy during the Berlin Crisis.44 In the absence of access to the Prime Minister’s diary, some of the most important sources for any study of Macmillan and the Berlin Crisis during this period are his own extensive memoirs, albeit Macmillan sometimes put a gloss on some aspects of his premiership.45 His memoirs have been supplemented by the official, wide-ranging and detailed biography of Macmillan by Alistair Horne, who did have access to Macmillan’s diaries.46

Macmillan’s war-time military service in North Africa, where he developed close relations with both de Gaulle and Eisenhower, brought to the forefront his considerable negotiating and diplomatic skills. When dealing with foreign affairs, Macmillan often bypassed the Cabinet or informed members of policy after the event, and it is significant that there were relatively few meetings of the Defence Committee during this period. His presidential attitude to foreign policy was possible because of the compliance of Selwyn Lloyd, whom Macmillan surprisingly retained as Foreign Secretary in 1957 because, in Macmillan’s words, ‘in order to defend and rebuild the situation we had to say we were right over Suez’.47 The Prime Minister recognised that Selwyn Lloyd had no ideas of his own, but respected him for his loyalty and his readiness to tackle the dirty jobs with courage; for his part, Selwyn Lloyd felt tremendous respect for and loyalty to the Prime Minister, in spite of the latter’s constant interference in foreign
policy. Macmillan’s preferred form of decision-making was for informal weekend brainstorming sessions on major problems at Chequers, attended by a few key trusted ministers, the top officials in the Foreign Office, and his personal advisors. These included Freddie Bishop, his PPS, and Philip de Zulueta, who was seconded from the Foreign Office as his foreign policy advisor. Macmillan liked to throw out new ideas and to test them on these highly intelligent and open-minded men, and they in turn were an important source for his initiatives on Berlin and European security. It was during such a session in January 1959, rather than in Cabinet, that Macmillan took the decision to visit the Soviet Union – the first such visit by a British statesman since Winston Churchill’s in 1945. By this bold act of international leadership, he seized the initiative on Berlin. He was convinced by his face-to-face meetings in Moscow that Khrushchev was motivated by defensive factors, was ready to compromise on Berlin, and sought détente and disarmament. The Prime Minister, ever courteous, intelligent and unflappable, was the ideal mediator between the Americans and the Russians in negotiations for a compromise on Berlin.

When Macmillan assumed the premiership, Britain faced considerable constraints on her ability to influence world events, and to pursue an independent policy. Her world-wide commitments far outstripped her resources. This was due to the rapid decline of both the sterling area and Britain’s share in world trade as a result of the war, and her poor record in productivity compared to her economically resurgent European neighbours. The Suez débâcle of 1956 only served to emphasise the decline in Britain’s world status. However, this economic decline was not so readily observable at the time, and Britain was still a global power with world-wide commitments to her Empire and Commonwealth. Indeed, the British Chiefs of Staff (COS) pressed for the maintenance of Britain’s policeman role. Macmillan, faithful to his mentor Churchill, continued to build British foreign policy on ‘the three circles’ of Europe, the Commonwealth, and Britain’s special relationship with the US. Skilful manoeuvring, at which Macmillan proved to be adept, was essential if Britain was to exert leverage and protect her interests in the new bipolar world and play a vital role in the Cold War. In this situation, the government had to maintain a strong defence and simultaneously search for accommodation and a more flexible strategy to maintain and protect her world-wide interests. Britain could exercise her influence through her membership of three Alliances – NATO, SEATO and the Baghdad Pact – but her survival as a major power in the post-war world depended on her ‘special relationship’ with the US. This relationship was of mutual benefit, but was particularly vital to Britain’s maintenance of an adequate system of defence.

In 1957–1958, Macmillan’s first priority after Suez was to restore the Anglo–US relationship, and his second was to explore a closer relationship with Europe, as the answer to Britain’s structural problems. To achieve his first objective, Macmillan relied on both his own and Churchill’s excellent personal relations with the President, and on US fears of Russia moving into the vacuum
in the Middle East in the post-Suez period. At the Bermuda Conference of March 1957, the Prime Minister successfully negotiated a new defence relationship with the US, based on US provision of ‘special and preferential treatment’ in the field of design and production of nuclear warheads. Britain was to be supplied with sixty Thor missiles which would provide a minimum deterrent, being able to attack thirty Soviet cities deployed under the two-key system. The MacMahon Act on nuclear sharing was also repealed.

The degree of intimacy and cooperation achieved by the UK and US Governments within twelve months was remarkable, and the very act of nuclear sharing led to a ‘special rapport’. Most importantly, Britain, as a hydrogen power with her own nuclear deterrent, earned a place at the top table in international negotiations. It was hoped that this would convince the world that Britain was still a major military and political world power and it would also allow much-needed force reductions in Europe. As a result of the change to a new strategy based on nuclear deterrence, Macmillan’s new Minister of Defence, Duncan Sandys, introduced the Defence White Paper of 1958, essential for Britain’s economic recovery. This ended national service, reduced forces in Germany by 40 per cent and unified command of the Services under the new Minister of Defence. By this strategy Macmillan was able to pursue the policy he described as maintaining a firm and powerful NATO from the military point of view, but demonstrating a willingness to discuss and negotiate on a practical basis to obtain practical results. Like his Soviet counterpart Khrushchev, Macmillan sought to achieve détente and disarmament, and pursued his goals through summitry. In this respect, he was much influenced by his predecessors, Churchill and Eden.

Indeed, Macmillan’s policy of mediation through personal diplomacy, manipulation and interdependence, begun by Churchill after the death of Stalin and continued by Anthony Eden, should be assessed in this context. As Selwyn Lloyd, his Foreign Secretary, put it, his policy of détente was a recognition that Britain had to exercise not so much power as influence in the new post-war order. As Foreign Minister at the Geneva Conference in 1955, Macmillan defined the Geneva spirit as a ‘a readiness to discuss and negotiate. It meant a return to that flexibility without which the conduct of human affairs becomes almost intolerable.’ He saw the need in international affairs for forging personal relations with world leaders, for regular summits and for prolonged negotiation. In Joseph Nye’s terminology, he used ‘soft’ power rather than military might to deploy power and influence in foreign policy.

The general perception of British policy-makers in the 1950s was that bipolar confrontation was inimical to Britain’s world-wide interests, particularly given the nuclear policy of the Eisenhower administration. So although the UK Government supported containment as a short-term strategy, it simultaneously emphasised the need to normalise East–West relations. This approach was manifested in the policy adopted by Britain regarding the emergence of Communist China, the Laos situation and the 1954 Geneva Conference, and Soviet moves towards détente during Churchill’s last administration. In all these areas, Britain
differed fundamentally from the US. The latter perceived Britain’s policy as a threat to the position defined in NSC 68, that the Russians would risk war when their military capacity reached a point where they could expect to win. In contrast, Churchill convincingly argued, ‘it is not easy to see how things could be worsened by a parley at the summit if such a thing were possible’. In 1953, following Stalin’s death and encouraged by initial signs of a ‘thaw’ in Russia, Churchill made yet another major speech which conceded the need to recognise legitimate Soviet security interests in the context of European security. However, again his efforts were frustrated by opposition from Eden and his own Cabinet, by US intransigence, and by his own deteriorating health. Nevertheless, his initiative and conviction that East–West dialogue was in Britain’s national interest influenced Macmillan, who served under both Eden and Churchill.

Once Macmillan had firmly established his government and rebuilt the Anglo-American Alliance by the Bermuda Agreement of 1957, the Prime Minister turned his attention to détente. Throughout 1958, the Western powers had been preoccupied with their response to the advent of Sputnik and Russia’s breakthrough in space technology in November 1957. As a result, they were more amenable to Soviet calls for a summit conference and disarmament. The UK Government took the lead in pressing for a summit and rapprochement with the Russians, and the Prime Minister was bitterly disappointed when the Middle East and Far East crises of 1958, combined with US reluctance, led to the failure of his efforts.

Most Western statesmen have acknowledged that the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958, which marked the beginning of the second Berlin Crisis, was the most serious crisis of the Cold War since the 1948–1949 Berlin Airlift, as Britain faced the potential threat of a nuclear war in defence of Berlin. In this situation, Macmillan’s policy of détente had the support of the Foreign Office, the Cabinet, the Conservative Party and the majority of the House of Commons, where the Labour Party’s adoption of unilateralism by 1960 reflected the popular mood and their support for a modus vivendi on Berlin. As an astute politician Macmillan could see political advantage in his support for détente, particularly prior to the 1959 Election, but nevertheless his objectives were sincere and idealistic, and primarily based on the fact that tension between the superpowers could endanger world peace. The First World War had deeply affected Macmillan, and his objective in seeking détente was the prevention of further useless loss of life. Those who belittle his genuine motives do him an injustice.

Background to East–West relations and the German Problem 1945–1958

In the closing stages of the Second World War, the greatest problem facing the war-time Allies was the future of Germany. In 1945, despite Germany’s unconditional surrender and total enfeeblement, Marx’s maxim that ‘whoever controls
Germany controls Europe’ remained a central problem for the future. Initially there appeared to be a degree of Allied cooperation and agreement on this issue, and the four Allied occupation zones, agreed at the Yalta Conference, were confirmed at the Potsdam Conference in August 1945, as was the Oder–Neisse Line as the future boundary between Germany and Poland. Allied agreement was also reached at Potsdam on reparations and the principles of denazification, decentralisation and disarmament which were to be applied to Germany as a whole by the Four Power Allied Control Council (ACC), namely the representatives of the US, Russia, Britain and France, based in Berlin. This body, for which decisions were to be unanimous, was also responsible for the administration of Germany as a single economic and political unit. Berlin, which was similarly divided into four sectors under the joint supervision of the Allied Control Council, lay inside the Soviet zone, and Allied access was guaranteed by the Soviets, though only by a tenuous oral agreement between General Lucius Clay (the US representative on the ACC) and his Soviet counterpart. From 1945 to 1949, Berlin thus became the microcosm of the emerging East–West divisions of the Cold War.

Recent research has indicated that Stalin probably envisaged the continuation of ‘Big Three’ cooperation in the post-war world, as long as he could preserve his main foreign policy aims. These may be defined as the defence of the 1941 borders, the continued enfeeblement of Japan and Germany, and the establishment of friendly governments along the country’s Western perimeter. As a result of their war-time experience, the Soviets’ nightmare scenario was the prospect of a rearmed, economically resurgent Germany which might be tempted to reverse the status quo in the DDR and Eastern Europe – their protective glacis against German aggression.

From the outset Germany was a problem, though General Lucius Clay, US Military Governor in Germany, maintained that the Russians had been far more cooperative than the French in the early stages of post-war Germany. However, the Western powers, particularly the British (who were virtually bankrupt after the war), were unable to maintain the burden of sustaining their zones, and pressure mounted for the economic rehabilitation of Western zones. US thinking, inspired by George Kennan, was also moving towards the idea of a Western bloc and the emergence of a divided Germany integrated into the capitalist European economy. As Stalin tightened his grip on Eastern Europe during 1945–1947, East–West cooperation over Germany broke down, mainly over the question of reparations, so vital to the Russians. In Berlin, the Soviets vetoed the verdict of the electorate in free city-wide elections, held in October 1946, and proceeded to impose tight controls on their sector.

Arguably, by 1947 the Western Allies had no other option but to accept the division of Europe into spheres of influence, but Stalin’s repressive policies in Eastern Europe had led to fears of wider Soviet ambitions for European hegemony. The collapse of British power in the Balkans and the influence of Kennan’s new ideological analysis of expansionist Soviet objectives led to a transformation in US policy from initial isolationism to one of containment of
Soviet power through an activist European policy. The enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and the President’s pledge to support democratic regimes in Western Europe using the massive economic resources of the US led to the Marshall Plan in June 1947, and the economic rehabilitation of Western Europe, including Western Zones in Germany. The new US thinking was that Western Europe, including Germany, should integrate to form a third economic and political force capable of withstanding a potential Soviet attack, if necessary without US support.

However, the latest Soviet evidence suggests that, prior to the Marshall Plan, Stalin did not have any master plan for taking over Western Europe. For him, the Marshall Plan was the final straw. It signalled not only the end of any hope of massive reparations payments from Germany to his devastated country, but also an even more alarming prospect; the economic and political revival of Germany, which in the Soviet view was totally contrary to the war-time Allies’ Potsdam Agreement to disarm, denazify and decentralise Germany. The Moscow Foreign Ministers’ Conference of 1947, which met to decide on a German peace treaty, broke down over the key question of reparations, even though Stalin appeared ready to accept a German constitution based on the Weimar model, with reduced executive powers and nationwide elections on the formation of a government. Between 1947 and 1948, the formation of the Comintern, the breakdown of the Allied Control Council, the merging of all the Western Zones, and the Western decision at the London Accords in June 1948 to inaugurate the Federal West German state institutionalised the Cold War and resulted in a Europe divided into two rival economic and political though, as yet, not military blocs.

Apart from the German issue, there were additional factors entrenching East–West polarisation, which convinced the Western Allies that the Soviet Union had military as well as political designs on Western Europe, especially as Soviet conventional military strength was overwhelming. These included the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948, fears about the rapid growth of Communist parties in France and Italy, and, finally, Stalin’s imposition of the Berlin Blockade in 1948–1949, which inaugurated the first Berlin Crisis. The latter was an attempt to reverse the seemingly inevitable emergence of a potentially powerful West German State. However, by May 1949, faced with determined Western resistance in the form of the Berlin Airlift and unwilling to risk war over Berlin, given Western nuclear superiority, Stalin had backed down and reopened Allied land access to Berlin.

Meanwhile, in 1949 Ernest Bevin, Britain’s Foreign Minister, reacting to what he perceived as aggressive Soviet moves and wishing to encourage the fragile democracies of Western Europe, instigated talks between the signatories of the Brussels Pact of 1948 – namely France and Great Britain. In 1949 this led to the formation of NATO, a Western Security Pact for the ten North Atlantic powers, who agreed mutual self-defence in the case of armed attack. NATO, under the leadership of the Americans, both enabled Western Europe to build up
forces, including US troops, and guaranteed US military assistance in the face of a Soviet nuclear attack.

In 1950 the Korean War led to an escalation of Cold War tensions, especially as some (including Adenauer) considered it to be a trial run for a Communist attack on Germany. In response, the US, believing that Stalin now had designs for world-wide domination, adopted NSC 68, which resulted in the rearmament, remobilisation and remilitarisation of the US and its Allies. This had long-term repercussions for the German question. Given that West Germany was demilitarised, and that Britain and France, still suffering the economic consequences of the war, were unable to increase their defence expenditure, the US became convinced that the only way to preserve Western European security was to proceed with limited German rearmament. The US was ready to send extra divisions to Europe, and to appoint a US Commander of NATO. In September 1950, Dean Acheson proposed that Germany should rearm in the shape of ten divisions within NATO.

European supranationalists, under the guidance of Jean Monnet, had already embarked on European economic integration via the Schumann Plan (1950) as a means of achieving Franco-German reconciliation, yet simultaneously containing German power. However, the prospect of German rearmament acted as a catalyst for the emergence of the European Defence Community in May 1952, consisting of French, German, Italian and Benelux forces, as a means of containing potential German expansionist tendencies. Stalin condemned German rearmament as contrary to the Potsdam Agreement, and later he launched a new peace initiative. His Note to the Western powers on 10 March 1952 has been the subject of much speculation, because it proposed the creation of a neutral, reunified German State through free democratic elections. However, the consensus of recent research has concluded that this was not a missed opportunity in East–West relations; Stalin only made the offer because he expected the Western powers to reject it, and because he anticipated that it would have the effect of stalling the negotiations for the European Defence Community. As George Kennan observed in 1952, the Western Allies’ refusal to envisage any agreement with the Russians involving the removal of US forces from Germany meant ‘the indefinite continuation of the split of Germany and Europe’.

However, in 1953 the death of Stalin and the detonation of the H-bomb, with its implications for the destruction of the human race, seemed to offer a new opportunity for East–West rapprochement. The new collective leadership in Moscow, dominated by Malenkov, Beria, Khrushchev and Molotov, adopted a policy of reducing international tension, which ultimately resulted in the Korean Armistice, the Austrian State Treaty of 1955 and the Geneva Summit of 1955. Simultaneously a new Soviet initiative on the German question emerged, as East Germany was in a parlous state with living standards in sharp contrast to the FRG, where the economic miracle was underway. Moreover, the flow of emigration to the FRG continued apace.

Molotov’s memoirs confirm that Beria, as Head of State Security, had ascer-
tained from police reports that the DDR could never be successfully absorbed into the Soviet orbit. Beria tried to advance his position within the collective leadership by supporting new talks with the West for a reunified neutral Germany. Molotov heard him say that it made no difference whether Germany was socialist or not, his most important concern was that she was peaceful, so he was prepared to give up Ulbricht and the DDR in return for peaceful coexistence and possibly Western aid, as both the Soviet intelligentsia and the Party apparatus were increasingly dissatisfied with the Cold War and had recognised the terrible nature of the new nuclear threat.

On 27 May 1953, at a meeting of the Praesidium, Khrushchev led the offensive against Beria and Malenkov, accusing them of betraying socialism in East Germany. In the subsequent struggle for power he threw his weight behind Molotov, who supported the maintenance of the DDR. Beria was shot, and his advice to the East German leadership to mollify the workers was rejected. In June, this led to the 17 June workers’ uprising, which Ulbricht, with the support of Moscow, ruthlessly crushed. In 1953, the KI (or ‘Small Committee of Information’), attached to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, reported as follows:

For some in the Soviet hierarchy, the Berlin revolt was a grim reminder that German revanchism, prompted by and under the nuclear protection of the United States, could pose a deadly threat to Soviet interests. This in their eyes gave an ominous tint to the detailed and voluminous intelligence data on the rise of revanchist agitation and the activities of certain refugee organisations in the FRG.

Thereafter, the zigzags and the outcome of the Beria affair ‘set the terms of Soviet/German policy for decades ahead. The DDR regime ceased to be an expendable factor and dubious asset, and became the sine qua non of Soviet diplomacy in Europe’. The primary goal of Soviet policy became the unconditional acceptance of the new status quo in Europe, and in particular the Oder–Neisse Line. This explains Molotov’s uncompromising stance at the Four Power Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on Germany, in Berlin in 1954, when he rejected the Eden Plan for holding elections for the whole of Germany as a basis for negotiation.

The death of Stalin, and Winston Churchill’s speech, in May 1953, calling publicly for a summit conference with Stalin’s successors, also coincided with the inauguration of a new Republican administration in Washington under Dwight D. Eisenhower, who appointed John Foster Dulles as his Secretary of State. Almost immediately, the US had to react to the startling turn of events in Moscow following the death of Stalin. The new Eisenhower administration was ambivalent about proposals for disarmament and East–West détente, and eventual German reunification. The first US review by the National Security Council (NSC) Council stated that the long-term goal for Germany was ‘the firm association of a united Germany or at a minimum the Federal Republic with the West,
preferably through an integrated European Community, thereby enabling Germany to participate in the defence of the West’. Nevertheless, it was incumbent on the US both to respond to the new situation in Moscow and to react to pressure to cut defence expenditure. In September 1953, Dulles suggested to the President that the time had come for a relaxation of world tension by the creation of areas of restricted armaments and a withdrawal from Europe by both the Soviet Union and the US. Eisenhower also ventured into the disarmament debate with his ‘Atoms for Peace’ speech in December 1953.

Simultaneously the Eisenhower administration embarked on a new defence strategy, which was to have profound implications for the German problem and East–West relations. Since April 1950 US defence policy had been based on a secret document known as NSC 68, which had been drawn up under the Truman administration to deal with the alarming situation resulting from the Soviet explosion of an atomic bomb in 1949, and the onset of the Korean War. NSC 68 recommended the development of the hydrogen bomb, and the mobilisation of US economic resources for a massive military build-up against the potential threat from the Soviet Union. This was a major development which dramatically altered Truman’s policy of economic and political containment of Soviet power. It led to the stationing of large numbers of US ground troops in Europe, and the installation of US air bases in European countries including Germany.

Nevertheless, by 1953 Dulles and Eisenhower thought the Democratic administration’s strategy was too passive in view of what they perceived as Communist aggression worldwide, and they adopted a new defence strategy labelled ‘the New Look’. This involved massive nuclear retaliation in the event of attack, and ‘roll back’ of Soviet power in Europe, and proposed the first use of a retaliatory nuclear strike in the event of an attack on strategically important areas of East–West confrontation such as Berlin – which, lying as it did behind the Iron Curtain, was not militarily defensible. The US considered that the freedom of the city and the US’ whole position in Europe depended on its willingness to implement a nuclear response. Initially, it was assumed that the European Allies would actively support this new policy.

Inevitably, those in the Republican administration who promoted ‘New Look’ viewed disarmament and détente as irrelevant to the goal of tying West Germany into the Western Alliance and pursuing the Cold War. Hence, in early 1954, the Berlin Foreign Ministers’ Conference on Germany ended in failure, with both sides supporting the status quo rather than considering any other options, such as a reunified, neutral Germany. Arguably, a divided Germany was now the best and most secure option for the Soviets, the Americans and their Allies. Even Adenauer seemed prepared to go along with it for the time being because, for him, it meant the emergence of an independent West German nation. However, the vital question was whether the division of Germany could provide long-term stability for Western Europe, given the fact that the economic imbalance between the two states was unsustainable.
Meanwhile, the French Parliament’s failure to ratify the EDC Treaty in August 1954, besides temporarily derailing the movement towards European unity, threatened NATO’s unity and the acceptable integration of West Germany into Western Europe’s defence. Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary in the Churchill Administration, was worried on two counts. He feared a possible US retreat from Europe and was concerned about another Rapallo scenario, and therefore was determined to bind the FRG into the Western Alliance. He rescued the situation by promoting the Paris Agreements of 1955, which led to the emergence of an independent, rearmed Federal Republic within the Western Alliance. Konrad Adenauer, leader of the CDU Party, became the new Chancellor of the West German State.

To counter French fears of German rearmament as a result of these new arrangements, Britain agreed to maintain her current forces in Europe and help France to act as a counterbalance to Germany. Most importantly, as an intrinsic part of the Paris Agreements, Germany, though a member of NATO, would not be permitted to use nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. This restriction of German sovereignty was an intrinsic part of the new arrangements to ease not only Russian security fears but also those of Britain and France, a mere ten years after the Second World War.

Nevertheless, the emergence of two independent German States under totally opposing ideological and political regimes made the situation, in terms of any move towards peaceful coexistence between East and West, even more difficult, particularly considering the complexities of the Berlin problem. West Berlin relied on the FRG for its economic survival, but for security and freedom it depended on the Western Allies and their continued occupation of the city. Adenauer believed that if the Allies eroded their occupation status even by de facto arrangements with the DDR, the Federal Republic would have to abandon all hope of reunification. Therefore any recognition of the DDR had to be opposed at all costs, and to prevent this the Hallstein Doctrine was proclaimed. This stated that the FRG would not recognise the DDR and would not maintain diplomatic relations with any state that did so.

Accordingly, the Western powers, keen to bind the fledgling West German State to the West, refused to grant diplomatic recognition to East Germany and argued that the democratic Federal Republic was the only legitimate German state. The new Soviet fear resulting from these developments was that a West German State, linked politically and militarily to the US, might lead to a US-led coalition of capitalist powers in Western Europe directed against the Soviet Union and her Eastern European Empire. In this new Cold War situation Berlin remained a dangerous flashpoint for rivalry between the superpowers, and Russia reacted predictably by condemning German rearmament and setting up the Warsaw Pact to defend Eastern Europe against the West. Notwithstanding these developments, the Soviet Union did not prevent further Soviet gestures towards détente, such as the 1955 East–West Summit at Geneva. However, as there was no East–West consensus on Germany’s future, the Soviets reverted to
the ‘Two Germany’ solution. The closest they would come to reunification in the future was the idea of a confederation between the DDR and the FRG.

This phase in international relations, typified by the ‘Geneva Spirit’, was shortlived. In 1956, East–West relations deteriorated following the ill-fated Anglo-French Suez expedition, and the Soviets’ brutal suppression of insurrection in Poland and Hungary. Khrushchev, now the foremost voice in the Kremlin, had to come to terms with the fact that his revolutionary policies of de-Stalinisation and peaceful coexistence, first announced at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, had destabilised Eastern Europe. There was a brief period in 1957–1958 when the prospect of the nuclear armament of the Bundeswehr, and the US planned placement of IRBMs in Germany (albeit initially under the NATO umbrella), led to significant new initiatives in East–West relations. The Rapacki Plan of 1957 envisaged nuclear disengagement in Central Europe and the possibility of a neutral Germany. However, as Germany had become the linchpin of US security in the defence of Western Europe, Western leaders were reluctant to consider any Soviet proposals for disengagement, a neutral Germany, or for a German confederation – the option favoured by Ulbricht. Nevertheless, Macmillan, inspired by Winston Churchill’s efforts to pursue détente in the 1950s, tried to put pressure on the Americans to respond to the Soviet pressure for a summit from 1957–1958, but to no avail. In 1958 Khrushchev therefore resorted to the device of an ultimatum on Berlin to force the West to negotiate initially on Berlin, and thereafter on Germany and European security and disarmament. After the successful launch of Sputnik in 1957 the Soviet leader believed he would be able to negotiate from a position of strength, using nuclear blackmail as a weapon of Soviet foreign policy – especially as he felt this had been successful in 1956 at the time of the Suez Crisis.

On 10 November 1958 Khrushchev made a speech to a Soviet-Polish Friendship Meeting in Moscow, stating that the Soviet Union wished to terminate the Four Power Agreement on Berlin, thereby ending the ‘occupation regime’ in the city. If by 31 May 1959 the Western powers had not agreed to negotiate the end of Berlin’s occupation status and to change its status to that of a Free City, the Soviet Government intended to unilaterally sign a peace treaty with the East German Government, giving it full control over access to West Berlin. This was confirmed in the subsequent Soviet Note on Berlin that was delivered to Western capitals on 27 November 1958, which argued that Allied rights in Berlin derived from the Potsdam Agreement, which the Western powers had ‘grossly violated by allowing West Germany to participate in NATO, and by arming the Bundeswehr with American rockets and atomic weapons’. The Soviet Government therefore considered null and void the ‘Protocol on Occupation Zones of Germany and Greater Berlin of September 12 1944’, and the ‘Associate Agreement on Control Machinery in Germany’, concluded on 1 May 1945. These agreements, which were in place during the first years after the capitulation of Germany, were the basis of Western claims to West Berlin and their occupation zones in Germany.
The Soviet Note stated that it intended to hand control of access rights to the German Democratic Republic (DDR) in accordance with the exercise of its jurisdiction dating from the agreement between the USSR and the DDR, 20 September 1955, which also recognised West German sovereignty. The Western position was safeguarded by Notes to the Western powers, issued on 18 October 1955, which stated that traffic controls would temporarily be carried out by the command of Soviet military forces in Germany until the achievement of a suitable agreement. In ‘normalising’ the situation, the Soviet Union proposed giving West Berlin the status of a demilitarised Free City:

so that no power, not even the two German States, would have the right to interfere in its affairs. West Berlin should in turn commit itself to prohibit on its territory any hostile or subversive activity directed against the DDR or any subversive activity directed against the DDR or other states.

The Four Powers would guarantee the free status of the city, and the UN could participate in the observance of the new status of West Berlin.

Two further points deserve attention. First, the Soviet Government made it clear there would not be a repeat of the 1948–1949 blockade of deliveries of raw materials and foodstuffs to West Berlin. Second, and in contrast, an implied threat was made – namely that the DDR could take over control of access routes to Berlin. The Note stated:

the question would arise of some kind of arrangement with the DDR, concerning guarantees of unhindered access between the Free City and the outside world both to the East and the West, with the object of free movement of traffic.
SOVIET POLICY ON THE BERLIN QUESTION, NOVEMBER 1958–FEBRUARY 1959

The role played by Ulbricht and the DDR in the decision to issue the Soviet Ultimatum

Mounting discontent in Poland and the revolt in Hungary in 1956 emphasised the basic instability of the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe, so the primary goal of Soviet policy became the ‘unconditional acceptance of the new status quo in Europe (the Oder–Neisse Line in particular), while running the country was the means to guarantee this goal’.1 Given these imperatives, Khrushchev became the defender of the status quo in Eastern Europe and the supporter of massive Soviet economic assistance to the DDR.2 This became an issue between Khrushchev and the Anti-Party Group of Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich in 1957. The Anti-Party opposition had emerged during a discussion of the three billion roubles the Soviet Union had budgeted for goods to be produced in East Germany, without which, Khrushchev argued, they would lose the DDR altogether.

The recognition of the DDR was thus essential to Soviet strategy, both as the advance guard of Communism in Europe and as a bastion for the Soviet Union preventing the danger of a reunified Germany.3 Khrushchev viewed Berlin as a ‘barometer’ registering the relationship between East and West, and he wanted to relieve the mounting tension in West Berlin and work out a peace treaty. This would consolidate the status of Germany as fixed by the Potsdam Agreement and legitimise the provisional de facto situation and make it permanent:

We were simply asking the other side to acknowledge that two irreconcilable social–political structures existed in Germany, socialism in East Germany and capitalism in West Germany. We were only asking for formal recognition of two German Republics, each of which would sign the Treaty. According to our proposal West Berlin would have special status as a Free City.4

Khrushchev supported Ulbricht, who ‘acted as a bona fide Communist in a tough struggle for fulfilment of the old Bolshevik dream: that there would be a
German proletarian state in the heart of Europe’ – a dream which had been bought at the price of millions of Soviet lives during the war with the Nazis.\(^5\) During the Stalinist era, Ulbricht had worked his way up through the ranks of the Comintern to his positions as Deputy Premier of East Germany, and Secretary General of the Party of German Unity (SED), the ruling party in East Germany from 1949. He had suppressed any opposition to his rule from within the party and saw himself as ‘the Lenin of Germany’, who would convert East Germany into the first advanced socialist state.\(^6\) The DDR never recognised the legality of the Allied occupation of West Berlin, and claimed that Berlin was the ‘capital city’ of the DDR. Ulbricht repeatedly asked the Soviet leadership to help him take over West Berlin, but to no avail.\(^7\)

At the Fifth Party Congress, in July 1958, Ulbricht announced new economic reforms and set unrealistic economic goals, proclaiming that the DDR economy would overtake the FRG by 1961. As a convinced ideologue, this intensification of left-leaning policies was aimed at making reunification more difficult and placating the Soviet leadership after the 1953 uprising. Between 1958 and 1959, the percentage of collectivised land rose from 29 to 40 per cent. By 1961 it was all collectivised, and private industrial firms had become joint state/private undertakings.\(^8\) However, the widening differentiation between the DDR and the FRG, where the economic miracle was underway, simply increased the refugee flow to the West and emphasised the need to stabilise the DDR. Yury Andropov, Head of the Central Committee Department on Relations with Socialist countries, wrote an urgent letter to the Central Committee pointing out that there had been a 50 per cent increase in the numbers of the intelligentsia fleeing to the West since 1957. He considered their motives were more political than economic, and therefore ‘it would be expedient to discuss this with Comrade Ulbricht, using his stay in the USSR to explain to him our apprehensions on this issue’.\(^9\)

On 2 and 5 October 1958, during meetings with Mikhail Pervukhin, Soviet Ambassador to the DDR, Ulbricht emphasised the importance of the refugee problem. Although the East German Passport Law had reduced the refugee flow in general, the proportion leaving through West Berlin increased from 60 to 90 per cent by 1958.\(^10\) In his memoirs, Khrushchev confessed that the DDR had to cope with an enemy who was economically very powerful and therefore very appealing to the DDR’s own citizens:

> the resulting drain of workers was creating a simply disastrous situation in the DDR, which was already suffering from a shortage of manual labour, not to mention specialised labour. If things had continued like this much longer, I don’t know what would have happened.\(^11\)

Additional destabilising influences were the constant flow of Western propaganda into East Berlin and the increase in subversive activities. Hence, the Soviet Note stated that: ‘It is necessary to prevent West Berlin from being used any longer as a springboard for intensive espionage, sabotage and other
Subversive activities against socialist countries'. Dolgilevich has also emphasised the importance of this factor as a source of international tension.

Western recognition of the sovereignty of the DDR was therefore of paramount importance. Pervukhin stated that the aim of the Embassy in 1958 was to help prepare ‘Soviet Foreign Policy steps directed towards the resolution of the Berlin problem, the consolidation of the situation in the DDR, and the advancement of its international prestige’. These relatively unprovocative aims, revealed in the newly released DDR documents, make Soviet readiness to compromise on Western proposals understandable, and explain why Western acceptance of the DDR alongside the FRG, as observers at the Geneva Conference, was regarded by the Soviet and DDR Governments as significant progress towards international recognition of the DDR.

**Soviet and Eastern bloc fears of the nuclear rearmament of the Bundeswehr**

The second main factor influencing the Soviet Government’s decision to issue its Note on Berlin of 27 November 1957 was the profound fear of the nuclear rearmament of the Federal Republic. This was frequently dismissed in the West either as propaganda or as a failure by the Russians to understand NATO’s command and control system. However, recent research both in the West and in the former Eastern bloc has indicated that the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr was taking place in 1958–1959, and that this development was regarded with considerable trepidation not just by the Soviet Government but also by Western governments.

In 1958, CDU leaders debated the question of nuclear deployments in Germany by either the US or the Bundeswehr, and the FRG Government introduced the ‘March Resolution’ in the Bundestag. This advocated the solution of the nuclear issue by arms control talks, whilst reserving Bonn’s right to acquire nuclear weapons if the talks failed. Helmut Schmidt, leader of the SDP, which mounted a campaign against nuclear rearmament, went so far as to state: ‘the decision to equip the Fatherland with atomic weapons directed against each other will be seen by History as a decision as important and ominous as the Enabling Law against Hitler’. In trying to counter public opposition to IRBMs, Henri Spaak, Secretary General of NATO, argued that ‘continental Europe’s ability to play an effective part in atomic retaliation is now a fact. Would it not be fair then to give Europe some share of the responsibility for the conduct of this kind of warfare?’

Marc Trachtenberg argues that the Russians definitely had cause for alarm as they faced the prospect of a nuclearised Bundeswehr in the not too distant future. David Bruce, the US Ambassador to the Federal Republic took it for granted that in the long run the Germans wanted to have their own nuclear force. The US Joint Chiefs of Staff were sympathetic to German aims, but Dulles and the State Department had doubts about Defence Minister F. J. Strauss, who was
expected to follow a more independent path if he became Chancellor. At the end of 1957, US Defense Secretary Neil McElroy noted that in deploying IRBMs, the Americans might give the Allies control not just of the delivery systems but of the warheads themselves.21 And in June 1959, the President stated that they were willing to give control of nuclear weapons to the Germans.22

Following the Rapacki proposals in November 1958, which were directed against the nuclear rearmament of the FRG, the State Department reviewed the US position. The NATO policy of a strong shield entailed the extensive equipping of Germany with nuclear weapons at a time when the UK, with an anticipated army of 165,000 in 1962, was unable to maintain her present status in NATO. Requirements for Germany included a number of weapons with dual or atomic capability, notably Honest John, Lacrosse, Redstone, Matador and Nike, and the Germans had ordered sixty Ajax and forty atomic-capable Hercules per battalion.23 The Matadors were scheduled for delivery some time between August 1959 and July 1960, though the atomic warheads would remain under US control. The Germans had also acquired 225 F84 fighter bombers, a proportion of which were equipped with conversion kits that gave them atomic capability.

On 17 December 1958, the DOD discussed with Strauss the German military build-up and West German efforts to meet NATO plans for possible transfer of IRBM, Nike missiles, Hawk missiles and F104 aircraft.24 David Bruce planned to hold talks with Adenauer on the provision of nuclear weapon stockpiles.25 Sir Christopher Steel, British Ambassador to the Federal Republic, warned that Strauss was determined to acquire ‘forces which will bring Germany the maximum influence at the price’. The Air Force, though not operational until 1963, would have nuclear capacity for the strike and ground-to-air missiles on which they would largely depend for defence.26

On 3 November 1958, the Defence Committee discussed a Foreign Office memorandum which warned about the emergence of West Germany as an independent nuclear power, its impact on the European balance of power, and whether it was desirable or possible to prevent this happening:

General Norstad is planning that German forces like those of other member states should be provided with tactical nuclear weapons and the first German air squadron has now completed its training in the delivery of atomic weapons and has its nuclear stockpile in position.27

The committee stated that as the UK was cutting down her forces in Europe to maintain her ‘status as a global partner with the US’, this development was essential to an integrated Federal Government in Europe. ‘German hegemony in Western Europe would have disadvantages, but was preferable to a Germany either committed to rearmament or pursuing an oscillating independence between the camps’.28 However, such a development posed considerable risks: Russia might be tempted to embark on a preventative war; there could be a
danger of war by miscalculation if there was rioting in East Germany, and the Federal Republic, armed with nuclear weapons, could not be restrained from going to the rescue; and, most seriously, the Soviet Union and her satellites regarded the present US control over the warheads as inadequate. The Defence Committee concluded that there was an ‘increased likelihood of the Germans one day coming to possess nuclear warheads under their own control especially if France became a nuclear power’. However, although Soviet fears were seen as justified, and the dangers of Germany reasserting hegemony over Europe acknowledged, their recommendation was to let German nuclear plans run their course. In view of these developments, the evidence suggests that Soviet fears that the potential nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr would be a threat to their security were certainly not illusory – indeed Yury Aksuitin, a Communist Party historian, believed it was a very important factor behind Soviet foreign policy.

The Background to the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958

The Soviet Note of 27 November was not just a bolt from the blue. During the spring and summer of 1958, the German question was becoming the dominant issue in the DDR. In March 1958, Friedrich Ebert, Deputy Mayor of East Berlin, challenged references to the Four Power status of Berlin on the grounds that it was derived from the Potsdam Agreement and was abrogated by the Western powers, who therefore forfeited the right to maintain garrisons in Berlin.

At the Fifth Parteitag, Ulbricht announced his proposals for a future Germany: West German withdrawal from NATO; East German withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact; the recognition of West Germany’s post-war frontiers; the guarantee of all fundamental democratic freedoms; the defeat of revanchism; and an endorsement of the idea of a confederation. Khrushchev, who attended the meeting, stated that the two German states should negotiate directly on the establishment of a German confederation. He said:

West Germany’s entry into NATO, the introduction of conscription and now the decision to equip the Bundeswehr with atomic and rocket weapons further aggravates German states. The Bonn Government erected, stone by stone, the wall between the two parts of Germany.

However, it was new developments in West Germany which directly led to the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958. The Bundestag Resolution of 2 July 1958, which was sponsored by all the parties, called on the Four Powers to create a Four Power Group to prepare joint proposals for the solution of the German problem. This mechanism would have meant that the German question would be determined by a commission on which the Soviet Union could be outvoted by the Western powers, and on which the two German States would have no representation. In response, on 15 August the Praesidium agreed to an MID recommendation that the Soviet Union and the DDR should take joint action to
pre-empt this Western initiative. On 5 September the DDR sent Notes to the three Western powers proposing the creation of a Four Power Commission, and in addition a joint German Commission to prepare a German Peace Treaty.

The Western powers replied to the DDR in their Note dated 30 September, which stated that the prerequisite for any negotiations on the German question must be the reunification of Germany and the formation of an all-German Government by means of free elections. As this was anathema to the Soviet Union and the DDR, a series of high-level meetings then took place between Ulbricht, Pervukhin (Soviet Ambassador to the DDR) and A. Smirnov (Soviet Ambassador to the Federal Republic) between 26 September and 17 November. These discussions suggest that Soviet and DDR motivation for reactivating the German question was primarily defensive, and arose from three main fears: the nuclear rearming of the Bundeswehr; impending Western aggression against East Germany; and the destabilisation of East Germany, which was becoming weakened by the outflow of refugees. On 2 October, Pervukhin said that the Soviet Government would answer the Western powers with a special note emphasising support for the DDR proposal on the preparation of a peace treaty. Ulbricht thought they should not be in a hurry to transfer to the DDR control functions which had been carried out by the Soviet organs in Berlin, ‘since this would give us the opportunity to keep the adversary under pressure for a certain period of time’. There was certainly no discussion about taking over West Berlin.

Meanwhile, on 3 November Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister, sent an analysis of West German reports to the Central Committee. Gromyko said that the Western powers had put the German question on the backburner since the Geneva Conference of 1955 because of their involvement in Near Eastern and Far Eastern policy issues. However, in 1958 the Chancellor had become increasingly worried about the economic and political strengthening of the DDR in a socialist direction, so he decided on an initiative on the German question. In response, Gromyko proposed that the Soviet Union should pre-empt any Western initiative on the German question based on the creation of an all-German Government. He recommended an initial meeting of the representatives of the Four Powers and the FRG and the DDR, at which they would discuss the competence and the appropriate representation of Germany on the body to be appointed for the preparation and signing of a peace treaty. He hoped that a meeting of the six states concerned with Germany’s future would also create a precedent for wider recognition of the DDR in international relations, whether or not an agreement was reached.

One of the most interesting points to emerge from the latest evidence is the flexible and improvised nature of Soviet decision-making, particularly during the period 3–27 November. One week after Gromyko’s report, the whole emphasis of Soviet policy had changed. Khrushchev’s speech of 10 November, the Soviet Ultimatum of 27 November and the Soviet Note of 10 December dealt primarily with the question of Berlin and the ‘Free City’ idea, not
Gromyko’s proposed German peace treaty. Khrushchev’s speech ‘bore many marks of improvisation and none of careful preparation for a major campaign against the West’. In addition, it contained rhetorical, highly emotional and even inaccurate passages, which suggest that the Soviet leader had not consulted his legal advisors. Furthermore, on 3 December, when Hubert Humphrey, Democratic Senator from Minnesota, met the Soviet leader, he was most impressed by Khrushchev’s incredibly detailed, almost word-for-word knowledge of the text of the Soviet Note. Humphrey thought that the dominant hand was that of Khrushchev. Subsequently, Khrushchev demonstrated his well-known flexibility by his readiness to withdraw deadlines, and to soften the tone of Soviet policy according to Western reaction. It was only on Christmas Eve, a month after Khrushchev’s speeches, that Gromyko resumed preparation of two drafts of a German Peace Treaty.

Gromyko’s report is important for a number of reasons. First, it suggests that Soviet aims as regards the DDR were defensive and limited in scope. Second, it emphasises that DDR participation in any meeting of the Four Powers was regarded as an important initial step towards de facto recognition of East Germany. For the Soviet Union and the DDR, an Interim Agreement on Berlin, not involving either recognition of the DDR or a complete end to the occupation regime, would therefore still be a worthwhile goal. Although Ulbricht played an important part in pressing for a solution to the Berlin and German problems, the latest evidence suggests that, despite attempts within the DDR since 13 August to bring up these questions, it was a Soviet initiative, responding to the new geopolitical situation in Europe, which led to the Soviet Note on West Berlin of 27 November 1958. This precipitated one of the major crises of the Cold War.

Clarification of Soviet Intentions on Berlin

In the immediate aftermath of the ultimatum, the Soviet and DDR Governments made a determined effort to correct what they termed as Western misperceptions of Soviet policy. At a press conference on 27 November 1958, Khrushchev emphasised that the Soviet Note on Berlin was not an ultimatum but an invitation to the Western powers to consider and negotiate on the issues over a six-month period. Non-interference in the internal affairs of the Free City would be guaranteed, and if necessary a joint document could be registered with the UN. In his interview with Senator Hubert Humphrey, Khrushchev emphasised the reasonableness of Soviet proposals on the Free City, and his readiness to consider alternative proposals on Berlin as long as talks had started by the end of six months. However, he warned that German reunification could only come about through discussion between the FRG and the DDR.

The Süd-Deutsche Zeitung published an interview with Khrushchev in which he dismissed Western claims that the DDR had plans to conquer West Berlin and claimed that the Soviet Union had moderated the DDR position and ‘even persuaded the East German Government that they would have to abandon
making Berlin their capital and move out for the sake of détente in Germany and Europe’. In early December, Ulbricht outlined in the *New York Times* his vision of a demilitarised Berlin, ‘which could only be favourable to our capital and to all Berliners’. However, he emphasised that the Free City could not be an escape route for refugees, and that organisations which looked after refugees would have to be abolished in the same way as espionage organisations. The numbers of professional people defecting through West Berlin had become so great that the DDR could not hold out against the economic and political pull of West Germany for another year unless something was done. In retrospect, Frank Roberts, British Ambassador to Moscow from 1960, said that Khrushchev’s overall strategy was to win Western recognition of the DDR and hand over powers to the East Germans, but he had heard Khrushchev remark that ‘every now and then he felt, well, better we should perhaps keep some control over things and not give it all to the East Germans’.

Another major influence on Soviet policy was the widespread fear in the Eastern bloc, and particularly in Poland, of West German ‘revanchism’ and the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr. The British Ambassador in Warsaw informed the Foreign Office that the initiative of 27 November had been coordinated between the Soviet, the DDR and the Polish Governments, and was essentially a move to prevent the FRG from getting nuclear weapons. Władysław Gomułka, the Polish Prime Minister, attacked West German militarism and said that a German confederation was the only practical solution, because the ‘security of Poland rested on the boundary of the Elbe separating the two German States’. An editorial in *Kurier Polski* supported Mr Bevan’s statement of 4 December in the House of Commons, which, it stated, was ‘in complete harmony with the Rapacki Pact’ in recognising that the Free City proposal would facilitate reunification through agreement.

The Foreign Office’s perception that there was a linkage between what appeared to be the Soviet’s two main objectives – a change in the status of Berlin and disengagement – was confirmed by an article in the prestigious Soviet journal on international affairs, *Novoye Vremya*. On 28 November 1958, it advocated ‘the summoning of a summit conference at which the Rapacki Plan and the status of Berlin should be discussed’. This linkage was also a feature of the Soviet Note to NATO governments of 13 December advocating a summit conference as the best method of settling controversial international questions. The Note proposed: an atomic- and rocket-free zone in Central Europe on the lines of the Rapacki Plan; agreed reductions in foreign troops on the territories of the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries; a permanent ban on atomic and hydrogen tests; and the earliest possible settlement of Berlin. Macmillan pondered long on whether the Soviet call for a summit was propaganda or a serious proposal. On 5 December, Khrushchev wrote a long personal message to Macmillan emphasising his anxiety about West Berlin, where the Cold War was taking ‘such acute and dangerous forms’, and where the sensitive contradictions and differences which divided the leading powers of NATO and the Warsaw
Pact converged. He renewed his threat on Berlin, stating that if the West was not prepared to reach an agreement on Berlin within the six months specified, the Soviet Government would not hesitate to ‘abrogate its functions deriving from the maintenance of the occupation status of Berlin’, which would give control of Western access to the city to the DDR.

**Soviet Policy on Berlin, January–February 1959**

The deliberations of the Twenty-First Party Congress, which met in January 1959, shed important light both on the domestic considerations determining Soviet Foreign Policy and on Soviet goals in East–West relations. They also provide some insights into Sino–Soviet relations and their impact on the Berlin Crisis, though only tangentially. Reform, détente and disarmament were the watchwords of the Congress, which was dominated by an ebullient Khrushchev, proud of recent Soviet achievements – including his country’s successful launch of the first inter-planetary rocket at the beginning of January 1959. He told the Congress that the record of the preceding years ‘had shown the historic importance of Party decisions on the policy of relaxation, decentralisation and a larger measure of democracy’. Pragmatism, Soviet patriotism and pride in economic and technical achievements appeared to have replaced Communist ideology as the chief factors in social cohesion. The Soviet leader gave a precise timetable for catching up with America economically and for instituting economic reforms benefiting the ordinary people, who were promised less work, more food and a tax-free future. Khrushchev was now ready to embark on the next stage of his vision. He was a ‘man in a hurry’, anxious to preside over the final transfer of Soviet society to Communism.

The new Seven-Year Plan envisaged that the Soviet Union would dominate Europe economically and would eventually surpass the US in terms of GDP. The emphasis was on new technologies, particularly space research, and on a rise in living standards with massive investment in housing. These ambitious targets were well received in the West, even by *The Economist*. The foreign policy agenda, with its emphasis on disarmament, European security and peaceful coexistence, was also generally welcomed within the Soviet Union and in the West. In terms of Sino–Soviet relations, the Plan foresaw a time when the Communist bloc would become the world’s leading industrial power. However, a claim by the radical leadership of the PRC (which had initiated the Great Leap Forward) that the development of communes had put the Chinese Communists at the forefront of the Communist movement, was sharply rebuffed by Khrushchev with the words, ‘society cannot leap from capitalism to communism without going through the socialist phase’.

The Congress’ views on nuclear proliferation also sowed seeds of Sino–Soviet dissent. Khrushchev’s objective was a ban on nuclear weapons and the destruction of stocks. However, he acknowledged that his government would only negotiate from a position of strength, so he had instituted the serial produc-
tion of ICBMs, which would be capable of extremely accurate delivery and targeting.\textsuperscript{62} In 1959, though, the withdrawal of Soviet nuclear support for China added further fuel to the flames. In the West, his aim of an atomic-free zone in the Pacific was seen as an attempt to prevent China from having nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{63}

### The Soviet draft peace treaty of 10 January 1959

Whilst the Party Congress was in progress, the Soviet Government launched a further diplomatic initiative to maintain the momentum in its pursuit of dialogue with the West on the Berlin and German questions. On 10 January 1959 the Soviet Government sent the Western powers a Note concerning a German peace treaty, which supplemented the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958 on Berlin.\textsuperscript{64} This new Note called for a conference of the twenty-eight nations (including Communist China), to be held in Warsaw or Prague, with the purpose of drawing up and signing a peace treaty with Germany. An enclosed draft treaty for Germany echoed similar Soviet proposals in 1952 and 1954, except in one most important respect: it envisaged that a peace treaty would be drawn up not with a united Germany but with two German States.\textsuperscript{65} Any future reunification of Germany would only come about by confederation and with the agreement of the two German States. It also proposed that Germany should assume a ‘commitment not to enter into any military alliances directed against any of the powers party to the peace treaty, and not to take part in any military alliances whose membership does not include all four principal Allied Powers of the anti-Hitler coalition’. Many of the proposals in the Soviet Note were based on those in the preceding Note from the Government of the DDR to the Government of the Soviet Union of 7 January 1959, favouring a free demilitarised city and the confederation of both German states prior to a peace treaty.\textsuperscript{66} To allay Western fears of the DDR breaking off communications with West Germany once the Free City was established, the other nations concerned would accept corresponding commitments as to the guarantees of the Free City and would likewise guarantee the connections of West Berlin in all directions. In addition, they would take all measures in order that ‘the passage of goods and the passenger traffic to and from West Berlin, according to the requirements of the economic, political and cultural life of the demilitarised Free City of West Berlin can be carried out without hindrance’.\textsuperscript{67}

By this new diplomatic initiative, the Russians intended to conclude a peace treaty with both parts of Germany separately in advance of reunification. Their objective was to secure the Federal Republic’s withdrawal from NATO. If this was accepted by the West, it seemed that they would be prepared to see East Germany withdraw from the Warsaw Pact. Thus, even before any talks on reunification would have taken place, the Russians would have virtually achieved three goals: the acceptance of the political status quo in Europe, de facto recognition of the DDR, and the maintenance of the existing political systems of both
parts of Germany. The one option the Soviet Union would not accept was German reunification based on the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr and continued German adherence to NATO. Clearly, Khrushchev anticipated that the double challenge to the West of the Soviet Notes of 27 November and 10 January on both the Berlin and German questions would secure the summit conference which the Soviets had sought for so long.

**Mikoyan’s visit to the United States, 4–20 January 1959**

Meanwhile, Anastas Mikoyan, Khrushchev’s Deputy Prime Minister and foreign policy advisor, as well as a personal friend, arrived in America. Although ostensibly on a trade mission, the real purpose of his visit – the first by a top Soviet minister since 1945 – was to probe Western intentions on Berlin and Germany. He played down the ultimatum, emphasised the peaceful nature of Soviet intentions and campaigned for Soviet–US rapprochement, thereby putting US foreign policy on the defensive.

US intelligence assessments of the visit indicated that the Soviets were prepared to negotiate on the German problem in conjunction with the Berlin problem, but they were not prepared to discuss reunification on Western terms. Discussions in January between Mikoyan, Dulles and the President clarified Soviet policy on a number of points. The Soviets wanted to end the occupation regime in Berlin, but were not asking the West to withdraw troops from the city. They invited suggestions or amendments to their proposals from the Western powers, and believed that ideas on a peace treaty could prepare the ground for German reunification.

One of the main aims of this Soviet diplomatic offensive was to gain recognition of what they considered to be East Germany’s rightful participation in discussions at the Geneva Conference, an objective which became even more apparent during the course of Macmillan’s visit to Moscow in February 1959. Mikoyan proposed confederation as an intermediate step to German reunification. In response, Dulles indicated Western Governments’ determination to maintain their rights in West Berlin, but he also hinted that German confederation might be a transitional stage to reunification. He also told the Russians, contrary to indications in December 1958, that the US would not give nuclear weapons to Germany.

Mikoyan outlined Soviet plans for Europe, at the heart of which would be a confederal Germany incorporated within an atomic-free zone, comprising Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, part of France and some of Russia, open to inspection by the UN with US and Soviet participation. He talked of cutting foreign troops in Germany by as much as one-third, though it was not clear whether this would be in a divided or united Germany. Mention was also made of the possibility of a united Germany remaining in NATO as long as there was a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, a matter which was also touched on by Khrushchev at the Twenty-First Party Congress.
Common themes of almost all his speeches and broadcasts to the American people were that ‘you do not trust us enough’; that it was time for the US and the Soviet Union ‘to start talking like human beings’; and that ‘they desired to have the Cold War ended and security guaranteed for all the peoples of the world under conditions of coexistence’.74 As a public relations exercise Mikoyan’s visit was an outstanding success, and it was generally taken for granted in Washington that there would be Big Four Talks on Germany in the Spring.

On his return to Moscow, Mikoyan reported to the Party Congress that the American people had expressed a wish to improve relations though they had not been prepared to change their policies. However, he had not once heard the Americans mention the words, ‘containment’ or ‘liberation’.75 It would remain to be seen whether the British Prime Minister would make further concessions on behalf of the Western Alliance. Khrushchev mentioned the warm welcome given to Mikoyan by the American people, but said that he had been disappointed by Dulles’ subsequent negative remarks. He was obviously annoyed that he had not received an invitation to visit America, but he said he still extended an invitation to the President to visit the Soviet Union.

**Soviet preparations for the Prime Minister’s Visit to Moscow, 21 February–3 March**

On 24 January, the British Ambassador, Sir Patrick Reilly, saw Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister, to sound out Soviet reaction to Macmillan’s proposed visit to Moscow for a week or ten days, commencing 21 February. To the Prime Minister’s relief, an official invitation was eventually delivered to the Foreign Office on 2 February. Prior to Macmillan’s arrival, the Times correspondent in Moscow reported that there had been little official Soviet comment on Macmillan’s venture. It was the first by a British Prime Minister for sixteen years, and Soviet officials had displayed a good deal of reserve about it – possibly because Soviet newspapers ‘never threw their caps in the air before a meeting with the West’. There was also an undercurrent of puzzlement about the visit, as the Prime Minister had made it abundantly clear that he was not coming to negotiate on behalf of the Western powers.76

The February edition of the Soviet journal Novoye Vremya reported Macmillan’s announcement in Parliament that the visit would be a ‘reconnaissance’ which would hopefully lead to better mutual understanding.77 Macmillan’s choice of words was unfortunate, as in translation ‘reconnaissance’ means ‘espionage’; thus in his statement announcing the visit, the British Ambassador tactfully called it a ‘Voyage of Discovery’. The next issue noted that the visit was seen as benefiting the Conservative Party in the light of the impending Parliamentary elections, and emphasised that the British electorate were demanding a policy to promote peace and improve Anglo–Soviet relations as they were weary of the Cold War and hoped for an improvement in
Anglo–Soviet relations. Izvestiya’s editor, Alexei Adzhubei, Khrushchev’s son-in-law, reviewing the attitude of the British press to the visit, said that the British public hoped the visit would result in a reduction of tension, leading to a summit conference and an end to the Cold War. In retrospect, Macmillan observed that, ‘the intensity of the Cold War and the shadow of the nuclear bomb oppressed the whole world, and any attempt to break through the clouds of suspicion was generally welcomed’. Prior to Macmillan’s visit, the Soviet Ambassador to the UK, Yakov Malik, tried to establish via the Swedish Ambassador whether Dulles, in his recent visit to Britain, had tried to prevent the visit, and whether Britain dared take an independent line from the US. This conversation confirmed that the chief Soviet preoccupation in issuing the Soviet Note on Berlin was West German rearmament, and since his government remained concerned about assurances that the US had the key to the atomic cupboard, it was essential that West Germany should leave NATO. The Soviet Ambassador expressed surprise that Britain and France would even want German reunification, and he deplored British and US disregard for the Rapacki Pact. The Foreign Office concluded from this conversation that the Russians were interested in the Eden Plan. This was put forward at the Geneva Conference in 1955, as an attempt reduce Russian anxiety about German reunification by the establishment of a zone of limitation of forces and weapons in Central Europe.

Prior to the Prime Minister’s arrival, it became clear that the Soviet Government, possibly influenced by press feting of Mikoyan in America, intended to make it a high-profile visit. According to Sir Patrick Reilly, the largely uncensored media coverage was greater than any visitor to Russia had ever been accorded. Large photos of Macmillan provided by Conservative Central Office beamed purposefully from the front pages of Pravda and Izvestiya, accompanied by long leading articles on the Prime Minister’s visit, expressing hope of better relations between England and Russia.

The Central Committee prepares strategy for talks between the Soviet and UK Governments

On 16 February, only two days before the Prime Minister was due to arrive in Moscow, the Central Committee of the Communist Party approved an eighteen-page brief on Soviet strategy for their talks with the UK Government. The Russians appreciated that Macmillan was not coming to Moscow to reach an agreement, but rather to clarify the position of the Soviet leadership on controversial questions, and above all to test the firmness of the Soviet position on Berlin. They were also well aware that the Prime Minister hoped to gain prestige from the visit in order to improve his electoral prospects.

A joint communiqué issued in April 1956, during Khrushchev and Bulganin’s visit to Britain, pledged to do ‘everything possible to end the arms race in all areas of the world, thereby freeing their countries from the threat of nuclear war’. 
war’. In the post Suez–Hungary period, relations between the USSR and Britain had deteriorated; however, the Soviet Government hoped that both countries would now make a significant contribution to the alleviation of international tension. There should be a free-ranging agenda, and at the conclusion of the talks a joint communiqué should be issued by both states, making specific proposals on the German peace treaty and the Berlin question.85

The MID brief confirms that fear of a resurgent, militaristic Germany dominated Soviet foreign policy. In 1959 an additional threat was posed by the potential nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr, which lent particular urgency to the situation. The Soviets intended to exploit Britain’s concern about the emergence of a powerful reunited Germany by emphasising Britain’s isolation from her continental allies, and the attraction of improved Anglo-Soviet relations. Most importantly, it is clear that Soviet motivation resulted from defensive rather than offensive factors. There is nothing to suggest that their ultimate aim was to incorporate West Berlin in the Communist system, as was often argued in the Western Alliance. The evidence indicates that the main Soviet objective was détente and disarmament, which Khrushchev saw as being incompatible with expansionism in Germany. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government was determined to preserve the status quo in Germany and Europe and to improve the position of East Berlin by signing a peace treaty with the DDR. Other major objectives were the liquidation of the occupation status of West Berlin, the creation of a Free City with guaranteed communications, and an East–West summit. There is no mention of German reunification on Western terms, which was still an inherent part of Western proposals for future East–West negotiations.

Two further significant points in the Brief should be noted. First, if Macmillan were to issue threats on Berlin on behalf of the Western powers, the Soviet side would warn him that such pressure would not exert any influence on Soviet policy and would lead to serious consequences for the West: the Soviet Union was prepared to honour her socialist obligations under the Warsaw Pact. Second, in all previous Western interpretations of the Berlin Crisis, the Soviet decision to agree to a Foreign Ministers’ Conference has been attributed to the Prime Minister’s diplomatic enterprise in unilaterally visiting Moscow and persuading the Soviets that they should negotiate on Berlin. However, these Soviet proposals show conclusively that the Soviet Government, probably aware that the Americans would not agree to a summit in the first instance, were prepared to compromise and accept the Western offer of a Foreign Ministers’ Conference to negotiate on Germany, Berlin and European security.

This evidence confirms that long-term Soviet objectives were détente and disarmament and the establishment of a system of collective security for Europe based on an atomic-free zone in Central Europe. Depending on the progress of the talks, the Soviet side intended to emphasise the need for radical measures to ban nuclear testing and the use of all atomic and hydrogen weapons. The Soviet preference for a summit where the representatives had plenipotentiary powers
suggests that Macmillan was correct in his assessment that the Western powers could only do business with Khrushchev, and a summit was a priority.

The dominant Soviet motivation in raising the Berlin question was to prevent the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr and to establish permanently the status quo in Germany and Europe. Thus, the British Government in its negotiating position both at diplomatic level and at the Four-Power Working Group was correct in its perceptions of Soviet policy. As the Soviet Government intended to use the forthcoming Anglo-Soviet dialogue to probe Western intentions on the questions of Berlin, Germany and European security, and to inform the West of its priorities, Macmillan’s role as an intermediary must have been timely and extremely useful to the Russians, and so it would prove to be for the Western Alliance.
BRITISH REACTION TO THE
SOVIET INITIATIVE ON BERLIN,
NOVEMBER 1958–FEBRUARY 1959

British policy on Berlin, 10–27 November 1958
The Foreign Office view of Soviet aims on Berlin had from the outset been prag- matic, and in marked contrast to the more hysterical assessments made by the US and West Germany. Pat Hancock, Head of Western Department responsible for British Policy on Berlin and Germany, thought Khrushchev’s speech had two possible motives. One was that it was all part of a campaign against nuclear weapons for West German forces, as similar attacks and threats had been made by the Russians before the conclusion of the Paris Agreements. The other was that the main object might have been to secure recognition of the DDR.

On 14 November the three Allied Ambassadors in Moscow produced a remarkably accurate joint assessment of Soviet motivation, which recognised Khrushchev’s flexibility and Soviet security fears. They stated that the most likely reason for Khrushchev’s action was concern over the weakening internal situation in East Germany together with the rearmament of West Germany. At this point the Prime Minister became actively involved. At his request, Philip de Zulueta, his Private Secretary, ascertained from Northern Department that the minimum Soviet objective was to support the status of the DDR Government in the face of the growing strength of the Federal Republic, but that there was a wider agenda – namely, to force negotiation on Germany, possibly at summit level, and to discuss reunification on Khrushchev’s terms. De facto recognition of the DDR Government would support the Soviet view that reunification must be settled by the two German States.

Sir Frank Roberts, Head of the UK Delegation to NATO in Paris, asked the Foreign Office for guidance on the British position in readiness for the NATO Council Meeting of 17 November. In response, Sir Frederick Hoyer-Millar, Permanent Under-Secretary, and Sir Anthony Rumbold, Deputy Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, discussed the Berlin question on 14 November. They concluded that the issues raised by Khrushchev’s speech provided an ideal opportunity for tripartite discussions with the French and the Americans and thereafter with the Germans, and agreed that the Allies needed to work out ‘some arrangements for dealing de facto with the East Germans’ and ‘if
necessary actually recognising the DDR Government'. They decided that a Foreign Office analysis of the Berlin problem should be made, based on assessments from the Ambassadors in Bonn and Moscow, and the Military Mission in Berlin.

The Foreign Office Memorandum 8113

The Foreign Office analysis of the Berlin situation, thereafter known as Foreign Office Memorandum 8113, and initial allied reaction to it, was forwarded to Sir Harold Caccia, British Ambassador in Washington, with a request that he ascertain the views of the State Department. The Memorandum was controversial because it advocated dealing with the DDR as the best compromise, and the Foreign Secretary told Sir Harold Caccia that he would not ‘much mind if it ended up with the recognition of the DDR Government’. The basis of Western Policy on Berlin, dating back to the Declaration of 1954, was that any attack on Berlin would be seen as an attack on the West, and that the Western Alliance should be prepared to resort to force rather than withdraw forces or abandon the West Berliners. The Memorandum stated that any weakening of this premise would be fatal, but that if the Soviet Government carried out its intentions, the Allies would have to decide whether to deal with the DDR representatives on present procedures on access and transport matters. The Federal and West Berlin authorities already dealt with DDR officials de facto in relation to civilian traffic, and this would be unaffected by the Soviet withdrawal. In theory, only Allied official and military traffic would be affected, and there would be no difficulty in staging a ‘miniature airlift’ to take care of this for a maximum period of a year.

Ultimately, the stark choices facing the West were that they could abandon Berlin, resort to force, or stay in Berlin and deal with the DDR authorities. In putting forward this last option, the Foreign Secretary realised it might well put Britain rapidly on to a slippery slope at the end of which lay full and formal recognition of the DDR. There was a danger that the DDR might make it a condition that the Western powers should recognise their regime before authorising their representatives to enter into practical arrangements with the Allied governments over transport and communications. Given the alternatives of agreeing in practice that the government should deal with representatives of the DDR or resorting to some act of force to break a blockade, the Foreign Secretary’s view was that it would clearly be in Britain’s interests to choose the first alternative.

Sir Bernard Ledwidge, Political Advisor to the British Government in Berlin, made the following comments on the contents and impact of Memorandum 8113:

It was obviously better to negotiate than fight, that we couldn’t desert West Berlin, that the West Berliners’ way of life must not be changed but that to recognise the DDR which was probably Khrushchev’s objective, was a small price to pay for protecting West Berlin. This was
of course a sensation at the time. We put it in a very off hand way, in what was described as a Chancellery paper, but in fact it had Macmillan’s approval and it was a proposal for departing from the official allied policy of seeking the reunification of Germany through free elections. This was a matter of moving in the opposite direction, to the reunification of Germany without free elections, in fact deepening the division of Germany and none of our Allies liked this.9

Arguably, this rapid assessment of policy options was undertaken to ensure that Britain’s more compromising attitude would influence allied decision-making, and facilitate a consideration of the wider implications of the Crisis.

On 17 November, the British Ambassadors to Paris and Bonn were officially asked to assess French and German reaction to FO Memorandum 8133. Surprisingly, the French were in broad agreement with the analysis, and were prepared to accept the idea of Four Power discussion of problems on the assumption that there was general tripartite agreement. The French Foreign Minister, Couve de Murville, said the real dilemma was whether the Allies were prepared to risk a world war rather than do something that would imply the recognition of the DDR.10 When he heard about the British memorandum, Adenauer was suspicious and resentful. He sent a personal letter to Macmillan voicing his deep concern that ‘the Soviet Union is resolved to make the Berlin question a test for the policy of the free world’.11 He pleaded with Macmillan to prevent the Soviet Union setting in motion ‘a stone which could become a destructive avalanche’, by making representations to Moscow.

In response, Macmillan sent a personal message to Khrushchev on 22 November, conveying his anxiety over the Soviet leader’s recent statements on Berlin.12 He warned that the UK Government had every intention of upholding its rights in Berlin, which were soundly based. He expressed surprise that whilst fruitful negotiations on nuclear tests were proceeding in Geneva, the Russian Premier should proceed with such action. This gesture was appreciated in Bonn, where the British memorandum had been interpreted as implying that HMG was in favour of unilaterally recognising the DDR, which might lead to descent of the ‘slippery slope’.13 At his meeting with the US Ambassador on 19 November, Selwyn Lloyd played down the significance of Memorandum 8113 on the grounds that it merely provided a preliminary British analysis ‘to start the ball rolling’ in consultation between the Allies, and it was ‘not a considered or final policy’. He ‘was prepared to fight’ to maintain the Western position in Berlin, but was opposed to presenting the options facing the Allies as a choice of recognising the DDR or fighting.14 The US view was that full recognition of the DDR would amount to legal recognition of the partition of Germany. This was contrary to their policy of accepting (explicitly as opposed to implicitly), Adenauer’s commitment to the reunification of Germany as the linchpin of US policy in Europe. The US considered Berlin to be the major symbol of the Cold War, and felt that any defeat for the West would encourage the Russian advance.
Contingency planning – the Agency Theory

The debate on the attitude of the Western powers towards the DDR led to demands by the Federal Republic for changes in existing contingency planning, based on NSC 5404/1, approved 25 January 1954. In the event of access to Berlin being cut off by the DDR, the three Allied powers would not immediately impose an airlift but would first apply diplomatic and economic measures and then limited force to lift the blockade, even though this might inexorably lead to nuclear war. However, the British saw an airlift as the only ‘positive response’ to a blockade, so during 1954, as a result of British pressure, these instructions were amended by the Allied High Commissioners in Berlin. They agreed that in the event of Soviet withdrawal from Berlin and on the condition that access to Berlin was not cut off, Western commanders and military travellers would deal with the East Germans as ‘agents’ of the Soviet Union. This was confirmed in 1957, but the FRG had not been informed of the decision. These purely technical contacts with DDR officials, subsequently termed the Agency Theory, were not considered at variance with Allied support for German reunification, and the consequent refusal of the Western powers to recognise either the DDR or the division of Germany. From 1958 the Tripartite Ambassadorial Group in Bonn met without German participation to discuss sensitive contingency planning issues, but from February 1959 this function was taken over by the Tripartite Ambassadorial Group, of the US, Britain and France, in Washington. This body also coordinated airlift planning on measures to be adopted if the Soviets withdrew from their functions with respect to Allied access to West Berlin.

Shortly after Khrushchev’s speech of 10 November, the US suggested changes in contingency plans for Berlin. Initially the State Department proposed that if the DDR took over surface access, the West should show documents but not allow them to be stamped, on the grounds that this might imply de facto recognition of the regime. However, it emerged that neither the British nor the French were prepared to stand and fight on the issue of non-recognition of the DDR, so on 14 November it was agreed on a tripartite basis that the Germans should at least be informed of the existence of the Agency Theory. Immediately, the Germans put pressure on the Americans to reject any dealings with the DDR. The State Department also asked the Allies to reconsider another aspect of contingency planning, as specified in NSC 5404/1, namely to commit themselves in advance to the use of force to reopen road access to Berlin.

The British were totally against this development. They viewed the massive retaliation theory of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff in the 1950s as one of brinkmanship, and feared that any confrontation at the checkpoints would quickly escalate to general war and an attack on the Soviet bloc. Eisenhower’s remark that he was ‘prepared to put all the chips in the pot’ and Fay Kohler’s (Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs) comment, that ‘it was conceivable that we could get a better stabilisation of the position by a show of force, or a test of strength before negotiations took place’ were considered
typical of US policy-makers. Sir Anthony Rumbold aptly summed up the British attitude when he said public opinion, faced with a choice between recognition of the DDR and fighting, would not support war. ‘Can you imagine a more miserable issue on which to go to war?’ However, he emphasised that HMG would not abandon rights of access and that ‘any forcible attempt to evict allied garrisons would be met by force’.

On 14 November the situation became very serious, because the Soviets detained US trucks at an autobahn checkpoint. General Norstad sent a message to Washington saying that, in the absence of other instructions, he was planning to dispatch armed military forces to test Soviet resolve in Berlin. If the Soviets were to detain the convoy and did not release it, he planned to rescue it ‘by the minimum force necessary’. In his memoirs, Eisenhower states that the US COS and administration were sympathetic to the request, but they decided to suspend cargoes and give some time for Allied consultation. Later, on 18 November, Dulles told the President that the Berlin situation had eased because General Norstad and the JCS had moderated their ‘initial combativeness’ on checkpoint procedure, as they ‘recognised the necessity of bringing their Allies into line prior to taking drastic action’. Arguably, British and French opposition to changes in contingency planning was beginning to bear fruit.

On 24 November, Dulles wrote to Adenauer suggesting that it might be possible to hold the Soviet Union to its obligations on access while simultaneously dealing on a de facto basis with minor DDR functionaries, so long as they merely carried out perfunctorily the present arrangements. Subsequently, at his Press Conference of 26 November, Dulles adopted the moderate pragmatic line of the British. Using the analogy of US policy towards Communist China, Dulles said he did not envisage that dealing with the DDR as a substitute for the Soviet Union would involve Western recognition of the regime, and he reminded his audience that the Federal Republic already had relations with minor DDR functionaries on less important matters. Furthermore, he saw the question of the use of force as a purely academic one, as so far there had been no direct threat.

Reaction in the FRG ranged from ‘disbelief to dismay and downright anger at the thought of any dealings with the DDR’. On 28 November, Heinrich von Brentano, the German Foreign Minister, stated that it was not possible to accept the transfer of power from the Soviets even tacitly, including the idea of DDR officials acting as agents. This perceptible hardening in the attitude of the Federal German Government to the DDR was the result of a historic meeting between Adenauer and de Gaulle at Bad Kreuznach on 27 November 1958. Intrinsic to this new Franco–German alignment was de Gaulle’s tacit acceptance of Adenauer’s position on the Berlin Crisis in return for German backing for his exclusion of Britain from the EEC.

Meanwhile, the British Cabinet met on 18 November for their first discussion of the Berlin situation and to consider their possible options should the Soviets transfer responsibility for access to the East German Government. The Foreign Secretary told the Cabinet:
We should be faced with a choice between abandoning Berlin or instituting an airlift in order to maintain supplies to Western Sectors or coming to some arrangement with the East German Government which would permit transport by road and rail to continue. The last course would be most realistic, but our best chance of achieving a solution on these lines would be in making it clear that we should maintain our right of access to the Western Sectors of Berlin and were prepared if necessary to institute an airlift for this purpose.\textsuperscript{24}

The Cabinet agreed with this analysis and invited the Minister of Defence, in consultation with the Foreign Secretary, to arrange for an examination of alternative means of maintaining supplies to the Western sector of Berlin if the existing arrangements were interrupted. The Americans were sufficiently convinced by the British argument to take part in a tripartite meeting in Bonn on 24 November concerning a garrison airlift, ‘the purpose of which would be to supply the garrisons, transport officials, fly out refugees, and transport nonofficial persons when possible.’\textsuperscript{25} British policy had therefore been most successful in moderating the hard-line stance of the US and the FRG – a factor of great significance during the early weeks of the crisis when, as Eisenhower put it, there was a great danger of a shooting match breaking out because the stakes in Berlin were so high for both sides. In reply to a Parliamentary question from Denis Healey on 28 November, Selwyn Lloyd confirmed the British position:

To the extent that persons appointed by the authorities in East Germany exercise minor technical functions on lines of communications to Berlin, we can be said to accept such persons as the agents of the SU. But the principal functions of control on these lines of communications are in fact performed by Soviet officers.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{The reaction of Britain and her Allies to the Soviet Note, 27 November–31 December 1958}

The Soviet Note on Berlin was dispatched to Western capitals on 27 November.\textsuperscript{27} Western leaders took advantage of the six-month period until the 27 May deadline to take stock of the situation and prepare a measured response. Speeches by Khrushchev, Ulbricht and Gomulka, dispatches from the British Embassies in Moscow and Eastern Europe, and Soviet press reports clarified the Soviet position and facilitated a further reassessment by the Foreign Office of Soviet motivation and aims. The main impression gleaned from these sources was that Khrushchev was determined to regularise the position of West Berlin through negotiations with the West within the six-month deadline, thereby confirming the consolidation of the status quo in Germany and Eastern Europe. His other main objective was to prevent the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr.\textsuperscript{28}

Meanwhile Khrushchev had replied to Macmillan’s message of 22 November
1958, telling him that he was sure that Her Majesty’s Government’s ‘premature and erroneous’ interpretation of the Soviet Government’s intentions in Berlin must have been corrected as a result of the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958. Khrushchev’s long letter repeated customary Soviet arguments on Allied disregard of the Potsdam Agreement, and pointed out that the strategic and military importance of West Berlin to the Allies had been overtaken by technological developments in weapons of mass destruction. Khrushchev also warned that if agreement was not reached within six months the Soviet Union would carry out the proposed measures by means of an agreement with the DDR, and no one would be able to prevent the Soviet Union from abrogating its functions deriving from the maintenance of the occupation status in Berlin. As Macmillan describes it, the last two pages of Khrushchev’s letter ‘returned to blandishments if not blarney’, referring to the 1956 Anglo–Soviet meetings in London, and Soviet hopes for the relaxation of international tension and the cessation of the Cold War. As a result of their perceptions of Soviet motivation which emerged during this period, the Foreign Office did not reverse their controversial Foreign Office Memorandum 8113 of 15 November, and continued to take an independent line on Berlin.

Following receipt of the Russian Note on Berlin, of 27 November, Macmillan sent the following minute to the Foreign Secretary:

The Berlin issue is in fact an ultimatum with six months to run. We shall not be able to avoid negotiation. How is it to be carried out? Will it necessarily lead to discussion of the future of a united Germany and possibly disengagement plans? As regards Russia, it may be that Khrushchev is really working for a summit conference without the Chinese. In that case it would certainly not be bad politics for us to take the lead in suggesting it.

With these words, Macmillan immediately broadened the Berlin issue from one that, until the receipt of the Soviet Note of 27 November, had been dominated by contingency planning to one that encompassed the wider issues of Germany, European security and the summit conference he had been promoting throughout 1958. The Prime Minister hoped to seize the initiative in negotiations with the Russians, and Dulles’ terminal illness and eventual death in May 1959 meant that Macmillan could play an important mediatory role in negotiations between the Russians and the Americans. However, the President made no attempt to link the Berlin question with the broader issues of European security and disarmament at this stage, and US policy continued to major on contingency planning and the Agency Theory. The Foreign Office and the Prime Minister, though, were prepared to make a fresh and innovative exploration of Western policy towards Berlin and these wider, interconnected problems. This reappraisal of policy was based on two factors: the impact of public opinion on the government, and FO perceptions of Soviet objectives. In general, public opinion
favoured negotiations with the Russians and some form of arms limitation in Central Europe. During the previous few years the British public had been bombarded with articles and books on disengagement, and the impact of broadcasts such as the Reith Lectures on public opinion during 1957 and 1958 should not be underestimated.

On 4 December, opening an impassioned House of Commons Debate, the Foreign Secretary pronounced the Soviet proposals unacceptable, ‘pledged HMG to uphold Allied rights in Berlin’, and said he was ready to seek discussions with the Soviets on Germany’s position as a whole. He told the House that Allied foreign ministers would discuss Western reaction in Paris in ten days’ time at the NATO Council meeting, and he reaffirmed that German reunification would only come about by free elections. A definite note of compromise can be detected in his next statement: ‘HMG considers guarantees must be given to reassure the Soviet Union and the East European countries against the dangers of an attack from a united Germany.’ Mindful of Russian security fears he was ready to resurrect the British ideas of 1957, advocating a ground control system, aerial inspection against surprise attack and a zone of agreed numbers of nuclear weapons and levels of armament. These proposals were again being discussed with the Russians at Geneva. Macmillan thought Selwyn Lloyd made an ‘excellent speech in his new style, firm, clear, and short’. On behalf of the opposition, Aneurin Bevan and Denis Healey rejected the Free City proposal, but argued that HMG could not carry on indefinitely defending the status quo and should therefore be prepared to negotiate with the Russians over the future of Germany. They also supported some form of limitation of arms in Central Europe.

The Commons Debate confirmed the Prime Minister’s view that a reconsideration of the Berlin question had to be part of a general reassessment of European problems, including a change in the European status quo on Germany and a discussion of some form of arms limitation in Central Europe. He also bore in mind mounting public support for CND, and support from the public at large for some form of arms control in Central Europe. In a letter to his Public Relations Minister, Charles Hill, Macmillan wrote, ‘I wonder whether all this propaganda about the bomb has really gone deeper than we are apt to think’. In his Memoirs, too, he admitted that the genuine public anxiety about nuclear arms amounted to hysteria. These considerations strengthened the Prime Minister’s resolve to seize the initiative, and pursue a modus vivendi with the Russians.

However, the Cabinet continued to be preoccupied with contingency planning and on 5 December considered a report on contingency measures for Berlin, describing the existing Soviet position and allied instructions on road, rail and air access to West Berlin, and listing possible Soviet measures which would deny access to the city. On road access to Berlin, the report envisaged that in the event of the DDR taking control of the checkpoints, Allied personnel would show their travel documents to the East Germans and allow them to be stamped. The possibility of rejecting the Agency Theory or of using force in a
land probe was not discussed. Shortly, both issues and the question of whether or not the DDR should be permitted to stamp documents would develop into a source of even greater inter-Allied controversy.

The UK Government’s preferred option, should the crisis suddenly escalate and the Soviet Union hand over control of access to West Berlin, was still an airlift. Accordingly, on 10 December the Foreign Secretary informed the Cabinet of the government’s intention to discuss with its Allies at the forthcoming Western Summit ‘the measures which it might be necessary to adopt for the relief of Berlin if the Soviet proposal to bring the military occupation of the city to an end compelled the Western sections to withstand a blockade’. The Cabinet considered that it would be advantageous to abstain from any immediate initiative in relation to Berlin and to allow the other Powers to make the first move. It was hoped that at the forthcoming meeting of the NATO Council, Britain would gain the support of the US Government for ‘fresh proposals for the organisation of European trade’ and for the preparation of an ‘agreement between the Great Powers on the political and economic settlement of Europe’. Herein lay the basis of Macmillan’s quest to reach an accommodation with the Soviet Union on Berlin as an essential prelude to some form of arms limitation in Central Europe, and thereafter détente.

On 27 November the Prime Minister sent a minute to the Foreign Secretary on Soviet motivation on Berlin and the disastrous turn of events in Europe, particularly the ‘unholy alliance’ cemented between the French and the Germans at Bad Kreuznach, which had an important bearing on the Berlin Crisis. Macmillan suggested to Selwyn Lloyd that he would find the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Peter Thorneycroft, the most helpful of his Cabinet colleagues on foreign affairs, and proposed a ‘little dinner for a quiet talk between the three of us’.

Foreign policy initiatives in the Berlin Crisis usually originated from the Prime Minister, but his two private secretaries, his PPS Freddie Bishop, and Philip de Zulueta, his Foreign Affairs Secretary, were the most important sources for the Prime Minister’s ideas on Berlin, and schemes for disengagement. Freddie Bishop sent a minute on Berlin written by de Zulueta to the Prime Minister to use as background for his talk with the Foreign Secretary that evening. In the minute, de Zulueta pointed out the attractions of Eden’s idea of a nuclear-free zone in Germany, not based on the boundaries of East and West Germany but allied to inspection and control of all forces in both Germanies. He thought a tough public stance on the ultimatum might lose West Berlin.

Freddie Bishop thought de Zulueta’s minute ‘excellent’, and used it as the basis of a further Paper he sent the Prime Minister on 2 December entitled ‘Berlin and All That’. He agreed with the Prime Minister’s statement to the Cabinet that ‘we should take our time to formulate an attitude about Berlin’ and meanwhile ‘be slightly offhand about it’, as the best short-term policy to be followed at the Foreign Ministers’ meeting due to take place in Paris during December. Bishop condemned the Allies’ policy of waiting for the Russian
ultimatum to take effect and then doggedly standing by West Berlin, which was at best only defensive and would not command international opinion. He emphasised the importance of considering ‘the Berlin situation in the context of a wider political initiative’ including disarmament or disengagement. Bishop’s approach was radical in that he questioned whether there were any grounds for establishing a German nuclear capability and for installing Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) in West Germany. Drawing on de Zulueta’s ideas, Bishop also put forward the idea of a zone for the limitation of nuclear arms not contiguous with national frontiers, in which the following stages of disengagement could be successively implemented: the freezing and withdrawal of nuclear arms; international inspection of armaments; a staged withdrawal from the zone of non-indigenous forces; and the establishment of precise proposals on the suspension of nuclear tests under effective control.42

In spite of no clear evidence on the content of Macmillan’s dinner conversation with the Foreign Secretary on 2 December, one can speculate that such an initiative was discussed, for in the New Year the Foreign Secretary asked for Sir Gladwyn Jebb, Ambassador in Paris, to be seconded to London for a month to carry out a detailed analysis of British policy on Germany, Berlin and European security.43 Selwyn Lloyd records that he orally suggested on 5 December, or earlier, that the Prime Minister should visit Moscow because the Western Alliance was in hopeless disarray over Berlin, and he knew the Prime Minister could not face an election without a personal effort to ease tensions. The Foreign Secretary had also been told on a visit to Yugoslavia in the late 1950s that ‘Khrushchev was the man for us, as he believed in peaceful coexistence’.44 Selwyn Lloyd commented that he had little doubt that the Prime Minister, who agreed about the visit, was thinking along the same lines, possibly as a step to a summit meeting, which was at the forefront of Macmillan’s thoughts.

Berlin also dominated the agenda in the Foreign Office, where preparations were underway for the December meeting of Western Foreign Ministers in Paris. Sir Anthony Rumbold, Head of Western Department, wrote a long, innovative memorandum recommending that Western rejection of the Free City idea should be accompanied by Allied proposals about the related subjects of Germany, Berlin and European security, on which the West should be prepared to negotiate.45 If, as he predicted, the Russians rejected NATO’s 1957 ‘Outline Plan for German Reunification and Security’ on the grounds that it was based on German reunification, Rumbold believed the West should deal exclusively with the Berlin situation and negotiate a new status for Berlin guaranteed by the UN. David Ormsby-Gore, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, saw the attractions of Rumbold’s idea of an interim Berlin settlement because it would not involve recognition of the DDR.46 Negotiations would be between the DDR and the United Nations, which had no power to grant recognition. The last section of the Rumbold Memorandum, reinforcing the message of FO Memorandum 8113, recommended that the UK Government should try to deal with the DDR. He pointed out that Dulles had come near to saying the same at his Press Confer-
ence of 26 November, and he emphasised that there were all sorts of gradations between dealing with the DDR on a practical basis and recognising it in the full sense.

After the recent Dulles Press Conference, the British could justifiably hope that the Americans were moving towards their position on Berlin. Eisenhower told Dulles that he was willing to consider the ‘Free City’ idea as long as it included the whole of Berlin, both East and West, and access was guaranteed by the UN. However, he added the proviso that this would only be appropriate if the West German Government approved. He told Dulles to organise a Four Power Conference of Western Foreign Ministers with a view to coordinating the Western standpoint. Even though the President thought the immediate crisis was averted, he still expected a ‘showdown at the end of six months. Every tick of the clock brought us nearer to the moment when we had to meet him head on if necessary.’47 Whilst Eisenhower felt that the Allies should convey to Khrushchev the firmness of the West’s position, he did not wish to be provocative. In contrast, Fay Kohler, of the State Department, said ‘compromise was virtually excluded’ and ‘firmness to the point of brinkmanship is our only resource’.48 Throughout the Berlin Crisis, it is notable that Pentagon and State Department officials were more inflexible in their attitude towards the Soviet Union than were the President, and even Dulles.

On 29 November, the US gave in to German pressure and outlined plans for the elimination of the Agency Theory. At a meeting of the NSC on 11 December 1958, the President approved an aide-memoire to the Bonn Embassy which emphasised that the populace of Berlin, as well as that of the Soviet Zone and the Federal Republic, would regard any dealing with East German checkpoint officials by the Western powers as a first step, however tentative, towards recognition of the DDR.49 The next part of the message set alarm bells ringing in the Foreign Office. It stated that if the DDR were to interfere with access, a multi-phase diplomatic and military strategy would be implemented, ending in an ‘attempt to reopen access through the use of limited military force in order to demonstrate our determination to maintain surface access and to test Soviet intentions’.

The Foreign Office rejected such inflammatory action, but was not prepared officially to ‘stick its head above water’. Its formal response to the State Department stated that it was premature to say whether the Foreign Office would accept the US position, but there was some disquiet about the meaning of the paragraph on the ‘use of limited force’.50 Further discussion of this difficult problem was scheduled for the Paris Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 14 December 1958, where the British hoped that the Americans and Germans would be brought to their point of view by the realities of the situation.

At the Paris meeting, the Western powers reaffirmed their rights with respect to Berlin, including access, and agreed that they would not negotiate under duress. Initially, the Foreign Secretary argued that whilst the Soviet Union could not unilaterally repudiate its responsibilities for exercising access to Berlin, it
would be reasonable to apply the Agency Theory whereby the DDR would exercise its responsibilities in substitution for the Soviet Union. However, the Americans, ever conscious of Adenauer’s opposition, won this battle, and the Agency Theory was rejected. The Foreign Secretary, supported by the French, also emphasised that he could not accept anything like Telegram 3350 outlining the uncompromising position of the US on military measures, including the automatic implementation of contingency plans, following a DDR refusal of access to the West. He made it clear that Allied agreement had to be obtained, and this remained the position for the future. However, there was general acceptance at the meeting that it was important that the Soviet Union should be able to climb down without loss of face.

The Four Foreign Ministers appointed a Four Power Working Group which was given responsibility for preparing a Western reply to the Soviet Note, and for taking a new look at the ‘Western Plan for German Reunification and European Security’, submitted to the NATO Council in October 1957. The British view was that the problem of Berlin should be addressed in the wider context of the German problem as a whole – i.e. German reunification and European security. However, there was general agreement that this Plan ‘lacked innovative thought’ as to ways of meeting well-known Soviet objections to the Western position on free all-German elections, and a reunited Germany’s freedom to make a free choice of alliances. The Russians were keen to implement measures on European security prior to German reunification rather than simultaneously, and the British hoped to break this logjam in the forthcoming negotiations.

The subsequent British Note to the Soviet Union of 31 December, agreed by all the Western powers, rejected the Free City Proposal, which would jeopardise the freedom and security of West Berlin’s population, and reaffirmed Allied rights in Berlin, including access. The Allies claimed that these rights were based on the Four Power Agreements of 12 September 1944 and 1 May 1945, by which the Western powers evacuated one-third of the existing Soviet Zone and moved into West Berlin, and not on the Potsdam agreement as stated in the Soviet Note of 27 November. The fact that the occupation system was still in force thirteen years after the end of the war was to be deplored, but the Note emphasised that the government in Berlin was only one aspect of the German problem, and therefore any proposed discussions on the status of Berlin should be considered in the wider framework of the German problem and European security. The Western powers were ready at any time ‘to negotiate with the Soviet Government on the basis of Western proposals for free all-German elections and free decisions for an all-German Government or any other proposals genuinely designed to ensure reunification of Germany in freedom’. The British Note concluded with a warning that the Western powers could not negotiate under menace, but it gave Moscow the benefit of the doubt by assuming that the object of the Soviet Note was not to threaten the Western powers. Macmillan wrote that on this dangerous but by no means disastrous note, the year ended.
British policy towards the Soviet Union, 31 December 1958–18 February 1959: the emergence of the British initiative on Berlin

In the New Year, Macmillan temporarily took over the Foreign Office while Selwyn Lloyd was hospitalised. He reacted to the challenges of the Berlin Crisis with energy and commitment, only too aware that Britain did not have any agreed policy with her Allies, and that the Paris Declaration of 16 December 1958 had ‘only papered over the cracks’. In his diary he wrote: ‘I doubt therefore whether we can make the bills of lading or punching the railway tickets into a casus belli. What really matters is whether civil or military supplies actually reach West Berlin.’

Thus Macmillan, his COS and the Foreign Office were preoccupied with the dangers presented by the US attempt to change the ground rules on contingency planning. At a meeting on 1 January 1959, the British Chiefs of Staff framed their official response to the US aide-memoire of 11 December 1958 concerning a small land probe fighting its way through to Berlin. Lord Mountbatten, Chief of the Defence Staff, argued against US policy, based on new analysis that it was preferable to have an early showdown with the Russians, who would give way to pressure at any stage during the next two or three years, before they had reached a state of nuclear sufficiency. His view was that limited ground action would be impractical, since it would be seen as a bluff which would quickly be called. Therefore, a land probe, as recommended by the US, should only be undertaken after all necessary preparations, including mobilisation, had been made, and with the clear understanding that it might lead to global war. Such an operation would require the full agreement of all the NATO and Commonwealth countries.

Since many of Britain’s Allies in NATO regarded the continued Western occupation of Berlin as pointless, it was inconceivable that the three occupying powers would precipitate a major war on their own account – especially as, if a global war did take place in the near future, it was the United Kingdom and European members of NATO, not the US, which would suffer. The COS concluded there was much to be said for Britain’s preference for an airlift and de facto recognition of the DDR’s control of access, as it would demonstrate British determination to stay in Berlin and allow a breathing space for negotiations.

In a minute to de Zulueta on 5 January, Macmillan confirmed his support for the COS and the controversial Foreign Office Memorandum 8113. He encapsulated the absurdities of the US argument thus:

The Russian move is to go away and leave the West to make arrangements with the DDR which (we say) Russia cannot do unilaterally. If that is so, I do not see how we can have a world war or take action endangering the peace on a point of this kind. If the DDR refuse to allow lorries to go through that is another thing but I take it that we are
Macmillan was now in a difficult position, as he had already agreed the Allied position adopted at the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Paris on 14 December that in no circumstances would they deal with the DDR as agents of the Soviets if the DDR disclaimed this status. In a forthright letter, Macmillan warned Dulles that a firm decision to take military action needed the agreement of the full Cabinet, and he urged his Allies to study the implications of all kinds of military plans without necessarily deciding on them. The Prime Minister believed the Soviet objective was not to impose a blockade, but to force the Western powers to choose between dealing with the DDR or imposing a self-blockade. The Allies should ensure that even if the Russians handed over their duties to the DDR, either as successors or agents, they ‘must see to it that the DDR carry out their obligations including those which the Russians purport to hand over to them’.

In Washington, Dulles had a revealing ‘off-the-cuff’ discussion with Caccia about Berlin. The Ambassador warned Dulles that no party in Britain in an election year would want to stand on a platform of ‘vote for us and a war on Berlin’, and that British public opinion would insist on negotiations at a high level before any Western resort to force. Caccia reported that Dulles had been more flexible and innovative in his approach on Berlin than Livingston Merchant, the German expert in the State Department, or the military in the Pentagon, whom Caccia later characterised as ‘being ready to play the game of chicken’ in their approach to contingency planning. For instance, Dulles had wondered if anything could be made of the idea of a confederation in Germany, though he recognised Adenauer was the problem as he was ‘against anything except a rigid insistence on our existing rights’. Both internal and inter-Allied discussions confirm that Macmillan, the Foreign Office and the COS were genuinely afraid that the US attitude to contingency planning, combined with the unwillingness of Britain’s partners to consider a compromise in negotiations with the Russians, might easily lead to global war. This factor, rather than electoral gain, was the main motivating force behind the Prime Minister’s initiative, although Macmillan was well aware that a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union would be popular with the British people.

The Macmillan Initiative, which emerged in January and February 1959, comprised two main components: first, the Prime Minister’s unilateral decision to take up an outstanding invitation to the British Government to visit the Soviet Union, dating back to 1956; and second, a major reassessment of British foreign policy on Germany, Berlin and European security, conducted by Sir Gladwyn Jebb, which resulted in a Prime Ministerial Directive on Germany, Berlin and European security, issued at Chequers on 14–15 February 1959. In early January, intensive discussions on the German question were already in progress.
in Downing Street, and many of the ideas contained in Macmillan’s initiative originated from de Zulueta. He questioned whether the West should still support free elections, on the grounds that a reunited Germany would secure a commanding position in NATO and, after absorbing East Germany, would be a formidable competitor in the Western world.61 His recommendation was that whilst lip-service should be paid to the principle of German reunification, Britain should aim to perpetuate the status quo: Germany should remain divided, with West Germany allied to NATO. This fear of a united Germany, shared by Macmillan, the Foreign Office and the COS, was one with which the Russians had great sympathy, and which they exploited in their dealings with Great Britain. In a meeting at Chequers on 18 January, attended by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Anthony Rumbold, Bishop, and de Zulueta, the Macmillan Initiative was launched.62

It was decided that, for the sake of Allied unity, the British Government would outwardly pay lip service to the principles of the 1957 Western Plan, with its emphasis on free all-German elections leading to reunification. As it was anticipated that the Russians would immediately reject this, negotiation would proceed on the basis of the three main components of the British initiative, which were as follows: first, that there should be a proposal for a nominally provisional or interim solution of the Berlin problem; second, that there should be a discussion of areas and degrees of disengagement and denuclearisation and methods of control and inspection; and third, that the acceptance of a confederation for Germany would be common to both courses of action. These ideas became the basis of British policy until the Paris Summit of 1960.

Action was planned to implement this new policy. A telegram was sent to Washington urging a speedy reply to the Russian Note of 10 January on a German peace treaty, and testing the reactions of Dulles and the President to the Prime Minister’s proposed visit. If they were ‘content’, a telegram would be sent to the Ambassador in Moscow asking him the best way to put the plan into operation. When the visit had been arranged, the Americans, the French and the Germans would be formally notified, together with a proposal that the Prime Minister would visit each of them on his return from Moscow. Only at a later stage would Harold Caccia be instructed ‘most discreetly’ to ascertain US reaction to plans concerning European security. Meanwhile, the British military authorities would examine a scheme for a zone of limitation of forces and weapons in Central Europe. Lastly, it was decided that the Prime Minister would visit Moscow in the second half of February or early March. On 21 January, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, Ambassador in Paris, arrived in London and was briefed to produce an independent study of the German question in the light of the immediate crisis provoked by the Soviet ‘ultimatum as regards Berlin’.63 The Prime Minister’s dominance over the formulation of foreign policy was such that it was only on 3 February that he informed his Cabinet of his intention to visit the Soviet Union. This was the first time Berlin had been discussed in Cabinet since 23 December, even though a major review of policy under Sir Gladwyn Jebb
had been launched, and the Prime Minister had unilaterally decided to break ranks with his Allied partners and engage in one-to-one talks with Khrushchev.

**The Jebb Memorandum**

The Jebb Memorandum set out detailed policy recommendations on Berlin, Germany and European security and, in the absence of Cabinet discussion, it provides one of the best insights into British thinking on these interlinked subjects. On the question of contingency planning for Berlin, Jebb recommended that, in the event of the DDR taking over administration of Western access to Berlin, the UK Government should resist all US attempts to force the issue by military means but instead persuade its Allies to introduce a ‘garrison airlift’ to tide over immediate difficulties. Although Jebb recognised the danger of the ‘slippery slope’ towards outright recognition of the DDR, he rejected Dulles’ ‘get tough policy’ over DDR stamping of documents on the grounds that ‘short of declaring war, there is in the end no alternative to accepting DDR visas under protest’. He recommended that in the likely event of the long-term failure of an airlift, the Allies should try to persuade the Soviet Government to instruct the DDR to assume its functions on Berlin, thus enabling the West to claim that the DDR was merely the agent of the Soviet Union. If this proved impossible, the UK Government should urge the DDR to hand over the functions it had inherited to the UN and, in the final analysis, if this failed then the government ‘should simply say that it doesn’t matter if the DDR officials do apply their stamps as we shall regard them as agents anyhow’.

The memorandum recommended the maintenance of the UK Government’s flexible and compromising approach to facilitate a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union. This was consistent with traditional balance of power factors in British foreign policy, which opposed the continental hegemony of any power, whether it was that of Germany or the Soviet Union. It also reflected traditional fear of the potential military and economic strength of the FRG, and possibly antipathy towards Adenauer’s support for a Bonn–Paris Axis, with all this implied for Britain’s policy towards the European Common Market. The Foreign Office did not favour the emergence of either a neutral reunified Germany or a reunified Germany within the Western orbit, which the Russians would never accept. NATO would remain the linchpin of British defence policy, and the preferred long-term option was the maintenance of the status quo in Germany and Eastern Europe, linked to measures on security which would ease both Soviet and British fears of the threat of nuclear war, and in the interim a provisional agreement on Berlin. It was their common fear of a powerful reunified Germany that explains Moscow’s subsequent interest in Harold Macmillan’s proposals.
The Prime Ministerial Directive of 14–15 February 1959

Prior to his departure for Moscow, the Prime Minister held a meeting at Chequers, on 14–15 February, with the Foreign Secretary and his officials to discuss both the Jebb Report and the agenda for talks with the Russians. As a result of the meeting, a Prime Ministerial Directive, dated 14 February 1959, instructed the Foreign Office, after consultation with the Ministry of Defence and the COS, to prepare draft plans on the lines of the Jebb Report: first, on European security; second, on what might constitute a stabilisation of the Berlin problem; and third on what the UK Government should say to its Allies at the forthcoming meetings of the Four Power Working Group after the Moscow visit and at the NATO meeting in April.

Macmillan had no intention of divulging his plan of action to his Allies, as he was afraid the British might be considered ‘unreliable’ and ‘weak-kneed’. He would keep it in cold storage until the very last moment, possibly until Khrushchev had, as it were, ordered his train at the conference in May and ‘all the dangers of the autobahn situation were staring us in the face’. The actual deadline for the studies was not until after Macmillan’s return from Moscow, though Sir Anthony Rumbold thought the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary would ‘be easier in their minds if something could be shown to them before they left for Moscow’, even though it would not have received the final assent of the Chiefs of Staff.

The Foreign Office study on Berlin recommended that at a future conference the Western powers should first ask the Soviet Government to continue to be responsible for free access to Berlin, and regard the manner in which this was done to be immaterial. If they wished to appoint an agent, they had to ensure that access was free and give written guarantees to that effect. Simultaneously, the Western powers could examine the possibility of an exchange of undertakings with the Russians on free access, and in return the Western powers would agree to undertakings on ‘subversive activities’ and ‘propaganda’ in Berlin, and on the possibility of locating UN agencies in Berlin. If no progress was made in this direction, alternatives suggested were a UN Commission in Berlin or a freely elected Council for the whole of Berlin. It was evident that the Prime Minister was determined to uphold the Agency Theory in spite of intense pressure from his Allies.

In their Study on Germany, the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence stated that the British position would be based on the ‘Plan for German Reunification and European Security’ agreed by NATO at the Paris Foreign Ministers’ Meeting of December 1957. This plan originated from the 1955 Geneva Conference proposal that a free all-German Government, established by free elections, would be at liberty to choose its own domestic and foreign policy and its alliances and negotiate a peace treaty, and proposed that European security measures, including a zone of limitation of forces and weapons, be introduced at the same time as reunification. However, the British were merely paying
lip-service to the idea of German reunification for the sake of Allied unity. Their real objective was to reach a modus vivendi with the Russians by attempting to meet what they perceived as the Soviet aim: the maintenance of the status quo in Germany and Central Europe. Harold Macmillan believed a serious attempt to address Soviet security fears would make the Soviets more amenable to a compromise on Berlin. Thus the new study also proposed that security measures, based on the aborted British Outline Plan for European Security of March 1958, should be implemented prior to reunification to allay Russian fears. These included a narrow area of actual disengagement as between non-German troops; a large zone of ‘thinning out’ on the lines briefly discussed with Dulles, and something like the first stage of the revised Rapacki Plan, i.e. no weapons with atomic warheads could be introduced into NATO and Warsaw Pact countries which did not already have them. The political advantages of such a plan were that ‘it might be sufficiently alluring to the Russians to make them willing in exchange for an agreement about it, to undertake to negotiate a stabilisation of the Berlin problem on terms which we could accept’. It would also please the Poles and the Czechs, and have the support of public opinion. Other measures which would operate prior to reunification ranged from a plebiscite throughout Germany on free all-German elections, to various modifications to the confederal idea favoured by the Russians – such as an all-German body elected by the Länder, including East German Länder, with responsibility for technical matters, or a quadripartite commission to deal with problems. In their report of 23 February, the COS gave a generally positive reply to the Paper on European security. They stated that no significant military disadvantage to either side was apparent either in a ban on IRBMs or in a ban on nuclear weapons, though political difficulties were possible. Draft approval was also given to the proposals for zones of inspection against surprise attack and a limited de-nuclearised zone, agreed by 5 March and sent to the Ministry of Defence for further consideration. Subsequently it became the basis of the British position at the Four Power Working Group in Washington, in March 1959.

The impact of the Prime Minister’s decision to visit Moscow on inter-Allied diplomacy, 1 January–18 February 1959

Anticipating opposition from his Allies, Macmillan began to implement the diplomatic preparations for his visit to Moscow. On 20 January, the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Harold Caccia, wrote to Dulles announcing the Prime Minister’s intention to visit Moscow to probe Russian intentions regarding Berlin and Germany. Meanwhile, Sir Patrick Reilly saw Gromyko on 24 January to sound out Soviet reaction to the British Prime Minister taking up the invitation (originally issued by Khrushchev and Bulganin in 1956) to visit Moscow for a visit of ten days, commencing on 20 February. Macmillan was obviously relieved when the Russians finally replied on 2 February, agreeing to
the dates, duration and plans he had proposed for the visit. As he later admitted, they had stuck their necks out in making the proposal, and a rebuff would have been ‘damaging as well as embarrassing’, especially as Dulles was due in London two days later for discussions on Berlin.73

Understandably, there was some trepidation in the Foreign Office about potential US reaction to the proposed visit. The Prime Minister somewhat euphemistically wrote in his memoirs that he was encouraged by the fact that the US was ‘not unsympathetic’, ‘had complete confidence in me’ and said ‘I must do whatever I think best’. Privately, though, he later admitted that both the President and Dulles had pointed out the risks connected with such a venture when no agreed Western position had been reached. The US documents show that the President’s ‘shot gun reaction’ had been ‘to let him go, if he was that good’, but the British would come back ‘with their tail between their legs which would make the Americans the smart boys’.74 He also asked Dulles to remind Harold that he could not speak for his Allies. Dulles feared that the Russians would interpret the visit as a sign of weakness, and was sure that the visit was planned for electoral reasons. Macmillan further exacerbated the already strained Anglo-US relationship by turning down an invitation from the President to visit Washington before his Moscow visit.

On 23 January, the Foreign Secretary, via Caccia, thanked the Americans for their ‘speedy’ reaction to news of the visit, and informed them that the Prime Minister’s forthcoming visit would be a ‘reconnaissance on Russian views in the light of which the Prime Minister could have frank talks with Adenauer’.75 Selwyn Lloyd said there was a large measure of agreement that they should not give in to force or the threat of force, but he warned Dulles about the British perception that some people in the US wanted a ‘showdown’ because they knew that the US would not suffer as much as Europe. It would be impossible to mobilise British public opinion in favour of world war in order ‘to insist that the Russians should remain in occupation of the Eastern Sector of Berlin, and that they, rather than the East German officials, should stamp passes of Allied personnel travelling to and from Berlin’. The Foreign Secretary thought that as long as Germany remained divided, the Chancellor would not envisage any measures to reduce tension – such as a German confederation, the idea floated by Dulles at his Press Conference of 13 January, or some limitation of arms in Central Europe.

On 26 January, Dulles wrote another ‘thinking aloud letter with the hope of getting through to Selwyn and Harold his particular points’ about the Berlin Crisis.76 He remained hostile to any thought of dealing with the DDR as a substitute authority for the Soviet Union, as this course would increase the prestige of the DDR, buttress the Soviet position in East Europe and reveal the West’s lack of will. Dulles’ analysis of US strategy was based on the concept that the risk of war would be minimised if the Soviet Union realised that the West was prepared to be strong and exercise its rights, ‘for the striking power of the US constituted a strong and effective deterrent’. The effectiveness of this policy relied on
massive nuclear retaliation and the will to use it, and on this Europe lacked nerve. If this was the case, he thought there should be an entire review of NATO – a threat which had been used very effectively by the Eisenhower administration in the past as a way of bringing its Allies back into line whenever they became ‘weak kneed’. However, on this occasion Dulles confirmed that the US would not renege on its responsibilities.

In January, the US Government came under increasing pressure from the Federal Republic to toughen contingency planning on Berlin. Under existing contingency procedures Soviet officials did stamp documents on access routes, but at a White House Conference called by the President on 29 January it was decided that, in the event of DDR officials taking over from the Russians in future, only identification of Allied vehicles would be provided to DDR officials at the checkpoints. ‘No stamping of papers or inspection will be acquiesced in’. Existing procedures were reviewed as follows: after the substitution of DDR for Soviet officials, the next convoy of US trucks would be accompanied by a Scout with shooting capability. However, in the event of obstruction, the effort would be discontinued and parallel attempts would be made to mobilise world opinion at the UN and to exert diplomatic pressure, such as withdrawal of ambassadors. It was then that further military measures would be applied.

Macmillan feared that this strategy could easily escalate to nuclear war. Subsequently, British and French pressure forced the US administration to make an important qualification in their position: Allied agreement to contingency planning along the above lines was assumed, ‘if not, the question of US action would have to be considered in the light of the allied position’. America had now accepted that her Allies would not have to make an automatic commitment to the use of force. At the COS meeting of 24 January, Sir William Dixon, Chief of the Defence Staff, instructed Allied Commanders in Chief in Germany that British ministerial agreement was necessary for any measures they might impose. It became apparent that Eisenhower was privately sympathetic to the more flexible British views on contingency planning, which he described as ‘reasonable’. He told Herter that if the East Germans pledged themselves to carry out Soviet responsibilities the US would be tempted to accept, but in the final analysis they could not because ‘it would be death to Adenauer’. However, Policy Planning Staff Director Gerard Smith took the view that ‘we would be eventually pushed away from no stamping by our Allies’.

Meanwhile, Anglo-German relations were becoming extremely difficult. It appeared that new ideas could be imposed on Germany only if the initiative came from the US, supported by Britain. On 30 January, Hilger Albert von Scherpenberg, the German Ambassador, personally told the Prime Minister that Adenauer thought that there was little use in applying interim solutions to the situation, as the ‘German people would continue to be staunch if they could see a little light at the end of a long tunnel but to maintain this attitude it was very important to avoid an unnecessary clash’. In a conversation with the British Ambassador in early February, the Chancellor said the Prime Minister’s
decision to visit the Soviet Union was solely an election manoeuvre, and he rejected the British argument that it was important to show British public opinion that the government had already done everything possible to try to reach an accommodation with the Russians. He believed the unity of the West was the prime consideration, and ‘the effect on Khrushchev would be that of a major triumph for his side. The Russians had gratuitously denounced a solemn agreement with the Western Powers, and we were now running to them to negotiate about it’.82

Macmillan had anticipated that the Chancellor would be ‘dismayed and even alarmed’ when he heard news of his visit to Moscow. What was already a difficult situation became even worse as a result of the Ambassador’s frank admission to Adenauer: that the existence of the DDR was a factor which one could not ignore, in that the DDR would increasingly be recognised by other states, so the Western powers ought also at some time discuss recognising the DDR. At the time Adenauer said nothing, but later, on 11 February, he wrote to Macmillan personally, bluntly pointing out that the moment the Western Alliance considered recognising the DDR, the whole foreign political situation would be completely changed.83 He also warned the Prime Minister that should Khrushchev raise this matter in Moscow, the Prime Minister’s formulation of an answer would be very significant.

Mr Dulles’ visit to London, 4–5 February 1959

Dulles, by now a very sick man, was extremely concerned, both by the British stepping out of line and by the Chancellor’s intransigence. He decided to make a whirlwind diplomatic trip to London, Paris and Bonn to try and establish a unified position within the Western Alliance. On 4 February, Dulles arrived in London on the first stage of his tour of Allied capitals and engaged in a wide-ranging series of talks with the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary.84 In the opening session of the talks, the Foreign Secretary explained to Dulles that the Western powers were in some disarray on these issues, and that Herr von Scherpenberg’s visit to the Prime Minister had left him with a feeling of uncertainty as to where they stood.85 It emerged that Dulles had considerable reservations about the Prime Minister’s visit to Moscow, and was annoyed that sources in the press had given the incorrect impression that the Americans had been consulted in advance about his proposed trip. Macmillan readily agreed that in his forthcoming statement to the House of Commons informing them about his visit, he would merely say that his Allies had been informed in advance.86 The talks then moved on to Germany and Berlin.

Dulles believed that the Russians had launched their Berlin initiative to build up the prestige of the East German Government and to close the escape hatch from East Germany through Berlin, thereby minimising the psychological impact of a dynamic West Berlin. This assessment was surprisingly similar to that of Foreign Office Memorandum 8133 of 15 November, although it did not
take account of Soviet fears of the nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr. Dulles seemed flexible and ready to entertain new ideas, though not the British suggestion of a possible UN presence in Berlin. However, his ideas on the future Western negotiating position were conservative: he thought that the Western position at an East–West conference should remain largely the same as at the Geneva Conference of 1955, based on free all-German elections followed by reunification, but with some embellishments, such as thinning out of forces, though without discrimination against foreign troops and certain types of weapons in a zone not contiguous with national boundaries. (This was to avoid offending German sensibilities.)

Both sides acknowledged that the Chancellor’s intransigent position was the main problem blocking progress. Macmillan believed that the West Germans were not so keen on reunification as present Allied policy assumed, and that even if the present policy lasted as long as Adenauer, his successors might be tempted to do a deal with the Soviets, which would destroy the basis of the entire Allied European policy. Given this situation, he felt the Allies should try to get their ‘money’s worth now’, particularly as the status quo might well suit the Allied Occupation powers, West Germany and the Soviet Union. His hope for the future was in a progressive relaxation of the Communist grip on Russia and its satellites.

On Berlin, Dulles was opposed to the substitution of East German guards at the checkpoint and any stamping of Allied documents by the DDR authorities. He was decidedly ‘unenthusiastic’ about the British preference for an airlift rather than a probe down the autobahn, but he conceded that if a Western probe was physically held up by the DDR authorities it would be a mistake to force its way down the motorway, as it would be necessary to fan out into the countryside. He outlined current US contingency plans in the event of the DDR taking over control of access. This envisaged that a probe (consisting of a small convoy accompanied by a Scout), if challenged, would refuse to allow DDR stamping of their papers and return to the Western sector, and then a ‘double barrelled’ policy would be implemented consisting of an appeal to the UN and world opinion, and the setting in train of overt preparations for hostilities.

The British suggested an alternative provisional solution negotiable at a conference: that the Russians might be persuaded to underwrite the obligations of the DDR to grant free access. To their surprise, the following day Dulles agreed to this suggestion as long as it was accepted that the DDR were acting as agents of the Soviet Union. This was a virtual reinstatement of the Agency Theory, and a victory for British persistence since early January, when the US had responded to pressure from Adenauer by adopting an intransigent position. The UK Government was also prepared to accept an East German role in the stamping of documents even if the Soviets would not acknowledge an agency relationship, but this was unacceptable to the Eisenhower administration. Later, in the summer of 1959, the British reluctantly had to accept an alternative State Department proposal: to present East German checkpoint officials with pre-stamped copies of travel orders.
Throughout the discussions Macmillan continued to advocate a summit, on the basis that a deal could only be made with Khrushchev. Although Dulles did not rule it out, he thought it should only take place if it was likely to achieve results. However, it was agreed that a meeting of the Western Foreign Ministers should take place on 16 March in Paris, at which they would: decide on an agreed Western position before the NATO Meeting of 2 April; brief the Four Power Working Group on Germany currently meeting in Washington; and discuss the Western reply to the Soviet Note and decide on the Western position for a forthcoming East–West conference. It was anticipated that the East–West Foreign Ministers’ Conference would start about 10 May and last approximately four weeks. The visit thus ended on positive note. As Dulles’ visit was prompted by the Prime Minister’s unilateral decision to visit Moscow, perhaps the most important result of the talks was that the British had managed to convince the Americans that they were not defeatist. On his return to Washington, Merchant reported to the National Security Council that the British were ‘open minded’ on the proposals, and their position on Berlin was ‘firm’.87

The Prime Minister had been surprised at Dulles’ new flexibility and pragmatism on the German question, and thought that this was due to the fact that the administration had lost control of the Congress and had to accommodate the views of the House and the Senate. However, in reality, the Secretary of State’s ‘surprising’ flexibility in 1959 was based on a reassessment of US policy on the German question. The general approach of the Eisenhower administration to the Berlin Crisis was that ‘terrified by the prospect of nuclear war the Europeans would drift away from the American policy of resistance to Soviet encroachment’.88 This suggested that the political burden on the alliance would have to be eased by coming to a settlement on Berlin, the potential flashpoint for a nuclear war, if this could be reached on reasonable terms. NSC 5803, ‘Current US Policy towards Germany’ (para. 4) stated that although it was not at that moment propitious to advance major new alternatives toward achieving German reunification, the US ‘should give continuing consideration to the development of such alternatives which may be later required by developments in either West Germany or the USSR or both, with a view to the long-term solution of the unification problem’.89 Dulles’ testing of general reaction to the idea of a German confederation at his press conference in January had been a response to this policy decision. Adenauer’s reaction had been hostile: he had said that any talk of confederation was ‘totally unacceptable’ and that the repercussions in Germany would be ‘momentous’. Nevertheless, Dulles had still kept the idea of confederation ‘in wraps’.90 He wondered whether it might provide a step towards reunification or a freezing of the present situation, for he believed that unless the Russians adopted a different attitude to their satellites, they would never allow German reunification.91 Although Dulles only showed perfunctory enthusiasm for Macmillan’s more radical ideas on a zone of thinning out in Central Europe, it appeared that British ideas on a confederal German solution or, alternatively, something akin to it, such as the all-German Committee
proposed by Sir Gladwyn Jebb, might not fall on deaf ears in Washington. The Prime Minister could now go ahead with his visit to Moscow to pursue a modus vivendi with the Russians over Berlin. His statement to the Cabinet on 3 February informing them of his decision encapsulated the reasons for his initiative.\textsuperscript{92}

The Prime Minister said a dangerous situation might result from the Soviet Government’s declaration that they intended to withdraw from East Berlin and leave the East German Government in control of the city and its approaches. This declaration and the Soviet offer to negotiate a peace treaty had exposed the latent differences of attitude, on the part of the leading members of the North Atlantic Alliance, regarding the response to be made to the transfer of authority in Berlin and the lack of a common practicable policy on the wider question of the future of Germany as a whole. There was an increasing expectation of a Four Power Meeting in the spring to resolve the problems of Berlin and European security, and in the Prime Minister’s view it would be hazardous to enter into negotiations with the Russians without a common Western policy. It was urgently necessary that some fresh initiative should be taken to break the present deadlock and to find a basis for Western agreement, and in these circumstances the Prime Minister had decided to accept the invitation extended to his predecessor to visit Moscow. During his visit of seven to ten days he would ascertain the views of and intentions of the Soviet Government in respect of Berlin and Germany’s future, and thereafter he would go to Bonn, Paris and Washington to discuss these problems in the light of the views of the Soviet leaders. The US had been consulted about this approach before it had been made, and the Governments of France, West Germany and the Commonwealth, as well as NATO, would be informed that day about the visit.

The Cabinet supported the Prime Minister’s initiative and considered the visit would be welcomed by public opinion. Macmillan had thus broadened consideration of the Berlin issue and the pending crisis over access to the city, to include the interconnected questions of Germany and European security. He was now ready to undertake his groundbreaking visit to Moscow.
The Prime Minister arrived in Moscow on 21 February with an entourage of twelve, including Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Norman Brooke, Secretary to the Cabinet, Macmillan’s private secretaries, Philip de Zulueta and Freddie Bishop, and a group of Foreign Office officials, including Sir Anthony Rumbold. His was the first visit by a Western leader since 1941, and Macmillan felt encouraged to act as arbiter between East and West in the cause of détente. He was also well aware that such an image would boost his chance of electoral success in 1959.

British public opinion wholeheartedly supported the Prime Minister’s visit, which coincided with growing opposition to the threat of nuclear war – symbolised by the first Aldermaston March, which took place just before the Prime Minister left for Moscow. Four thousand people set off from Trafalgar Square, and the numbers soon swelled to ten thousand. In accordance with the national mood, The Times commented on the great responsibility which the Prime Minister had assumed in his role as mediator in the German, Berlin and European security questions. As a result of Dulles’ serious illness and President de Gaulle’s attitude of cold negation, only Macmillan was in a position to engage in fresh exploration and diplomatic leadership on these important questions: ‘the eyes of the world will now turn to him and in his hands more than ever, will be the initiative in the coming months’.

The Foreign Office brief for the talks was to estimate Soviet policy on Berlin, Germany and European security, and the readiness or otherwise of the Soviets to negotiate. On the German issue, the aim was first to ascertain whether the Soviet Government ‘was so mortally afraid of dangers to their ultimate ambitions or even to their security, represented by the alliance between a fully armed Germany and US that they will be ready to risk a war in order to destroy this alliance before the process of arming Germany goes too far’. The second was to see whether the Soviet Government would be prepared to abandon Ulbricht or the satellites to pay for the neutralisation or even demilitarisation of Germany; the third was to find out what it would demand in terms of measures to be taken for the Soviet Union’s own security, as the price for allowing German reunification on Western terms.
On the Berlin question, the Prime Minister was to establish whether the Soviet Government realised that ‘if they and their East German Allies pursued their intention to the end there is a grave risk of war’. Specifically, he should also determine whether the Soviet Ultimatum, contemplated on 27 May, might be deferred. Finally, he should investigate whether the Soviet Government would be ready to underwrite the handover of control of Berlin communications to the DDR so that Western powers could deal with the DDR as agents.

It was in the area of European security that the Foreign Office and Macmillan were most hopeful of achieving a meeting of minds with the Russians. Here, the brief was to ascertain first what prospect there was of the Soviet Government agreeing to some form of thinning out of forces and weapons on both sides of a dividing line, provided there was no discrimination as regards foreign troops and weapons, and provided it did not affect the military balance to the detriment of the West; second, whether agreement on the Rapacki Pact or a variant of it was required before the Soviet Government would consider German reunification on Western terms; and third, whether the signing of an Anglo-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty would be helpful to the solution of other European questions.

Talks in Moscow between the British and Soviet Governments, 21 February–2 March 1959

Macmillan emerged from his plane in Moscow as an imposing figure resplendent in a tall, white fur hat dating back to his last visit to Russia during the Russo-Finnish War of 1940, donned to impress his hosts. It was quickly cast aside in favour of a traditional black fur hat when he realised its embarrassing connotations for the sensitive Russians. During the rest of his visit he pointedly dressed as a typical Englishman, even to the extent of wearing plus-fours on a visit to a collective farm, and a Guards Officer tie, which he evidently considered appropriate for a visit to a nuclear plant.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were welcomed by Khrushchev, Anastas Mikoyan, his foreign affairs advisor, and Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister. In his speech at the welcoming State Banquet, Khrushchev emphasised the wartime alliance and the friendly relationship between the two countries. He said he regretted the decline of harmonious Anglo-Soviet relations during the post-war years, but quickly added that this was not the time to argue over how and why it happened. ‘It is best to put our heads together and decide what should be done to melt the resulting “Cold War” ice’. In his reply, Macmillan likewise deplored the state of tension during the so called Cold War over the past ten years, during which the two blocs had confronted each other with ever more terrible weapons of mass destruction. The British, he said, did not fear a calculated act of aggression, but it was impossible to hide from the ‘dangers of war by miscalculation or by muddle’. The next day, when the two speeches were widely reported in the world press, the general view was that there had already been a distinct thaw in the Cold War, and the Russian press
had likewise been directed to encourage the view that the visit was proving a success. Sir Patrick Reilly thought the Prime Minister had made ‘a favourable impression’ on Khrushchev on his first day.10

In retrospect, the Ambassador conveniently divided the visit into four phases: the first was a period of cordiality; the second was one of coldness ending in open rudeness; then came the tour outside Moscow, during which there were increasing signs of a desire to make it up; and finally there was the return to cordiality during the last two days.

A period of initial and growing cordiality, 21–23 February 1959

The first serious session of talks between the two governments took place on 22 February, at the government dacha at Semyonovskoye outside Moscow, where the Russian leader held forth on Germany and Berlin. He reiterated the arguments expounded in the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958, and the Note on the German peace treaty of 10 January 1959. In accordance with his brief, Khrushchev made it clear that the Soviet Government was determined to stand firm on its decision to ‘normalise’ the situation in West Berlin by ending the occupation regime, though it was significant that no mention was made of a deadline.11

He reviewed East–West relations since the Geneva Conference of 1955, and condemned not only the wrongly conceived Western policy of ‘roll back’ after Stalin’s death, but also the continuing Western conviction that German reunification should take precedence over questions of European security.12 Khrushchev felt that if agreement could be reached on European security, and the German question was left for the Germans themselves to solve (through some form of confederation if they so desired), other questions would be easier to surmount. Thus, the Soviets wanted to ‘delink’ the Western tripartite proposal to deal with Germany, Berlin and European security as a total package, and considered any Western plan based on German reunification untenable.

Here, the crucial question was the recognition of the DDR, and Khrushchev skilfully tried to drive a wedge between Britain and her Allies, saying that British policy was more ‘flexible’ but that there was nevertheless a ‘tinge of difference between them’. The UK Government was indeed prepared to consider some form of arrangement on access with the DDR, in the event of the Soviet Union unilaterally signing a peace treaty with the DDR, so Khrushchev’s next exploratory statement was of great interest.13 He said that the ‘West should acknowledge that there were two German states with completely different social systems, and that if Britain was prepared to recognise the existence of a socialist East Germany, the position would be different’.14 This indicated that the Soviet Government would be prepared to accept de facto rather than de jure recognition of the DDR in any future settlement. Khrushchev then began to exert pressure on the Prime Minister, in accordance with his own MID brief. He insisted that if
Adenauer refused their offer they would sign a peace treaty with East Germany and any subsequent ‘policy of threats against the Soviet Union by the Western Powers would not work’. He concluded by emphasising that the Soviet Union was sincerely anxious to improve relations with the Western powers.\(^\text{15}\) The Prime Minister then probed to see whether the Soviet side was prepared to make any concessions. The Soviet leader confirmed that he was prepared to agree to some of the proposals that had been attributed to him during the past months: namely that the three Western Allies might keep forces in Berlin when it became a Free City, with the following qualifications: that they had merely a police function to guarantee non-interference in the affairs of West Berlin; that they were of a token strength; and that the Soviet Union would also garrison West Berlin with a quarter of the total number of Allied troops stationed in West Berlin.\(^\text{16}\) These concessions certainly represented an advance on the previous Soviet position.

Macmillan now tried to ascertain whether the Russians were ‘ready to press their claims to the point of war and whether they would be prepared to underwrite an agency role for the DDR in the event of their control of access to West Berlin after the signing of a Peace Treaty’.\(^\text{17}\) The following statement by Khrushchev is of crucial importance to the argument that the Russians wanted to reach an agreement to the Berlin problem which would ultimately be acceptable to the West, and that they did not intend to allow the East Germans to act irresponsibly. He said:

> The new arrangement would be in the form of an agreement to be registered with the United Nations. It could be more elastic and could provide for sanctions against anyone who violated it. The Soviet view was that the government of the DDR might make a declaration with which our four Governments i.e. the War time Allies would be associated guaranteeing access to West Berlin for all countries with which West Berlin wanted access. The declaration by the DDR would be registered by the DDR and would become law for the DDR.\(^\text{18}\)

Although this proposal did not encompass the agency arrangement envisaged by the British Government, it did represent a compromise on the former position of the Soviets. No mention was made of the 27 May deadline, and it was clear that the Soviet Government did not wish to provoke war with the West over access to Berlin.

The Prime Minister rejected the proposal that West Berlin should become a Free City. Instead he suggested other possibilities, such as German reunification with Berlin as the capital or, alternatively, that as a temporary expedient a Free City could be established for the whole of Berlin. As anticipated, Khrushchev rejected these rather unrealistic suggestions on the basis that Berlin was a part of the Eastern Zone and the occupation arrangements were only to last until a peace treaty was signed. When that was signed, the whole of Berlin should go to
East Germany. Significantly, he added, ‘they had however agreed with the East Germans that to prevent an upheaval they should put forward the proposal for a Free City in West Berlin and this proposal represented a major sacrifice by the DDR’. The Foreign Secretary emphasised that Allied rights in Berlin derived from the German surrender, and if the Soviet Union signed a peace treaty with the East Germans this would not affect Western rights in the City.

Regarding German reunification, the Russians were uncompromising. They rejected the Western view of free elections preceding the establishment of an all-German Government, and said that this was a matter for the Germans themselves. The West Germans would have to accept the East German proposal for an all-German confederation and the establishment of an all-German Government on a basis of parity between the two States. Although the Russian leader remained intransigent on Germany, he did make one concession; namely that the two Germanies could keep their present alliances after the implementation of a peace treaty.

In the evening the talks were entirely devoted to disarmament, and were ‘detailed, long, and hopeful’. Khrushchev agreed with the Foreign Secretary that disarmament would have to be a gradual process, and also liked his suggestion that the programme should be ‘first an end to tests; then control over the use of fissile material for weapons purposes; then confidence would begin to grow’. Selwyn Lloyd then broached for the first time Britain’s idea of establishing ‘certain areas in which one could have a controlled limitation of armaments of all kinds’, which was welcomed by the Soviet Union. Khrushchev said ‘the Soviet Union would be prepared to go quite a long way on that. He thought the main point was that we should try to disengage our forces. The further apart we went, the greater the area we disengaged from, and the more thorough the inspection of that area, the better it would be.’ To which Macmillan replied ‘if we started in a small way we would begin to learn how to do it. Then we could apply it in a wider field.’

During the first formal meeting at the Kremlin, which was mainly devoted to disarmament, Macmillan suggested to Khrushchev that the scientists already working at Geneva should pursue an agreement to end tests and effect some compromise on the controversial inspection issue. Then they could move on to a study of a system of ‘limitation and inspection and control of armaments, whether conventional or unconventional, in some area of Europe big or small’. The British thought it significant that Khrushchev indicated several times that he did not want nuclear weapons to spread beyond the three countries already possessing them. At one moment he seemed to suggest that he would not want to pass on weapons or information to the Chinese, thus revealing Soviet fears of their powerful and dangerous neighbours having access to nuclear weapons. Khrushchev said the only sensible thing to do was to accept their differences on other issues and at least achieve common agreement on disarmament policy. For this he suggested a summit meeting to work out principles, then to give directions to the Foreign Ministers and ‘lock them up with a limited supply of bread.
and water and tell them to reach agreement’. Macmillan disagreed, no doubt realising how difficult it would be to convert President Eisenhower to the idea of holding a summit. He remembered that during 1958 the President had repeatedly rejected Macmillan’s attempts to convene an East–West summit. On the way to Dubna, on 24 February, Gromyko pressed Lloyd further on the Prime Minister’s ideas on disarmament, informing him that ‘they were extremely interested in the possibility of limitations of armaments in a restricted area’. When the Foreign Secretary said that ‘we could not accept the exclusion of foreign troops’, he did not demur.

The first phase of the visit culminated in a ‘markedly cordial atmosphere’ at the Embassy dinner on 23 February. Khrushchev, who had announced that he was planning to accompany the Prime Minister on his trip to Kiev, made a very friendly speech in which he said that it was the Prime Minister’s frankness and understanding that the Soviet Government liked in their discussions with him. He concluded by regretting the misconceptions of the past and by advocating mutual coexistence and the establishment of friendly relations between the two countries. Macmillan judged the first three days to have been very successful and to have more than satisfied British expectations. Headlines in the British Press were enthusiastic, ranging from: ‘End Cold War Competition’ to ‘Mr. Macmillan Gets to Business’.

At the end of this first period of discussions, Macmillan telegrammed his initial impressions to his Allies. He said that Khrushchev had not liked the idea of a Foreign Ministers’ Conference rather than a summit, and that ‘in spite of their great new power and wealth, the Russians are still obsessed by a sense of insecurity’. Since Stalin’s death the Russians felt that the West had put pressure on them in the belief that they would be weakened by internal disputes, and therefore more amenable to concessions. In general, Khrushchev felt the West had ‘created an atmosphere of war’. The Prime Minister’s other general impression was of Soviet hatred and distrust of the Germans, and the continued influence of the old bogey of encirclement.

The ‘toothache incident’ and its repercussions

Anglo-Soviet relations started to deteriorate on the morning of 24 February. Khrushchev made an electoral speech in Moscow, attacking the Western position on Germany and opposing the Western proposal for a Foreign Ministers’ Conference, describing it ‘as a bog without an exit’. He spoke offensively about Adenauer and the Shah of Iran, and attacked Dulles and Eisenhower. However, at the end of this provocative speech he unexpectedly offered an immediate Non-Aggression Pact to the British, which was perceived by Britain’s Allies as the expected attempt to separate the British from the Americans and the West Germans. In fact, as the MID proposals for the talks pointed out, the Soviet Union had put forward this suggestion long ago, in 1955, at the Geneva Conference. Macmillan himself had proposed a Non-Aggression Pact to the Soviets in
January 1958 but, as he knew his Allies would view such a development as a breach of the NATO Alliance, he had back-pedalled on this initiative during 1958, and he continued to do so during the Moscow talks.

Knowing that the world’s press was eagerly following every twist and turn of events in Moscow, Macmillan and Lloyd went for a walk in the Embassy garden and attempted to have a private, ‘bug-free’ exchange of views on how they should react to the speech. They decided to ‘play it by ear’, since Soviet motivation was unclear to them at that stage. When talks on Germany and Berlin resumed at the dacha on 25 February, the Prime Minister, in careful, courteous and measured tones, delivered a warning that it was the Russian initiative (i.e. the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958) which had created the present tension. He stressed two points which he thought the Russian leader should take careful note of: ‘The first is that the German situation is full of danger and could develop into something tragic for us all. The second is that it must surely be possible to avoid this by sensible and co-operative work.’

Khrushchev worked himself up into a rage on hearing this warning, which, the Soviet documents reveal, he perceived as a threat, and replied that he could not understand why the Western powers wished to preserve the dangerous character of the Berlin situation. He asked whether it was because the British wanted to maintain the possibility of moving from the state of armed truce which now existed to a state of real war, or was it that the British were arming the West Germans to make use of them in a future war? He then said it was obvious the West wanted to help Adenauer liquidate the DDR, but that if there was any violation of the DDR after the peace treaty was signed then the ‘consequences would be very grave and it would be the fault of the West’.

The atmosphere at the Kremlin during face-to-face talks on the following day, 26 February, was ‘thoroughly bad’ from the outset. Khrushchev resumed the row over Germany and launched into an offensive statement, making an ‘unpardonable reference’ to Suez and comparing the present visit to that of the Anglo-French mission of 1939 which, he said, had been followed by war. He implied that if this happened again, it would be entirely the responsibility of Her Majesty’s Government. He maintained that the Prime Minister had threatened him, and said that if Western governments tried to impose their will on the Soviet Government by threats of war, the Soviet people would retaliate with all the means in their possession. At the end of the meeting he announced that he had hoped to accompany them to Kiev to introduce them to his daughter, who lived there, but now he would be unable to come because ‘you have insulted me’. Then he changed his tune and said he had a troublesome tooth, and that with the help of science and technology he hoped to keep his teeth strong and sharp. In Sir Patrick Reilly’s view, the meaning of the colourful metaphor was obvious.

Khrushchev proceeded to attack Selwyn Lloyd as ‘a man whose imagination was dangerous’. Macmillan recalled: ‘I tried to keep my temper and merely said that I was sufficiently friendly with Mr. Khrushchev not to answer his remarks
but that did not mean that I could accept them. I thought it better to leave things on
the joking tone in which Khrushchev had spoken.37 The unflappable Macmillan
had proved himself admirably fitted to deal with the irascible Soviet leader, for he
did not over-react to Khrushchev’s rapid changes of mood and rude outbursts. Sir
Patrick Reilly praised the Prime Minister fulsomely for receiving this onslaught
‘with a self control and an imperturbable courtesy which was beyond praise. A
flare up at this moment might have done irreparable harm.’38

Macmillan was naturally disappointed that the talks had reached an impasse.
The Soviet leader’s blatant discourtesy to the Prime Minister was heightened
when it became known that Khrushchev had received an Iraqi Economic Dele-
gation instead of accompanying the British to Kiev.39 Macmillan was in favour
of giving up the talks straight away and returning to England, as he did not think
there was any hope of achieving the kind of negotiation he wanted, but Lloyd
persuaded him to go to Kiev.40 Macmillan’s PPS, Freddie Bishop, described
how, when Macmillan returned to the British Embassy, he deliberately talked
beneath the chandelier which was presumed to be bugged, commenting: ‘of
course we shall have to recall the Ambassador and order the plane’. However,
he had evidently called Khrushchev’s bluff.41 During the next few days the
Soviets offered a series of olive branches so that the final session of the talks,
scheduled for 2 March, was able to proceed in a more cordial atmosphere.
Macmillan had been inclined to underplay Khrushchev’s discourtesy, but never-
theless the ‘toothache’ affair had almost became an international incident.42

In England, where public opinion was important to the Prime Minister, the
headlines in the popular dailies ranged from ‘The Toothache Insult’ and ‘Mr. K
Snubs the Prime Minister’ to the claim that the visit was a ‘Monumental Flop’.
the Sunday Times attributed Khrushchev’s sudden change of tone during the
talks to frustration and disappointment that the Prime Minister would not negoti-
ate.43 It considered that Khrushchev’s brinkmanship would provoke the ‘most
explosive international crisis in Europe since the war’, but that ‘Mr Macmillan
will give an urgent lead to the West in preparing a strong united policy to meet
the challenge’. The editorial praised the Prime Minister for ‘expelling from
Kremlin minds illusions about the softness or divisibility of Western policy,
particularly on Berlin’, and for his firm position that any fruitful meeting on
Germany must start from respect for existing Four Power rights, and self-
determination for the Germans.

The Home Secretary, R. A. Butler, who was standing in for the Prime Minis-
ter, told the Cabinet that the meetings in Moscow of 25 and 26 February had
taken place in an atmosphere of coolness, and that Khrushchev had maintained
his inflexible attitude on Berlin and Germany.44 The Soviet leader had expressed
the suspicion that the West’s policy was dictated by its determination to attack
the Soviet Union whenever this was judged most favourable to the West. The
Soviet Union’s position was that it would resist any attempt by the West to
impose its will on the Soviet Union. There appeared to be only one redeeming
feature of the otherwise acrimonious talks: Khrushchev had stated:
The Soviet Government were prepared to enter into negotiation with the Western Governments at any time. If the date of 27 May which the Soviet Union had suggested was unacceptable, a later date could be arranged. The Soviet Government would also be prepared to modify to some extent their proposals in connection with Berlin. In particular they would be prepared to guarantee its status as a free city and to send Soviet troops as a symbolic force to join Western troops in ensuring access by Western Powers to West Berlin.45

These Soviet concessions possibly ‘foreshadowed a more accommodating attitude on the part of the Soviet Government, which might become more apparent at the final stages of the talks’.46 In discussion, the Cabinet stated that the atmosphere of crisis had waned as the Soviet Union was now prepared to adjust the timetable. Furthermore, the British Government’s response was considered realistic and practical, seeking a ‘constructive approach’ and recognising that otherwise the West would face either a major diplomatic defeat resulting from an aggressive policy, or the risk of a major war.

After the ‘toothache incident’, in spite of Cabinet support, Macmillan found the criticisms and the condolences of his friends hard to bear. Eisenhower regarded this incident as ‘an affront to the whole free world’.47 He delivered a tough speech saying that he could see no hope for a successful summit, but the President praised Macmillan for ‘his hard and earnest work in a very difficult situation’, and said that at the very least, even if the Soviets were intransigent, the impressions he would bring back from Moscow would be fresh and that would make the trip worthwhile.48 The British Ambassador in Paris reported that de Gaulle thought Khrushchev’s behaviour had been ‘caddish’, but that he did not think the Soviet leader would push the West to the point of war.49

Macmillan recalled in his memoirs that he was certain Khrushchev had winked at him during their meeting of 25 February, implying that the speech to his constituents had been very ‘naughty’ but it had been great fun.50 Having analysed the speech from all points of view, Macmillan came to the simplest explanation: that Khrushchev had prepared the speech long beforehand as a ‘sort of Blackpool speech’, not realising that the Prime Minister would take it as an insult. He therefore tried to cover his mistakes by taking offence at Macmillan’s protest. It is a tribute to the wisdom of the Prime Minister that he saw it in this light. In contrast, it appears that at the Vienna Meeting of May 1961 the more youthful and inexperienced President Kennedy, who was smarting after the Bay of Pigs débâcle, may have over-reacted to Khrushchev’s similarly aggressive and arrogant behaviour and set in motion a series of moves and countermoves that ultimately led to the Berlin Wall going up on 13 August 1961. Philip de Zulueta took the view that Khrushchev had ‘no precalculative motive’ to humiliate Macmillan, and that it was just ‘his Russian spontaneity; heavy jokes like Peter the Great, and also an element to see if this new Prime Minister who appeared ready to make concessions could be broken down’.51
Retrospectively, Sir Patrick Reilly doubted whether it was Soviet tactics to humiliate Macmillan during the course of the visit. Khrushchev knew that he had been wrong to make his electoral speech of 24 February, but the Ambassador pointed out that the first Soviet rule when in the wrong is to attack. He also thought that Khrushchev, who was deeply committed to a peace treaty, had been angered by the proof that he could not divide the British Government from her Allies. What Macmillan saw as plainly pointing out the dangers of the current situation was interpreted by the Soviet leader as a threat of war. A British diplomat who accompanied the Prime Minister to Moscow said that after the Prime Minister’s warning, Khrushchev’s face went the colour of rather too old leather; he was furious, rocking to and fro, obviously thinking that if he acted it would mean war. Khrushchev’s famous outburst followed this incident. According to the Ambassador, another factor in the equation was that Khrushchev may well have regarded it as an impolite slight when the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary spoke between themselves at their meeting on 26 February, whilst the interpreter was relaying Khrushchev’s protest to the Prime Minister.

Russian reaction to the diplomatic impasse may be gauged from Mikoyan’s election speech in Rostov on 27 February, which was reported by Tass. Mikoyan said that the British Prime Minister had shown initiative and had at first given the impression of seeking solutions acceptable to both sides. This aim, he said, was of course ‘shared by us’, but later in the course of talks about a peace treaty with Germany and the Berlin question, the British Prime Minister (possibly under the influence of the burden of his connection with Britain’s Allies), had chosen a tougher line. Mikoyan said that the Prime Minister also met with silence Khrushchev’s proposal to conclude a Non-Aggression Treaty, which he had earlier advocated.

He prefaced these remarks with a reminder that recent Western proposals had accepted the participation of East and West Germany at a possible conference, but that the West now seemed to be drawing away from the view that free elections were not the only way of dealing with German reunification. Mikoyan believed that the attempt to substitute a Foreign Ministers’ Conference for a meeting of Heads of Government was being made to delay the negotiation. This speech suggests that following Dulles’ speech of January 1959, the Soviets had perceived the beginnings of a more flexible Western attitude towards the German question, but Macmillan’s positive statement supporting existing Western ideas on Germany had dashed their hopes. Pravda also questioned whether the Prime Minister meant to make a real contribution towards ‘détente’, or whether his visit was only in connection with the forthcoming election.

The tour outside Moscow and a return to cordiality

Vasily Kuznetsov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, accompanied the Prime Minister and his party to Kiev, and fortunately there was no direct contact with
Khrushchev for three-and-a-half days. According to Reilly, the sharp reaction both in the UK and abroad seemed to have caused the Soviet leadership to have second thoughts about the discourteous treatment of the Prime Minister.57 The Sinhalese Ambassador, who saw Khrushchev the next day, formed the strong impression that he regretted that he had gone that far, and that same evening Khrushchev’s daughter suddenly appeared at the dinner in Kiev held in honour of the British.

The Foreign Secretary had frank exchanges on 27–28 February with Kuznetsov, and told him that they had not been impressed with the Russian leader’s offensive attack on Thursday and ‘the childish business of the tooth’.58 On 1 March, in an obvious attempt to complete the series of olive branches being offered to their guests, Gromyko and Mikoyan unexpectedly arrived in Leningrad to meet the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. Frank private talks took place between both sides in a clear effort to heal the wounds.59 Gromyko expressed serious interest in the idea of zones of limitation. He said that the Soviet Government had been in favour of Anthony Eden’s suggestion and wanted to discuss it, but the British Government had appeared to lose interest so the idea had been dropped. Gromyko said:

They had listened with interest to the Prime Minister’s ideas (in the Moscow discussions) and if the British Government would like to go into detail or put forward more concrete suggestions, the Soviet Government would like to hear them and talk about them. Perhaps there was a possibility of agreement here and of doing something useful.60

Macmillan said he did not want to leave things as they had been left on Thursday. Gromyko agreed that the talks had been most ‘unfortunate’, but he pointed out that it was pure coincidence that Khrushchev had made his electoral speech on 24 February, the day before the Anglo-Soviet discussion. The speech had in fact been planned beforehand. Nevertheless, he said, the Soviet position was firmly held, and Mr Khrushchev had said nothing new. As the British were responsible for the change of tone in the talks, Gromyko took the view that what happened next was up to them. On a more conciliatory note, he emphasised that if Britain and the Soviet Union could reach an understanding, they could not have ‘better and more trusted friends’. Regarding the next step, he said that the Soviet side was extremely interested in the Prime Minister’s idea of a Foreign Ministers’ Meeting before a summit. This would be followed by some sort of commission, and then by another Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. Gromyko told the Foreign Secretary that they would study the suggestion most carefully, and it would be a good thing for the Prime Minister to refer to it during the next session of the talks.61

Once again, the British brought up the subject of a possible agency arrangement with the DDR. The Foreign Secretary said he wanted to be sure that
Gromyko correctly understood the morning’s conversation between himself and Kuznetsov, during which he had put forward what he termed a tentative idea, which might provide a way out:

One possibility worth exploring if the Soviets wanted to make a peace treaty with the DDR was for the Soviet Government to frankly acknowledge our rights, and to say that if it was handing over the obligation to respect them to the DDR it would ensure that the DDR would do so. If the Soviets wanted to create a successor State they must see that that State carried out existing obligations.

He was not putting it formally, and he warned that the British could not count on their Allies. Kuznetsov then made a very significant statement. He said that it should be possible to reconcile the signing of a peace treaty between the Soviet Union and the DDR with the maintenance of Western rights. During the course of this private conversation between Lloyd and Kuznetsov, the UK Government came further than in previous diplomatic exchanges to stating that they might be ready to come to some ‘de facto’ relationship with the DDR. However, later that day Gromyko reneged on his statement and told the Prime Minister he could not understand the Western position because the Western powers’ rights had lapsed, and therefore the Soviet Government did not think Western ideas on this point were sound.

Perhaps the most significant Soviet peace offering made in Leningrad was their provision of an advance copy of the Soviet Note of 2 March 1959 (in reply to the British Note of 10 February 1959). Whilst stating a preference for a summit meeting, this Note removed the deadline of 27 May and agreed to a Foreign Ministers’ Conference. It also suggested that the Foreign Ministers should confine their discussions on a German peace treaty and Berlin to a two- or three-month time period, and that the Heads of Government should cover the topics listed in Khrushchev’s speech of 24 February. Representatives of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the two Germanies should also be present at negotiations on Berlin, the peace treaty and European security. The decisions at the summit on the peace treaty should be submitted to a peace conference; others should be implemented by the Foreign Ministers. Reunification would have to be reached by agreement between the two German States, with the Four Powers helping to ‘eliminate the present estrangement’ in their relations. The Soviet Note also proposed a Non-Aggression Pact with Britain, and attacked both the equipping of the Bundeswehr with rockets and atomic weapons, and the encouragement of militarism in Germany. Taking up the ideas which Macmillan had earlier discussed during the Moscow talks, the Soviet Note called for the creation of an atomic-free zone, a zone of disengagement between forces of East and West, and the cessation of tests. These discussion behind the scenes did much to restore Anglo-Soviet relations and improve mutual understanding.
The final session of talks began on Wednesday 2 March, when Khrushchev made a conciliatory speech starting with the rather endearing comment that his tooth was better as a result of treatment using a newly designed English tooth drill. Both sides again declared their support for peace by negotiation, and Khrushchev praised the Prime Minister for his courage in undertaking the visit, which he knew had been a contentious issue amongst the Western Allies. He also said that, unlike Hitler, the Soviet Union had no need for expansion by guns and bayonets, thereby emphasising the revolution he had brought about through his adoption of the doctrine of peaceful coexistence. Although he said he would be delighted if the Prime Minister were to embrace Marxist–Leninist ideas, ‘this was a matter on which each man must decide for himself’.

The Prime Minister then sought to establish the Soviet position on Berlin, Germany and European security, and the extent to which the Soviet Government was prepared to make concessions. These objectives were clarified during this last session. The Soviet Government’s decision to agree to a Foreign Ministers’ Conference, in spite of its obvious preference for a summit conference, was perceived by the West as the most significant Soviet concession. It showed that the Soviets did not want to push the Berlin Crisis to the point of war. The British Ambassador saw this as ‘almost certainly a consequence of the visit’, which might prove to be its most significant result. This interpretation was wrong.

As shown, the Russian documents make clear that the decision to make this concession, for which the Prime Minister subsequently achieved much acclaim, was part of the MID proposal agreed by the Central Committee on 16 February, prior to the Prime Minister’s visit. If the West refused to agree to a summit, the Soviet Government would be willing to discuss European security, the occupation status of Berlin and the Free City proposal at a preliminary Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. The DDR and FRG should be present, and any future German rapprochement should be at the discretion of the two existing German states.

During the last session of talks, Khrushchev moved on to another contentious issue. Because the Western powers perceived the Soviet Note of 27 November 1958 as an ultimatum, they considered that it had led to the most serious international crisis since the 1948 Berlin Crisis. In response, the US Government had stated its readiness to use force, if necessary, to maintain Western access to Berlin after the 27 May deadline. The UK Government had consistently opposed the use of force when it came up in Allied discussions, since fundamentally they believed that Soviet motivation for its initiative on Berlin was defensive rather than offensive. It was therefore very important from Macmillan’s point of view that the Soviet Government should remove the deadline of 27 May and agree to negotiate on the Berlin question. Khrushchev showed his readiness to compromise on this issue. On 1 March, he said:
he could not understand why the West was so rigid. If it were a ques-
tion of prestige, May 27 had no particular significance. It had been
mentioned only because it was six months after the Soviet Note of
November 27, it could be June 27 or August 27, or the West could
name a date. The Soviet Government were concerned with the sub-
stance not the date.\textsuperscript{70}

The UK Government therefore concluded that although the Soviet Government
was determined to make a peace treaty with East Germany, it seemed unlikely
that it would do this while there was any prospect of holding a conference or
while such a conference was in session.\textsuperscript{71}

In the last session of talks, the Soviet leader also announced other conces-
sions concerning Berlin that had already been touched upon during the earlier
discussions. He stated that:

when the Soviet Government had worked on this problem it seemed to
them that if a Peace Treaty were signed with the two German States –
it must be the two German States because they were quite separate – it
would be reasonable that West Berlin be made a Free City so that
it might be able to retain its present social system. As regards the rights
of the Western Powers, they were prepared to guarantee the fullest
access to Berlin. They were willing to work out with Britain and her
Allies a definition of the status of the Free City which would guarantee
access.\textsuperscript{72}

Although the Prime Minister did not specifically ask Khrushchev whether the
Soviet Government would undertake an agency relationship with the DDR on
Western access to Berlin, the above statement shows that the Soviets were
anxious to address Western concerns over this question and guarantee any
change in the status of West Berlin.

On the question of the recognition of the DDR, the Soviet leader made a most
important concession, which was essential if the British Government was to con-
tinue its efforts to achieve a modus vivendi on Berlin. Khrushchev stated that:

if Britain was reluctant to sign a peace treaty with the DDR, some other
formula could perhaps be worked out which would avoid the necessity
of signing with them. There must be de facto recognition of the fron-
tiers and perhaps this could be done through a third state. He was not
worried about de jure.\textsuperscript{73}

As a result of their discussions about the all-important question of the future of
Germany and European security, the British Delegation formed the strong
impression that the Soviet Government was preoccupied by its desire to
strengthen its hold in Eastern Europe: ‘The point upon which Khrushchev
insisted more strongly than any other was that the dividing line between East and West created as a result of war could not be altered’. The only process by which unification could be brought about was one which recognised the two different social systems and was based on parity between the two states, so any question of reunification on Western terms would not be acceptable. Apart from the usual attacks on NATO, the Russian leaders said nothing to suggest that they were in a hurry to try and detach Western Germany from NATO. The UK Government recognised that these goals remained among the principal aims of the Soviet Government. Khrushchev seemed to accept the idea of working for the successive cessation of tests, the control of the use of fissile material for weapons purposes, and security through areas of limitation of armaments. The Soviet response to the Prime Minister’s idea of a designated area in Central Europe in which there would be limitation of troops and weapons was extremely positive.

Macmillan did not react positively to the offer of an Anglo-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. Instead, Macmillan suggested that a non-aggression treaty between the Warsaw Pact and NATO might come about as a result of negotiations on current problems. The Prime Minister made it clear that the British could not contemplate anything which would destroy the Western Alliance, just as he would not expect the Soviets to accept anything which would destroy the Warsaw Pact. Khrushchev accepted this philosophically, and instead offered a joint declaration which would include the renunciation of unilateral action to the prejudice of the other party, but this was left in abeyance to await further discussions.

The Russian leader also welcomed the Prime Minister’s ideas about continuing negotiation at different levels, including Macmillan’s idea of regular summit meetings, to remove any atmosphere of crisis. He was sure that if the West could understand the Soviet position on Berlin and Germany and settle these problems, ‘all the other knots could be untied’. Decisions could be taken on these two problems at a summit meeting in four or five days, then the Foreign Secretaries could work out the details for Heads of Government to sign. Perhaps one of the most important outcomes of the visit was the new personal relationship forged between Macmillan and Khrushchev, which was essential to the Prime Minister’s hopes of assuming a mediatory role in East–West relations. At a one-to-one meeting on the last morning of his visit, the Prime Minister suggested to Khrushchev that they should conduct a private correspondence as problems arose in the future. This idea was warmly received by Khrushchev who, like Macmillan, valued personal relationships. In their future attempts to achieve détente, both leaders exchanged letters up to and beyond the Paris Summit Conference of May 1960, when the Soviet leader pleaded with Macmillan to intervene with the Americans to save the Paris Summit.

The Anglo-Soviet communiqué, issued at the end of the visit, acknowledged the value of the discussions which had created a better understanding of the respective views of the two governments. The two leaders stated that whilst
acknowledging that they were unable to agree about the juridical and political problems involved, they agreed that ‘a basis for the settlement of the differences over Berlin and Germany should be sought in negotiation’. Possibly the most important clause in the communiqué was one relating to European security: agreement was expressed that ‘a study could usefully be made of the possibilities of increasing security by some method of limitation of forces and weapons, both conventional and nuclear, in an agreed area of Europe; coupled with an appropriate system of inspection’. As the UK Government had predicted, the Soviets were extremely interested in their ideas about a zone of controlled armaments in Central Europe.

The impact of the Prime Minister’s visit on the West

After ten exhausting and hazardous days the Prime Minister returned to London to face the reaction of his Allies, the British media and public opinion, and Parliament. Initial Allied opinions of the value of the Prime Minister’s visit were favourable. Sir Patrick Reilly told Con O’Neill, Superintending Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office, that his colleagues, the other Western Ambassadors in Moscow, had thought the visit ‘well worthwhile’ and that the Prime Minister’s demeanour had been ‘admirable’. Most importantly, the US Ambassador in Moscow, Llewellyn Thompson, who had expressed reservations before and during the early stages of the visit, reported to Washington that he thought that on balance it had been justified by results. The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary had had a ‘considerable and salutary effect’ on Khrushchev and his colleagues, who would have learned much from the meetings. Thompson’s one regret was that the Prime Minister had pursued the Non-Aggression Pact, so giving away, at this stage of the game, the card of accepting some form of disengagement or thinning out.

The Prime Minister had been the subject of banner headlines since his departure for Moscow, and this first visit of a Western statesman to the Soviet Union since the war was seen as highly successful. *The Times* commented that the visit had been worthwhile, as the danger of a flare-up over Berlin had been reduced. Not only had the Soviet Government postponed the date of 27 May as the deadline for the Soviet handover of Berlin communications with the West to the East German Government, but they had also agreed to a Foreign Ministers’ Conference which would work for two or three months beginning in April. The idea that there should be a study of a limitation zone for forces and weapons, which they saw as a variant of the Rapacki Plan, was also welcomed. The newspaper predicted that although at a future conference the Russians might start off with a maximalist position, Khrushchev might be prepared to make concessions. The *Daily Telegraph* made another most important point: that whatever the outcome, the Prime Minister’s visit had provided a unique opportunity for getting to know how Khrushchev’s mind worked, and this in itself was sufficient reward for the mental and physical strain of the past ten days.
Reaction to the Prime Minister’s visit was equally favourable in the House of Commons, where the Prime Minister, entering with Winston Churchill, received a standing ovation from the Conservative Party. For the Opposition, Gaitskell generously said ‘this side of the House would not wish to put anything in the way of an initiative towards peace on behalf of the British Government’. Denis Healey welcomed what he saw as a belated agreement to a study of a zone of limitation of forces and weapons in Europe and, in view of the current crisis, pressed for the notion of disengagement to be taken up by both governments.

The impact of Macmillan’s visit on government policy was highly significant. In terms of British perceptions of Soviet foreign policy, one of the most useful results of the visit, as Eisenhower acknowledged, was the opportunity to study the Soviet leadership (and particularly Khrushchev) at close quarters. It is evident from his memoirs and from Foreign Office accounts of his visit that the Prime Minister developed almost a paternal feeling of affection for Khrushchev who, in spite all his faults and crudities, still gave the impression of an excitable, petulant, occasionally impossible but not unlovable extrovert. Sir Patrick Reilly agreed that Khrushchev completely dominated his colleagues and that Gromyko was no more than a ‘highly competent official’. Khrushchev’s extraordinary behaviour, in the Ambassador’s opinion, stemmed from a ‘paradoxical combination of acute consciousness of power with an inferiority complex that still went deep’. He was therefore extremely sensitive to imagined slights and anything that could be construed as a threat, such as the warning over Berlin. On the other hand, he responded to careful and sympathetic handling and to proof of an attempt to understand the Soviet point of view, especially on matters touching on Soviet security. Given the complexities of Khrushchev’s character, Macmillan’s handling of the Soviet leader was admirable:

But what was remarkable, was the truly dramatic effect that HM’s obvious sincerity, his hatred of war, and his memories of 1914–1918, had in defusing what was undoubtedly a dangerous situation over Berlin. I think that this was Macmillan’s greatest contribution with the Russians, and undoubtedly had its effect over the negotiations on Berlin later.

Macmillan prefaced his statement to the Cabinet on 4 March 1959 with a remark obviously aimed at refuting any potential criticism of his initiative. He said:

we [Britain] must not get into the position we got into at Munich, I will be no Mr. Chamberlain. We must therefore talk to ourselves quite boldly about preparations for war and see what de Gaulle and Adenauer say in response. What would be the worst thing of all for the West would be a humiliating climb down after talking big.
The Prime Minister told the Cabinet that the ‘most significant’ outcome of his discussions was that the atmosphere of crisis which had been developing in relation to the date of 27 May had been reduced, and the Soviet Government had been prepared to adjust the timetable. Regarding the long-term future of Germany, the Soviets considered it a matter to be settled by the two Germanies, and it was evident that they favoured the indefinite partition of the country, though they were prepared to contemplate some kind of confederation of the two parts. The Soviets were also concerned to ‘avoid a major war’, which they recognised would be as disastrous for themselves as for the Western powers. However they were determined to go forward with their policy of concluding a peace treaty with Germany.90

In summarising the policy he considered HMG should pursue in relation to the Berlin Crisis, he emphasised the pressing need to convert Britain’s Allies to a more conciliatory stance. He said:

Whilst publicly maintaining the solidarity of the Western position we should seek to convince our Allies of the wisdom of making a realistic response to the Soviet willingness to negotiate. If the Western Powers were not prepared to go some way to meet the Soviet Union, they would face in the near future either a major diplomatic defeat as the result of adopting an aggressive policy which in the event they would be unable to sustain or the risk of a major war as a result of following that policy to its logical conclusion. Our Allies might be reluctant to recognize the need for a more constructive approach towards the problem of Berlin and might be liable to criticize us for appearing to be ready to yield to Soviet intransigence. Nevertheless it would be prudent that we should recognize the Soviet determination to regularize the Soviet position in Berlin, with some consequential adjustment in the status of Berlin and we should seek to extract the maximum advantage from the willingness of the Soviet leader to negotiate that adjustment.91

In the ensuing Cabinet discussion, the main concern was the disturbing reports recently received from Washington, which revealed the increasing hostility of the US towards the Soviet Union, and the US propensity to resort to force. However, as a result of the withdrawal of the deadline, it was considered that there was less risk that the US would take drastic action within the next few weeks to ‘nullify the tactical advantage which had been secured by the Prime Minister’s visit to Moscow’. The meeting approved the Prime Minister’s strategy of going to see President de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer before going to Washington, as it was important not to give the French and Germans any grounds for thinking that a separate deal would be negotiated with the US.92

The Prime Minister’s statement reveals that his visit had strengthened his resolve to act as mediator between East and West in attempting to achieve a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union on the Berlin Crisis. Furthermore, he was
determined to maintain the continuity and flexibility of British foreign policy towards the crisis. In the words of Sir Bernard Ledwidge, who was political advisor in West Berlin from 1956 to 1961, the UK Government considered:

It was better to negotiate than fight, that we couldn’t desert West Berlin, that the West Berliners’ way of life must not be changed, but that to recognise the DDR, which was probably Khrushchev’s objective, was a small price to pay for protecting West Berlin.93

Soviet reaction to the Moscow talks

An MID Report of 22 July 1959, addressing the ‘Communist Parties of the World’ on ‘Talks between the Prime Minister and Khrushchev’, is of great interest in that it reveals Soviet perceptions of British policy during the visit.94 According to the Russians, two factors determined Macmillan’s visit: first, a fear that, following Mikoyan’s visit to the US, Britain’s influence would be minimised; and second, the need to improve Anglo-Soviet relations in view of Britain’s isolation as a result of the formation of the new Franco-German Axis. The Report emphasised the sensitivity of Khrushchev to any perceived attempt by any Western power to threaten, humiliate or treat the Soviet Union as an inferior power.95 Initially Macmillan had demonstrated his ‘well known flexibility’, but the meeting of 25/26 February had been most ‘unfortunate’. Whilst the Russians admitted that Khrushchev’s recent electoral speech had criticised the Western position and emphasised the validity of the Soviet position, they reacted strongly to what they saw as a threatening statement from Macmillan. On behalf of the Western powers, the Prime Minister formally informed the Soviet Union that if its proposed measures were carried out (i.e. the Ultimatum), the Western powers would retaliate using ‘indefinable force’. Khrushchev had also been upset by the Prime Minister holding a conversation with the Foreign Secretary whilst his speech was being translated, which seemed ‘deliberately offensive’. He had even thought of leaving the meeting, but had decided against it.

Subsequently, following Macmillan’s tour outside Moscow, the atmosphere had improved as the Prime Minister realised the tone he had adopted would not bring the required results. So he changed tactics and thereafter showed a deep understanding of the Soviet position, promising to discuss Soviet proposals with his Allies. On the German and Berlin questions, the Soviet Government was disappointed that Macmillan had not brought any new proposals to Moscow, but it was noted that he ‘gave us to understand that on the German question and particularly on Berlin’, the British would permit any solution which would reconcile the signing of the peace treaty with the DDR with the securing of the rights of the Western powers in West Berlin. Reacting to this, and taking into account considerations of prestige, the Soviet side had proposed a compromise which would allow symbolic forces from the Four Powers to stay in Berlin during the transitional period, not as occupation forces but on a new basis.96 The
Soviets recognised that the UK Government appeared ready to consider a ‘readjustment’ of the status of West Berlin, based on reconciling the signing of a peace treaty with the DDR with the securing of the rights of the Western powers in Berlin. In turn, the Soviet side was prepared to guarantee the freedom of the citizens and free access to the City of Berlin, which were the two cardinal points underpinning Western policy. This evidence suggests that a modus vivendi on Berlin was possible.

The section on disarmament welcomed their agreement on a study of a zone of disengagement in Europe, but stated that Macmillan had been evasive about the Soviet proposal for a Non-Aggression Pact with Britain, probably because he did not want to forfeit the trust of his Allies. As to East–West dialogue, the report emphasised that only a summit conference possessing plenipotentiary powers could lead to a German peace treaty, a resolution of the Berlin problem, a cessation of nuclear tests and the prohibition of such weapons. So, the Soviet side had expressed a positive response towards Macmillan’s idea of regular six-monthly meetings of the Great Powers to examine and resolve these problems.

**The outcome of Macmillan’s visit to Moscow**

The new Soviet evidence suggests that Macmillan’s visit to the Soviet Union, far from being an unnecessary and futile appeasement of the Russians, as portrayed by critical accounts of his foreign policy, was vital to the Western Alliance. It provided Western leaders with a vital new understanding of Khrushchev’s personality and his objectives, prior to the Foreign Ministers’ Conference. Eventually, it convinced Eisenhower that he too should have face-to-face meetings with the Soviet leader at Camp David. It facilitated an ongoing exploration of Soviet motivation in reactivating the Berlin Crisis; it emphasised the defensive nature of Soviet policy, and proved to be of vital importance to Western planning on the compromises which were achievable on the issues of Germany, Berlin and European security. Macmillan’s support for a nuclear-free zone, based on the Eden Plan of 1956, addressed the problem of the potential nuclearisation of the Bundeswehr, the main Soviet security concern, and Macmillan hoped that at a future conference this concession might encourage the Russians to be more accommodating on Berlin. Finally, both sides supported the idea of a summit conference or a series of summits to negotiate on East–West problems and disarmament. A most important component of Khrushchev’s conception of peaceful coexistence was the development of a new personal relationship between himself and Western statesmen on the basis of parity of esteem. Arguably, the new relationship established between the two leaders, and what the Soviets termed as British flexibility, would facilitate Macmillan’s mediatory role in future negotiations on an East–West modus vivendi.
5

BRITAIN SEEKS TO CONVERT HER ALLIES TO THE MACMILLAN INITIATIVE, FEBRUARY–MAY 1959

On his return from Moscow, Macmillan organised visits to Paris, Bonn and Washington to brief his Allies on his visit to the Soviet Union. He informed his Cabinet on 4 March that he hoped to ‘convince his Allies of the wisdom of making a realistic response to the Soviet willingness to negotiate’.¹ His modus vivendi with the Russians would be based on: the status quo on the German question; an adjustment to the status quo on Berlin on the assumption that Allied rights in West Berlin and access to the city were guaranteed by the Russians; and an area of thinning out of forces and weapons in Central Europe. The Prime Minister had a formidable task in front of him. As a result of his visit to Moscow his partners had accused him of perfidy and appeasement, and they were obviously irritated by both his solo diplomacy and his ill-disguised attempts to assume leadership of the Western Alliance. However, with the Foreign Ministers’ Conference looming, and the ever present threat of the 27 May Soviet deadline for a peace treaty hanging over them, it was essential for the Allies to present a united front in East–West negotiations. Macmillan hoped he could convert the Americans to his ideas, and that they in turn would exert pressure on the French and Germans to compromise.

Meanwhile, from January to May 1959, inter-Allied negotiations on Berlin were taking place at the Four Power Working Group Meetings in Washington, Paris and London, respectively, and at the Foreign Ministers’ Meetings of 31 March and 29 April 1959. The main questions on the agenda were the contentious issues of contingency planning for Berlin and the preparation of the Western position ready for negotiations with the Russians at the forthcoming Foreign Ministers’ Conference.

The Prime Minister’s visits to Paris, Bonn and Washington, March 1959

In 1959, a Foreign Office Steering Committee considered that the Anglo-US relationship ‘was extremely good and that Britain had extended and consolidated her position as first and most reliable ally of the US’.² By contrast, relations between Britain and her European Allies were going through a ‘stormy period’,
as de Gaulle was determined to block Britain’s entry into the European Community, and it appeared that Adenauer was supporting France’s anti-British stance. The report suggested that apart from economic considerations, Britain could afford to be on ‘indifferent terms’ with France and Germany and remain outside the intimacy of the Common Market countries, provided that ‘America attached paramount importance to her relations with Britain’.

The analysis predicted that Anglo-American cooperation might be strained if France and Germany were at one with the US in preferring rigidity rather than a flexible approach on the Berlin question, and that the British position might deteriorate if their Allies’ counsels were preferred. Germany might even supplant Britain as America’s main ally if things went wrong, especially as the Americans were unsympathetic to Britain’s negative attitude to European integration.

On 8 March, prior to his visits, the Prime Minister summoned a large meeting at Chequers, including the Foreign Secretary and his main advisors, for a ‘tremendous discussion’ on the outcome of his visit to Moscow.

There was a general consensus that if there was neither a compromise nor a climb-down by the Russians, Britain would be faced with the ‘alternative of war or if they came near to war but decide not to have one, a diplomatic defeat coupled sooner or later with the loss of Berlin’. The Prime Minister therefore considered ‘it would be wrong to take the vital decisions except after a meeting of Heads of Government’. He said the agenda for a summit should be a broad one based on a rewording of the proposal for the Heads of Government meeting in the Soviet Note of 2 March, namely ‘the problems connected with the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and the question of Berlin’.

The Prime Minister’s visit to Paris, 10 March 1959

Macmillan’s bridge-building visits to Paris and Bonn began on 10 March, against a backcloth of Franco-German rapprochement following the Bad Kreuznach meeting of the French President and the Chancellor on 27 November 1958.

Obsessed by his nightmare that a weak Britain would come to an accommodation with Khrushchev involving some sort of recognition of the hated East German puppet regime, the Chancellor had made an unscheduled visit to Paris on 4 March to discuss his suspicions about Britain and enlist President de Gaulle’s support on the Berlin question. According to the French, the Chancellor was preoccupied with the seriousness of the Berlin situation, particularly as German opinion was so divided. Von Brentano, the German Foreign Minister, had adopted a more realistic attitude on reunification, recognising that this subject could not dominate discussion at the forthcoming East–West negotiations. The Germans feared that the Allies might succumb, and grant de jure recognition to the DDR and give their support to plans for a zone of disengagement.

Opening with his impressions of his visit to Moscow, the Prime Minister told the French that he believed that the Soviets wanted negotiations and some form
of settlement rather than war over Berlin. In this spirit they had put forward a number of conciliatory points: that de jure recognition of the DDR was not necessary, only de facto recognition through an intermediary (presumably Khrushchev himself); that both parts of Germany could maintain their existing alliance systems for the time being; and that the Soviet Government was interested in the British proposal for a zone of ‘thinning out’ of forces. Selwyn Lloyd emphasised that neither he nor the Prime Minister had discussed the idea of a demilitarised Germany, which, he said, was anathema to HMG.

During the course of the Anglo-French discussions it became apparent that there was a meeting of minds on the German question, as both powers supported the maintenance of the status quo and considered that reunification of Germany through free elections was neither feasible nor advisable, though they considered that this should not be admitted in public. It was also agreed that increased cooperation and contacts between the two Germanies was desirable. The French President said he had impressed on Adenauer that this was the only way progress could be made, and that there could be no question of any revision of the existing status quo on the borders of Germany. Adenauer had apparently agreed with his last point.

On other questions, there were differences of emphasis rather than substance. De Gaulle believed ‘that if the Russians substituted the DDR for themselves on the routes to Berlin that was not important, the main thing was that no one had the right to stop the Western Powers from going to Berlin’. He believed the only event which would justify war would be an actual physical blockade. Macmillan asked the General point blank whether he had said this to Adenauer, and ‘he admitted he had not, it would depress him’. The two leaders agreed that a study should be made of the practical measures which should be taken in the event of a blockade. De Gaulle said he was not opposed to a summit in principle but, like the Americans, he did not think it wise to name a specific date prior to the Foreign Ministers’ Conference.

Moving on to the Berlin question, Macmillan argued for a new status for Berlin, on the premise that existing Western rights were based on conquest. Allied rights would be brought up to date and a new statute incorporating existing Allied rights would be substituted. The Prime Minister preferred this option to acknowledging the East Germans as agents of the Soviets, as this would cause difficulties for Adenauer. Michel Debré, the Prime Minister, then made a statement which suggested the French might be amenable to compromising over an adjustment of the status quo in West Berlin:

he envisaged the possibility of the modification of our position, including reduction of the Berlin garrison; nor did he think that the Russians need always be the custodian of our rights. The experts should study whether it was better to keep existing rights or to negotiate a new status. We should, however, not lightly change the legal basis of our position, but should carefully discuss details and modifications.
Maurice Couve de Murville, the French Foreign Minister, suggested some conciliatory gestures, such as cutting down on Western espionage and propaganda activities in West Berlin, limiting emigration from Eastern Germany through Berlin, and accepting the DDR as agents.

Turning to the reference in the Anglo-Soviet Communiqué to a zone of ‘thinning out’ in Central Europe, the Foreign Secretary emphasised that he had told the Russians that British support for a zone of ‘thinning out’ did not mean the British Government supported a neutral or denuclearised area, which would leave a vacuum in Central Europe. HMG felt that three requirements had to be met in any arrangement: first, the balance of military advantage between the two sides must not be disturbed; second, such a zone should not lead to the break-up of NATO; and third, it must not lead to the withdrawal of US ground forces from Europe.14

On his return, the Prime Minister told his Cabinet that although the French might want to put some of the odium on to the British, they shared their point of view.15 The French Government preferred that the problem of the status of Berlin should be dealt with on the basis of the existing rights of the Western governments as occupying powers – an approach which implied that the Western position on Berlin would remain substantially unchanged.16 However, the Prime Minister hoped that eventually the French Government might accept the fact that the Western powers could not indefinitely expect to base their rights in West Berlin as the victors of war, and should be prepared to negotiate a new status for West Berlin. He outlined to the Cabinet his objective regarding Berlin:

- to negotiate a settlement on Berlin, based on some modification of the Soviet ‘Free City’ proposal designed to assure the continued freedom of West Berlin. It might be necessary to describe such a settlement as interim in the sense that it would need to be adjusted in the event of the reunification of Germany. But it would be implicit in a settlement of this kind that the West admitted the division of Germany as a fact which was likely to endure for a long period ahead. It was probably to our own advantage that Germany should remain divided; and the French government were equally convinced of the folly of precipitating a general war for the sake of a reunification of German territory. As public opinion in West Germany was sensitive on this issue, it would be important so to frame an interim settlement that it did not appear to imply that all hope of eventual reunification must be abandoned. For this purpose various possible forms and methods of federal relationship between West and East Germany might be considered, provided that the attributes of full sovereignty were withheld from any all-German body in the creation of which free elections had not played a part. Other possibilities of enlarging relations and dealings between the two territories might be explored.17
The Cabinet supported the Prime Minister’s general approach on Berlin and considered it unwise to seek negotiation of a settlement through the agency of the UN, where Britain had insufficient support. Once a settlement had been reached, the UN could act as guarantors of the City of Berlin. The government had thus laid down its future policy on Berlin. The vital question now was whether the Germans and the Americans would support the initiative.

The Prime Minister’s visit to Bonn, 12–13 March 1959

It is important to understand the background to Anglo-German relations, which had been strained since the beginning of 1958, when the Chancellor had opposed Macmillan’s pragmatic attempts to arrange an East–West summit conference. Adenauer had particularly disliked Russian proposals for the future of Germany, and the Rapacki Pact proposal for an atomic-free zone in Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. He believed that they would discriminate against the Federal Republic, and mean the end of NATO and the US presence in Germany. Any plans for limited disarmament which threatened the military or territorial sovereignty of West Germany, such as a ‘thinning out zone’, or for blocking Germany’s implementation of Eisenhower’s controlled nuclear stockpile system, were anathema to the Chancellor. Instead, Adenauer supported general disarmament not involving discrimination against West Germany, which realistically could only be a long-term Allied goal.

In the autumn of 1958, with the breakdown of negotiations between the nascent European Community and the Free Trade Area, and Bonn’s realisation that the British Government might be prepared to give de facto recognition to the DDR, Anglo–German relations deteriorated even further. Anti-British feeling in Bonn intensified after the Prime Minister’s visit to Moscow, which Adenauer perceived as shameless and dangerous electioneering ahead of the autumn 1959 British General Election. There was also a fundamental clash of interests between the outlook of the two leaders. Macmillan thought Adenauer might threaten any chance of détente with the Soviet Union. Adenauer, for his part, supported the Dulles line of negotiating only from a position of strength, and thought Macmillan was prepared to ‘sell out’ on Germany’s vital interests. The Prime Minister doubted the Chancellor’s attachment to German reunification, which produced:

a certain air of unreality because unless you put as Item One in any agenda the Reunification of Germany either amongst ourselves or with the Russians – you would be thought to have betrayed the cause. On the other hand it was quite clear that the Russians were not going to give up the defensive glacis they had built up by seizing Poland and East Germany, certainly not while they suffered from nuclear inequality.

Undoubtedly, the personal animosity between the two leaders exacerbated basic political and strategic factors. When they first met in 1954 Macmillan had been
fascinated by the Chancellor’s long, rambling discourses on German history, but now he soon became bored by these monologues. During the course of 1959, though he still admired Adenauer as a man of great courage, he increasingly saw him as a ‘false and cantankerous old man’ who was now ‘half crazy’. Macmillan’s personal prejudices were strengthened as Germany recovered and became increasingly competitive in world markets. The Chancellor’s anti-British prejudices dated back to the time of the Allied occupation, when he had been dismissed from the position of Burgermeister of Cologne by a minor British official on grounds of incompetence. At that time he had remarked to a journalist that he had three chief dislikes, the Russians, the Prussians and the British! Such was the unpromising background to the Prime Minister’s visit to Bonn.

The Anglo-German Conference in Bonn on 12 March was at times acrimonious, with Adenauer rebutting Macmillan’s claim that relations were very good, and attributing the deterioration in relations to inflammatory statements in the British press about the role of the Krupp family in Germany. When the discussion touched on trade relations Macmillan became more vehement, emphasising that he was astonished by the forbearance of the British people, especially as they had been ‘knocked about by the Six’. The Prime Minister made the point that in contrast to the French, who were withdrawing from NATO and had no troops in the Federal Republic, the UK maintained four divisions in Germany and paid £30 million a year for them. Macmillan said he saw himself as a strong European, but he had to face a strong isolationist movement, and in these circumstances people in Britain were inclined to feel that a war over Berlin would not be a very good result.

The Foreign Secretary, anxious to conciliate Adenauer, emphasised that Britain had not betrayed her Allies, and gave a full account of what had happened in Moscow. In response, the Chancellor launched into a long and pessimistic speech on Russia in general and on the future of Europe. In contrast to the British view that Soviet aims were defensive, Adenauer asserted that Khrushchev’s objectives regarding Berlin were to gain economic access to Western Europe and use it as a launching pad to challenge US world economic domination.

Adenauer described Macmillan’s idea of a ‘zone of thinning out’ as creating a ‘sensation’ in Germany, France and Italy. He argued that only by continuing with US-planned deliveries of 120 storehouses for nuclear weapons by 1962 could the FRG stave off the enormous Soviet preponderance in conventional weapons. Did the Prime Minister, he asked, want these to be inspected when it would be impossible for the Western powers to inspect Russian nuclear weapons behind the Urals? In retrospect, Macmillan recalled an hour-long heated discussion, during which he was ‘pretty sharp’ with the Chancellor – to some effect. However, he failed to change Adenauer’s mind on a zone of inspection, though it emerged subsequently that Heinrich von Brentano, the German Foreign Minister, had been perfectly satisfied with the British line. The ongoing problem for the Prime Minister during the crisis was that he continually had to try and per-
suade the Americans to be firmer with Adenauer if any solution to disengagement was to be reached.26

The Chancellor agreed in principle with the idea of a summit (or even a series of summits) before any vital decisions were adopted which might lead to war, but he was careful to spell out that ‘it was essential to handle the matter most delicately until we were sure of agreement with the US Government’.27 Clearly Adenauer would not challenge the US Government, should it continue to oppose a summit, but he agreed to try and persuade France to fix a date.28 Whilst both parties expressed initial satisfaction with the discussions, the Chancellor’s true evaluation of the Prime Minister’s ideas emerged on 16 March in an interview given to the political correspondent of the Christian Democratic Party. Adenauer said that all the plans he had seen for limitation of arms in Europe would merely endanger Western security.29 He was reported to have told some of his colleagues it was high time the British learned that they were no longer the leaders of Europe: ‘Germany and France are the leaders in Europe now’.30 The anti-British campaign in Bonn was partly a reaction to anti-German comment in the British press, and in April it culminated in a vitriolic German broadcast attacking Macmillan and ‘the systematically contrived impairment of the British attitude towards Germany’.31 In his memoirs, Adenauer stated that the Germans had been opposed to disengagement for years, whether it took the form of a wider safety area or the Rapacki Plan, on the basis that it would undermine NATO and lead to the withdrawal of US troops from Europe: ‘Great Britain seemed ready through a disengagement plan to break from the unified Western position and this meant that the Western world would be extraordinarily badly harmed. Heaven only knows what the outcome might be.’32

On his return to London, Macmillan reported to his Cabinet that it now seemed likely that the French and German Governments could be persuaded to accept the suggestion that a meeting of Foreign Ministers should be followed by a meeting of Heads of Government, and that a firm date should be fixed. However, the US Government would only be convinced about a summit if there was substantial progress at the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. Macmillan thought the US approach ignored the dangers of the Soviet Union taking unilateral action which might lead to a peace treaty with East Germany and force the Western powers to negotiate at a future Foreign Ministers’ Conference from a position of weakness. In consequence, the Prime Minister said that he did not want a reply to the Soviet Note to be dispatched until he had taken the opportunity to discuss the issues with the President on his forthcoming visit to Washington. Furthermore, ‘If the United States Government should decline to defer their reply, we must reserve the right to send a separate reply of our own, which might diverge significantly from theirs’.33

The Prime Minister felt that their conversations in Paris and Bonn had been ‘reassuring’, as two important new points had emerged. When de Gaulle spoke of the need to resist by force any blockade of West Berlin, what he had in mind was a situation in which the Western powers were denied physical access, not
just the transfer of control of access to the East German authorities. Second, in Bonn it had appeared that Adenauer was reconciled to the prospect of Germany remaining divided for a further period of years. He would not be unwilling to accept a settlement on that basis, provided that some amelioration of conditions in East Germany was secured and that hope of ultimate German reunification was not extinguished. The Prime Minister told the Cabinet that on the question of the Macmillan Plan for a ‘thinning out zone’, the news was more negative. There were suspicions in Bonn and elsewhere that the plan for limitation of forces and weapons in an agreed area amounted to disengagement, and the UK Government’s position on this would have to be clarified. However, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary remained optimistic. On 18 March Selwyn Lloyd said that there had been no real change in British thinking on Berlin, but a recognition of what was and what was not practicable. So, for instance, the reunification of Germany through free elections was not realistic, but, as de Gaulle had stated in Paris, it was necessary to keep the German desire for reunification alive so they could see some light at the end of the tunnel. The Prime Minister thought the best solution for Berlin was that of the status of a Free City for the whole of Berlin, guaranteed by the Four Powers, with a contingent of Allied troops and the introduction of a UN presence. He anticipated that preparations for negotiations would be difficult, as the British might be accused of appeasement. The next hurdle for Macmillan was to convert the US Government to his point of view.

The Prime Minister’s visit to Washington, 18–24 March

Before his departure to the US, Macmillan was depressed to find that telegrams had arrived from both Paris and Washington indicating first, that the Americans were against the British proposal for a summit, and second, that the French had ‘ratted’ and gone back on what de Gaulle and the others had agreed. Faced with these setbacks, Macmillan was determined that no reply to the Soviet Note should be sent until he had consulted with the President. He viewed the Western reply to the Soviet Note ‘as something of a landmark in the history of post-war relations with the Russians’, and he hoped to keep the Americans ‘fluid’. He therefore reacted with vigour and instructed the British delegate at the Four Power Working Group in Paris ‘not to accept any draft reply to the Soviet Note except on our lines’, which, for the moment, he knew would mean complete deadlock.

The Foreign Office Brief on Berlin, Germany and European security for the Prime Minister’s visit to Washington described in general terms the position the Allies should adopt for a conference with the Russians, as stated in the Jebb Report and the Prime Ministerial Directive of 14 February 1959, but with modifications to accommodate those German reservations on European security and a German confederation which had emerged during Macmillan’s visits to Paris and Bonn. The Foreign Office now proposed that: within the zone of limitation
there would be no discrimination as regards weapons; no ultimate reunification would be acceptable unless free elections played a part; and the all-German body envisaged would not have the attributes of sovereignty. Macmillan had modified his objectives to meet French and German objections, and now he hoped to convince the Americans of his case.

On arrival in Washington the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary visited Foster Dulles, who was in hospital suffering from terminal cancer. The Secretary of State was genuinely welcoming to his visitors, but subjected them to a long and inflexible monologue on Communism, Germany and Berlin. He was opposed to a summit, and thought the West ‘should stick it out in Berlin’. In contrast, during the ensuing talks at Camp David, Macmillan found the President ‘very reasonable and anxious to help him’. The talks were conducted in a spirit of relative optimism because, the previous day, Khrushchev had admitted at a press conference that the West had rights in Berlin but that after fourteen years it was time to end the military occupation and get a new settlement. The President had more good news for the Prime Minister: the German Government had now endorsed proposals for the informal development of contacts with the East German authorities which would not constitute formal recognition. He believed that Adenauer’s ‘new attitude gave some hope’.

The Prime Minister reviewed his visit to Moscow and told the President that Khrushchev was in total control; that his objective was the status quo in Europe, but that he was determined to resolve the Berlin situation without resorting to war. However, Khrushchev considered that it was not in the Soviet interest to resort to war, and in consequence had withdrawn the ultimatum and agreed to a settlement by negotiation. The President agreed with the British definition of objectives for a Foreign Ministers’ Conference with the Russians, as follows: to reach positive agreements over as wide a field as possible, and in any case to narrow the differences between the respective points of view and to prepare constructive proposals for consideration by a summit conference later in the summer. However, Macmillan was disappointed that the President’s agreement in principle to a summit was subject to substantial progress at the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. On 25 March, a joint Western note agreeing to a Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 11 May on the above basis was sent to the Russians.

In the course of discussions with the Prime Minister, Eisenhower forcefully argued that there was a large measure of agreement between the UK and US Governments, even including de facto recognition of the DDR in return for some form of interim settlement for Berlin:

We must accept the fact that Germany would remain divided for many years to come. Our problem was, therefore, to discover means by which the position of West Berlin could be safeguarded throughout that period. In the forthcoming negotiations we should have to seek, not merely a solution of the present crisis, but agreement on some satisfactory status for West Berlin which could endure for some time. If we
were to succeed in maintaining something like the existing situation, we should have to be ready to offer some concessions to the Soviet Government. We could not hope to secure a lasting agreement if we did no more than stand on our existing rights. To secure a reasonable breathing space for a period of years it would be worth our while to make some concessions. It would be useful for this purpose if Doctor Adenauer were now willing to accept de facto recognition of the DDR. We should, however, study whether there were any other concessions which we might make.44

Eisenhower also agreed that at the present time ‘a united Germany might hold more dangers than the present situation. It was our interest for the present to try and preserve the status quo.’ The Prime Minister argued for a new agreement which, if backed by international guarantees, would in the long run be a more effective safeguard for the people of West Berlin.45 The President went so far as to admit that ‘he could see that a new international agreement might in the long run be better’, though a settlement on the basis of an adjustment of the existing arrangements might be easier to negotiate.

The discussions concluded with Herter’s suggestion that at the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, Western governments should initially stand firm on their existing rights. Any new international agreement would be a substitute for their existing rights, and only acceptable if it improved the Western position. The possibility of inter-German cooperation in the form of an all-German Committee, as proposed in the Prime Minister’s Directive of 14 February, had become more likely if Adenauer would accept in principle de facto recognition of the East German Government. Macmillan said practical working arrangements between the two parts of Germany should be developed, though he emphasised that there was no possibility of a political merger. The President also favoured contacts between the two governments in the ‘form of a non-political form of association’. This left the way open for a possible compromise with the Russians, whose aim was some form of German confederation.

During the afternoon meeting, Macmillan moved on to clarify the British position and to allay suspicions about a zone of limitation of forces, as discussed at the Cabinet meeting of 17 March.46 Macmillan told the President that the British viewed disengagement as not only obsolete but also ‘positively dangerous’. Instead, they favoured a zone of limitation as a ‘constructive alternative not coterminous with any particular area, and with limitations which would not distinguish between nationalities or types of weapons’. Apart from its political advantages, Macmillan said that a zone of limitation open to inspection would be valuable in gaining acceptance of the principle of inspection, and a useful negotiating ploy in the forthcoming negotiations. In addition, he thought that the Russians might be interested in limiting forces because of the burdensome nature of armaments.47

As Macmillan put it, ‘in spite of almost universal disapproval of his military advisors’, the President saw that it was important to have something constructive
as an alternative to the Rapacki Plan and disengagement. He also thought that the Allies should ‘work out big and imaginative proposals and not always be driven by purely negative proposals’, which made General Nathan Twining, Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wince. The President’s qualified approval of an all-German Committee and his willingness to consider a zone of limitation meant that the British Delegation on the Four Power Working Group could press their inclusion in the Western negotiating position, as a quid pro quo for Soviet acceptance of an interim settlement for Berlin.

On 21 March, discussions moved on to the controversial question of Berlin contingency planning, and General Twining outlined the view of General Lauris Norstad, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), on current contingency preparations. He emphasised that in the event of DDR obstruction of Allied military traffic, such as the destruction of a bridge, the purpose of a military probe was ‘to demonstrate the reality of obstruction and to make the Russians and East Germans see that if they persisted, they would face the possibility of thermo nuclear war’. In the past the UK Government had consistently refused to give prior automatic agreement to the use of force, and Macmillan was relieved that the President conceded that an East German request to produce identification papers could not ‘properly be made the occasion for a show of force’. However, the Americans still insisted that DDR stamping of documents or examination of the contents of a vehicle could not be permitted.

Macmillan realised that, in order to achieve an interim settlement of the Berlin question, an essential element was Western de facto acceptance of East German control of their border, because from the East German and the Soviet point of view this would imply acceptance of the status quo in Germany. Eventually a compromise was agreed: Macmillan accepted Herter’s suggestion that the West could announce at the time of transfer of responsibilities that, without prejudice to their rights, the Western powers could accept inspection by the DDR which was limited to identification. As an alternative to stamping, the DOS recommended a plan to provide DDR officials with pre-stamped copies of travel orders. The British reluctantly accepted this compromise in the summer of 1959.

‘The Agreed Minute on Contingency Planning for Berlin’, issued at the end of the talks confirmed that contingency planning would be carried out on a tripartite basis under the general supervision of General Norstad. Allied embassies in Bonn under the supervision of the Tripartite Ambassadorial Group in Washington would continue to consider and plan field measures, and would issue on-the-spot instructions in the event of a DDR take-over of access to West Berlin. Preparations in line with the foregoing Anglo-US discussions would deal with two potential situations: first, the Soviet Government declaring the DDR to be its agents, in which case it was agreed that the Agency Theory would come into operation and Western vehicles would be subject to DDR controls at the checkpoints. In the second case, Western military vehicles would not submit to any DDR controls or formalities beyond identification of vehicles, or going
beyond what was tripartitely agreed as reasonable to allow the orderly progress of traffic on the autobahn or railroad. If free access was forcibly interrupted, the three governments would consider what military measures should be implemented. Meanwhile supplementary military and diplomatic measures, including the British preference for an airlift, would be put in place. Subsequently, the decisions contained in the above Anglo-US Minute formed the basis of an agreed Allied paper on contingency planning agreed on 4 April 1959, which accepted the Agency Theory provided that the Soviets acknowledged that such a relationship existed. It was also agreed that the Three Powers would jointly approve military measures, drawn up by Norstad’s planning group LIVE OAK, aimed at retaining freedom of access to Berlin. This body operated in complete secrecy until the late 1980s, and undertook studies which did not have the approval of the other NATO governments.

At their meeting on 24 April, the British COS Committee discussed Berlin contingency planning and the use of force. They confirmed their previous decision that it was impracticable to open the autobahn for the use of convoys by means of limited action. They said that: ‘no attempt should be made to force access to Berlin by road unless the risk of global war is accepted and all preparations including mobilisation have been made to demonstrate the determination of the West. Such an agreement should only be made with the agreement of all the NATO members.’ The British had therefore succeeded in re-establishing the Agency Theory, and thereby ensured British control over the implementation of contingency measures.

One further important matter which came up for discussion during Macmillan’s farewell visit to Dulles was the stalemate in negotiations with the Russians on a nuclear test ban treaty. Dulles thought that they should not be too much influenced by the scientific data, as ‘there was great political advantage to negotiate an agreement with the Russians over tests which would involve opening up the Soviet Union to inspection’. Eisenhower believed that such an accord ‘could have important political consequences’. It was decided that they could not let the Geneva Conference fail, and that it would be best to get a statement of agreed differences on outstanding points and try to settle them at the summit. This attitude was conducive to hopes of a compromise deal with the Russians based on a modus vivendi on Berlin and disarmament measures which would probably only be finalised at a summit meeting.

The British contribution to Allied planning for negotiations with the Soviet Union on Berlin, January–April 1959

The first remit of the Four Power Working Group, to produce the Western reply to the Soviet Note of 10 January, proved to be relatively uncontroversial. On 16 February, on the basis of their unqualified right to remain in Berlin, representatives of the Western powers proposed a Four Power Foreign Ministers’ Confer-
ence to discuss the entire German problem ‘in all its aspects and implications’. \(^{59}\) Allied agreement on the place and timing of the meeting would be hammered out in the future. As a concession to the Russians, ‘German advisors’ from the DDR and the FRG were invited to attend, thus acknowledging Moscow’s case that reunification was a matter for the two German states. The British Delegation supported this move as a first step in encouraging their partners to consider de facto dealings with the DDR. \(^{60}\)

Following two months of discussion, the Four Power Working Group produced their report, preparing the ground for the Western Foreign Ministers’ Meeting due to convene on 31 March. \(^{61}\) The main Western objective was the confirmation of Western rights in Berlin, pending an acceptable settlement of the German problem. As a result of British pressure, the Report contained important elements of Macmillan’s initiative – namely an Interim Agreement on Berlin, a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe, and an all-German Committee. The report conceded that ‘certain Soviet arguments against free elections as the sole means of reunification should be taken into account’. \(^{62}\)

It was a triumph for the British Delegation that the Report proposed that the Agency Theory should be recognised in some form. This issue had been the subject of fierce controversy between the US and UK Governments since November 1958. The Report recommended that initially the West should try to maintain the existing position regarding access, and if that failed, should propose two variants of the Agency Theory: First, that the Soviet Government must formally transfer its obligations to the DDR and second, that the Soviet Government would notify the three Western governments of a DDR declaration that it would continue to carry out the existing access arrangements, although not underwriting this declaration. As a fallback, the third course proposed would be an interim solution for the whole of Berlin whereby the Four Powers would station troops in Berlin (the Soviet contingent being one-quarter of the total, as suggested by Khrushchev) in order to guarantee the status of the city and access thereto.

However, the British Delegation failed to convince their colleagues that the UN should have a role in any settlement or that any Berlin proposals should be based on a fresh guaranteed quadripartite status for Berlin, as discussed by the Foreign Secretary in Moscow, rather than on existing occupation rights. The State Department was at least becoming more realistic, though. Their Working Paper admitted that any bridging of the gap between the positions of the Soviets and Western powers on the issues of German reunification and European security was unlikely at this stage; that the Western package was not indissoluble; and that after the Soviets had rejected the Western package at the Geneva Conference, the Western powers would have to negotiate on those points which interested the Russians and enter negotiations for an interim settlement for Berlin. \(^{63}\)
In advance of the meeting, a series of public statements by Western leaders revealed the divergences which still persisted between Britain and her Allies. On 25 March, in a nationwide broadcast, the President emphasised that the US would not accept any agreement which would limit the security of the US – a clear reminder of the importance of the FRG to America’s nuclear strategy. At a press conference in Paris, President de Gaulle withdrew the concessions he had made during the Anglo-French talks of 10 March in Paris, saying that France would not allow any claim to interrupt allied access to Berlin, would refuse to recognise the DDR regime, and would reject any zone of disarmament smaller than one extending from the Urals to the Atlantic. The only comfort for the British was that the President publicly confirmed that the European status quo on territorial borders should be maintained. Adenauer opposed Macmillan’s Camp David proposal that there should be a freeze of military forces on either side of the Iron Curtain, whereby West German ‘forces were not equipped with nuclear weapons while others had them’.

Unsurprisingly, the Germans dominated the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 31 March, trimming back the concessions to the Soviet view which the British Delegation had managed to insert in the 21 March Four Power Working Group Report. Von Brentano would only contemplate an East–West German Commission with limited powers, and rejected a body with legislative and executive powers as envisaged by the British, which would arrange, consecutively, Länder elections, an all-German Assembly and a Provisional Central Authority, thereby satisfying the Soviet concept of some sort of confederation. Moreover, any progress along these lines was conditional on the USSR accepting beforehand free elections at some stage.

On the question of European security, the Foreign Ministers commissioned a further study linking progress in European security to German reunification, and to ‘consider the possibility of a special zone in Europe which would permit the concomitant settlement of political problems without prejudice to the security of the West’. However, to the disappointment of the British, there was no provision for the prohibition of nuclear weapons in the special zone, as envisaged in the 21 March Working Group Report.

Turning to the problem of Berlin, both the French and the Americans recommended a firm Western response to the Soviet challenge. Couve de Murville warned that any weakness on the part of the Western powers would be the beginning of a ‘general retreat with unforeseeable consequences’. In his view, the West should not compromise on the legal basis of the Western position in Berlin, deriving from their role as occupation powers. Nor should they grant de jure recognition of the DDR, since that would be tantamount to recognising the division of Germany.

Seeing that his colleagues were not yet ready to give up Berlin’s present
status based on occupation rights, Selwyn Lloyd suggested that the Western powers should not ‘abandon their rights’ but should instead devise new ‘positive proposals’. These might enable them to improve their position in Berlin and also give them a tactical advantage in negotiating with the Russians, and in relation to public opinion. He still believed that, if there was no agreement amongst themselves on German reunification, they would ‘have to try to negotiate a modus vivendi with the Russians in which some elements of European Security might well form a part’. The NATO Council agreed the Foreign Ministers’ Report and instructed the Four Power Working Group to prepare an agreed position and a tactical plan for the consideration of the Four Foreign Ministers at their next meeting, scheduled to take place on 29 April in Paris, prior to the Geneva Conference.

On his return from the US, the Foreign Secretary reported to the Cabinet the outcome of his discussions in Washington. Progress on all the main issues had effectively been blocked by German intransigence. Thus, the meeting had been obliged to continue with the 1955 Geneva Conference proposals for Berlin and Germany, rather than a new phased plan incorporating a special zone, or a new status for Berlin based on existing rights, as favoured by the other Allies. The Four Powers would resume their discussions on 13 April, in preparation for the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 29 April. The Cabinet agreed that the UK Government should press for greater flexibility in the Western position and should in particular urge the German Government to adopt a more constructive attitude towards the forthcoming negotiations. For this, the Cabinet considered that the UK Government could look for some support from the US Government.

Germany’s uncompromising approach was a matter of great concern to the Americans, and even to Von Brentano himself, who confided to Herter that he had decided to go back to Bonn to see the Chancellor, as he realised that the Germans could not remain inflexible and tied to the 1955 Western position. Herter agreed, saying that it was ‘intolerable to prepare plans on certain principles set out after instructions and approval from governments, and then for the German Government at the Meeting of Foreign Ministers of 31 March to repudiate all the reports of the Four Power Working Group to which West Germany had agreed’. Both Herter and the US Ambassador in Bonn were aware that the German Government would have to be persuaded to agree to some form of relationship or understanding with the DDR, which fell short of full recognition but would enable the status quo to be preserved. In Bruce’s view, the French were aware of this but would fight shy of committing themselves until the last minute. Clearly, the new US Secretary of State was increasingly sympathetic to the British arguments for flexibility.

Anglo-French discussions, 13 April

The main aim of British diplomacy in the weeks preceding the Geneva Conference was to detach the French from Bonn’s obstructive stance. On 13 April,
Anglo-French exchanges at Prime Ministerial level in London revealed a surprising and significant degree of agreement. Macmillan opened by arguing that the Russians would reject the latest version of the Western Plan because it was based on the principle of free elections as a pre-condition for East–West discussions on German reunification. According to Gladwyn Jebb, the ensuing discussion was an unqualified success. He noted that it was the first time that the Ministers had got down to basics and agreed on the following policies before their meeting with the Russians: de facto recognition of East Germany; some kind of discussions between the two Germanies; the presentation of a Western outline plan as a tactical exercise designed to wrong-foot the Russians; the necessity of controlling refugees, propaganda and subversive activities; and the need to negotiate troop numbers in West Berlin, and links between Berlin and the West, in any Interim Agreement on Berlin. Both sides agreed not to seek a new status for Berlin, but if there was any new solution the new juridical status should be additional to and supplement the existing status. There was also agreement that a zone of inspection, in an area to be determined, was by no means an impossibility, but should be kept in reserve as an additional card at the end.76 The French also accepted the idea of a wide-ranging summit meeting with the Russians which was central to the Prime Minister’s and Khrushchev’s objectives.77 Both governments blamed the Germans for the fact that the present Western Plan had ‘fallen to the ground’. However, the French Prime Minister emphasised the importance of keeping German opinion with them, as the ‘so called Paris–Bonn Axis was only valid if there was Anglo-French understanding, and the Federal German Government was solidly with the West’.78

The Foreign Ministers’ Meeting of 29 April, in Paris

The Western Foreign Ministers met in Paris on 29 April to consider the revisions to the ‘Western Phased Plan for German Reunification and European Security and a German Peace Settlement’, and further studies on Berlin and European security proposed by the Four Power Working Group.79 The British Delegation had favoured an interim Berlin settlement in which the Western powers might try to reinforce their present position with the Soviets by negotiating with them an agreement precisely defining Allied rights and Soviet obligations regarding Allied access. If the Soviets wanted to relinquish their present responsibilities, mutually acceptable arrangements would have to be made for these to be exercised by a third party, such as the UN. The DDR was not considered an acceptable third party, unless the Soviet Government expressly acknowledged the DDR as its agent. This proposal was acceptable to the US Delegation if Berlin could not be reunited, or the Western powers could not exercise the rights relinquished by the Soviet Union. Reference to Berlin should be made within the Phased Plan. The latter envisaged the reunification of Germany within three years, and the consequent restoration of Berlin as the capital of a reunified Germany. One possibility open
to the West was for the Four Powers to simply agree that, during the interim period, they would not alter the existing arrangements regarding Berlin and access thereto. Alternatively, it might be possible to offer the Russians some satisfaction on specific points about which they had complained, such as the use of Berlin as a centre of espionage and propaganda. It was agreed that negotiation should be on the basis of the Allies’ existing rights, but with the following important qualification supported by the British:

"this does not mean however that the Western Powers need necessarily refuse to discuss supplementing the agreements which define how their rights and obligations should be exercised. Indeed there might be advantage in negotiating more precise agreements since the existing agreements are vague in many respects."

Finally, there was agreement that the principles of access agreements should not be the subject of negotiation as that would jeopardise the whole Western position.80 The Foreign Ministers decided that the West would try to keep discussion of all these fallback positions within the framework of the Phased Plan on hold until the Geneva Conference had convened. At this stage the Allies would decide which to put forward, and when and what elements of all of them might be combined together. Certainly, this would provide an opportunity for the British to discuss their ideas on a zone of limitation in conjunction with an Interim Agreement on Berlin.81

Discussions then moved on to the issue of European security measures within the Phased Plan. On German reunification and European security, most aspects of the 21 March Phased Plan were reinstated, and it was clear that the British view prevailed on several important points. Adenauer’s insistence at the previous Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, that the Russians had to make a prior commitment to free elections, was dropped. Ideally, the British would have preferred European security measures separate from the Package Plan; however, strategically, the Prime Minister had decided to acquiesce with the general view of his Allies and await events at Geneva, when the Soviets were bound to reject the Western Package Plan. Thus, arms limitations in a designated zone would continue to move hand in hand with the reunification process, as in the 21 March Working Group Report, with German unity and comprehensive disarmament appearing in the ultimate stage.

However, designation of the zone was left open for negotiation in the future, as the Germans could not accept any discrimination against Germany as a full and equal member of NATO. Neither were the British successful in their aim of inserting a clause in the Phased Plan for a nuclear-free zone.82 The Germans had opposed the recommendation in the 21 March Working Group Report which prohibited the production of atomic, biological and chemical weapons, or IRBM's, in the zone, and Selwyn Lloyd had no option but reluctantly to agree. Instead they proposed that in a future all-German Government, extending to all
of Germany, the renunciation of such manufacture should be accepted by the Federal Republic under the Western European Union (WEU) Protocols. The British, ever pragmatic, put the cause of Alliance unity before the attainment of all its goals, knowing that it was an interim Berlin agreement, not the Western Package Plan, that would ultimately dominate the proceedings at the Geneva Conference.

The other main area on which agreement was reached was the composition of the all-German Committee. Von Brentano had extracted the Chancellor’s approval for the establishment of the all-German Committee proposed by the Working Group; however, any implication that the all-German Committee might issue directives to the governments was deleted from the Phased Plan. This was to remove any implication that the establishment of an all-German Committee would result in Western recognition of the DDR, or acceptance of the Soviet proposal for a confederation. It was hoped, though, that such a committee would show Western willingness to encourage more contacts between Germans from both sides. As a concession to the Russians, the composition of the Committee was raised to twenty-five for the Federal Republic and ten for the DDR, with a three-fourths majority required in voting procedures. Although this meant that the DDR could not be outvoted on this body, the West had not conceded parity, as desired by the Eastern bloc.

In view of their public differences, there was widespread surprise in the West over the Western Powers’ Communiqué, which stated that they had come to ‘complete agreement on the position to be presented at Geneva’. Selwyn Lloyd informed the Prime Minister that the Foreign Ministers had made rapid progress in a good atmosphere. Meanwhile, Christian Herter, the new Secretary of State, telegraphed the President that he was gratified by the results of the Foreign Ministers’ Conference, but felt some basic difficulties of the British had been swept under the carpet and were likely to reappear at Geneva. This was the result of a conscious decision by Macmillan to put Alliance unity before the fulfilment of British objectives at this stage of the negotiations.

On 5 May, the Foreign Secretary told the Cabinet that the West’s position at Geneva would be more flexible than in 1955, and ‘Its formulation was such as to leave it open to us to put forward, as the negotiations proceed, the ideas which we canvassed in earlier discussions with our Allies’. The scene was set for Britain to play an important role at the Geneva Conference and to actively promote an Interim Agreement on Berlin as the basis of negotiations with the Russians. As Christian Herter, the Secretary of State, was inexperienced in foreign affairs, it was reasonable to expect that Macmillan, back in London, would, through Selwyn Lloyd, play an important mediatory role in negotiations at the Geneva Conference.
Historians have tended to dismiss the Geneva Conference as irrelevant to East–West relations and the Berlin problem because it did not resolve the crisis. However, the central argument of this book is that Macmillan and Khrushchev were determined that a step-by-step approach to a provisional agreement was the best way of dealing with such intractable problems. By this means, both sides could build trust by resolving immediate sources of conflict and taking steps towards disarmament. Viewed from this perspective, the Geneva Conference deserves detailed attention. As it progressed, both Macmillan and Selwyn Lloyd played key roles in achieving the necessary compromises. As the Eastern bloc documents illustrate, the Soviet side was equally keen to reach an agreement which would promote détente and disarmament, and achieve a reasonable settlement on Berlin. As a result, the final papers of the Conference on 28 July were the basis of the Interim Agreement which both hoped to negotiate at the 1960 Paris Summit.

**Soviet policy prior to the Geneva Conference**

In March and April 1959, official statements and messages emerging from Moscow broadly supported the view that the main Soviet aim during the Berlin Crisis was the confirmation of the status quo in Germany and Central Europe. Khrushchev’s speech of 31 March promised that West Berlin would not be harmed by being a Free City and could keep its capitalist system, since ‘evidently conditions have not yet ripened for the new order . . . as the saying goes each vegetable has its season’.

Reporting this speech from Moscow, Llewelyn Thompson, the US Ambassador, predicted that there would be a great Soviet effort at Geneva to achieve the process of disengagement by European security measures, and that by this and the new Berlin arrangement Khrushchev would obtain for the DDR a general status quo recognition which he had probably realised could not be gained through Western agreement to German confederation and the peace treaty.

Hans Kroll, the FRG Ambassador in Moscow, who had a very close relationship with the Soviet leadership, also reached this conclusion. On 13 April, in
conversation with Gromyko, he established that there were two major Soviet objectives in the Berlin Crisis: international recognition of a line running roughly along the Elbe, and Western confirmation of the existence of the two German States. Berlin itself was of secondary importance, and Khrushchev was willing to make considerable concessions in return for his major objective – the maintenance of the status quo in Central Europe. He was also willing for a period of several years to keep a modus vivendi on Berlin, provided DDR controls replaced Soviet controls in and around Berlin, and Berlin was purged as a centre of espionage and subversive activities. Khrushchev, he learnt, was committed to his Seven-Year Plan, which could only be carried out if considerable savings were made on armaments, and he had given orders that nothing should be done to endanger his objective of securing a summit conference.

April saw the beginning of a direct correspondence between Khrushchev and Macmillan, agreed during the Moscow talks, which was seen by West Germany as evidence that Britain was risking descending further down ‘the slippery slope’. Khrushchev’s letter to Macmillan of 14 April praised the British Prime Minister’s initiative in visiting the Soviet Union, as Britain’s Allies were now also ready for a summit. Looking back, he said that he had appreciated their frank talks in Moscow ‘I now feel that their value [was] much greater than it appeared at the time of [their] meetings’. He contrasted them with the ‘stupid inflammatory statements’ then being made by military leaders in the US and West Germany, which he saw as an attempt to prepare the American people ‘psychologically for war’. He agreed with Macmillan that meetings of Heads of Government should be informal and systematic, and not held just at moments of crisis, and though he noted from press reports that Macmillan might not have had the support of his Allies ‘on questions raised in Moscow’, he said he was grateful the Western powers did not ‘require specific results from the Foreign Ministers’ Conference, other than for it to proceed in a constructive way’.

In his reply, the Prime Minister acknowledged the importance of the Moscow visit and their ‘frank intimate exchange’, and said he had tried to explain Khrushchev’s point of view to his Allies. He emphasised that US generals spoke in terms of capabilities rather than intentions, and that war was repugnant to Eisenhower. He said he was reassured both by Khrushchev’s flexibility and by his hopes for the Foreign Ministers’ Conference. Macmillan was aware that the Soviet leader had tried to drive a wedge in the Alliance: he had renewed the offer of a bilateral non-aggression pact, which had of course being rejected; and had reminded him that there were certain contradictions within the (Western) Alliance, and that both Russia and England were within the range of ICBMs and IRBMs. Macmillan therefore hastened to tell Eisenhower about his correspondence with the Soviet leader, emphasising that he felt the letter was genuine in that Khrushchev had a healthy fear of war in Europe, was genuinely anxious for a summit, and would try to make the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting a success. The Anglo–Soviet talks in Moscow and the subsequent correspondence between the
two leaders give the impression that the Soviet Government was very interested in Macmillan’s willingness to act as a mediator between East and West.

A Soviet Foreign Ministry Report, submitted to the Central Committee on 22 April, was based on press reports and MID diplomatic assessments of the British position prior to the Geneva Conference. It noted that Britain was the only country willing to extend talks to topics outside those being discussed as part of the Package Plan, namely a separate examination of the subjects of West Berlin and European security. On the question of German reunification, views differed both on the timing and on the means of achievement, but the MID felt that a common Western line was emerging based on a long-term, phased plan for reunification, the establishment of an all-German non-governmental committee in the first phase leading to free elections at a later stage. However, since Dulles’ statement of 13 January that free elections were not the only path to German reunification, it could not be predicted whether such a plan would envisage confederation of the two German states.

On Berlin, the Report again noted a divergence of views, with only Britain supporting an Interim Agreement on Berlin until reunification. The main principles were agreed: rejection of the idea of a Free City; and no removal of Western occupation forces. In the event of the SU signing a peace treaty with the DDR, the Western fallback position would involve an airlift followed by land convoys, first unarmed and then armed, as a means of communicating their firm intention. The Report also stated that the British were considering transferring the question of Berlin to the UN Security Council to facilitate the summoning of a summit and to strengthen the Western position.

As regards European security, it envisaged that the West would reject Soviet proposals for a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The British also wanted a zone, preferably but not necessarily atomic-free, in which forces and weapons would be restricted. Initially such a zone would be small, but gradually it could be enlarged. These British ideas were opposed by the other Western powers on the basis of their impact on US strategic plans and on German reunification. The MID rejected the idea of linking disarmament with German reunification.

It is clear that Soviet perceptions of the state of Western planning for the Geneva Conference were remarkably accurate, and indicate that the Soviet Government was well aware of both disunity in the Western camp, and Britain’s individual and flexible approach to the questions of a summit, German reunification, an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and a special zone of limitation of weapons and forces. In the absence of concrete evidence, one can hypothesise that the Soviet Government hoped that Britain would influence her Allied partners to adopt a more moderate stance on these questions, thereby making a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union a possibility. The Soviet Government saw signs of the US moving towards the British position in some areas, whereas the FRG, with the support of the French, was blamed for putting pressure on its Allies not to delink the proposals for the Geneva Conference on Germany,
Berlin and European security. Whilst the Soviet Government praised Britain’s flexibility in many areas, it did not anticipate Britain weakening on the all important Western principles of the status of West Berlin and the maintenance of Western troops in the city. This assessment of Britain’s position means we can rebut the charge made by some of Macmillan’s critics, notably Adenauer, that Britain was appeasing the Soviets. Indeed, it has been established from this new Soviet evidence that it was Macmillan’s vigorous defence of the basic rights of the West in Moscow that precipitated the infamous ‘toothache incident’.

If Moscow genuinely wanted a compromise on Berlin, Britain, with her more pragmatic approach, was invaluable to Moscow in furthering her cause both as the conduit of her intentions (as after Macmillan’s visit to Moscow) and as an interpreter of Soviet policies. Arguably, the Soviet Government probably anticipated it would have to compromise on the questions of the status of Berlin and the presence of Western troops in the city. Finally, it appears that the Soviets, as Macmillan had argued, were extremely interested in British proposals for a zone of limitation of forces and weapons in Central Europe, and hoped this topic would be dealt with in later negotiations.

**Soviet and DDR objectives for the Geneva Conference**

The official aims of the Soviet Government for the Geneva Conference were set out in the communiqué issued after the Meeting of the Warsaw Pact Countries and the Chinese People’s Republic on 27 and 28 April 1959. Soviet proposals ‘on the two most urgent questions of our time: the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and the termination of the occupation regime in Berlin’ received the ‘full unanimity of the Conference’, as did the proposal for West Berlin receiving the status of a Free City. The city’s ‘security and unobstructed communications with the outside world would be guaranteed by the great powers with the participation of the United Nations’. The participants also acclaimed the DDR’s readiness to respect completely the status of the Free City of Berlin and to take part in the guarantees of its security. The communiqué condemned the setting-up of American rockets and atomic bases on the territories of European NATO countries, and drew attention to the ‘dangerous line adopted by the Federal Republic of Germany which has now launched vigorous measures to equip the German Army with nuclear and rocket weapons’. West Germans were against any proposals for the relaxation of tension, such as the Polish proposal to set up a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe. The report emphasised that German reunification was an inter-German problem, which could only be solved by Germans themselves ‘through rapprochement and agreement between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany without any outside interference’. There was also a clear warning against linking the three problems of Germany, Berlin and European security and ‘tying them in one knot’. Thus the main aim of the Soviet Delegation during the early weeks at Geneva was to untie the Western Package Plan.
The Soviet Government’s aims for the Conference did not include the annexation of Berlin. On the contrary, the two main features of Soviet policy were that the Soviet Union and the DDR would guarantee the freedom of West Berlin and access to it – the two essential principles for the West. These points are also confirmed by two documents from Ulbricht’s office. The first, a policy statement (author unknown), was sent from Moscow to Ulbricht on 8 March 1959, and underlined the principle of freedom of government and freedom of access. Moscow advised Ulbricht that a document guaranteeing these points should be lodged with the UN in the form of an international obligation. Expecting that reunification would also be on the Western agenda, Moscow advised the DDR to prepare a statement emphasising that this was a matter which the two German States should deal with by a system of confederation. In this respect the DDR was encouraged to hold bilateral talks with the FRG in the margins of the conference to attract Western interest and publicity, thereby strengthening the Soviet negotiating hand at the Conference.

The second document, a directive for the DDR Delegation at the Conference, is significant because it sets priorities and indicates a willingness to compromise. The priorities were: first, the peace treaty with Germany; second, the removal of the occupation regime in West Berlin, and third, measures to reduce East–West tension. On the peace treaty, the delegation should resist any West German attempt to link the issue with reunification, and should stick to the confederation route, using the all-German Committee model as previously agreed. On West Berlin, the delegation was empowered to discuss compromise proposals such as reducing the occupation regimes to symbolic numbers of Western and Soviet troops. However, any proposal for freeing up the whole of Berlin should be rejected, as Berlin was the capital of the DDR; the proposed city status for West Berlin should therefore be confined to that sector.

Regarding European security, the third priority, matters such as a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, a limited arms zone, means of reducing the risk of surprise attack and the nuclear test ban should be discussed, but only in close concert with the Soviet Delegation. These documents make it clear that the DDR’s aims for Berlin were defensive, not offensive, and add weight to the West German Ambassador’s prediction that, even though the gap between the two sides was great, Khrushchev would be prepared to meet the West halfway on the Berlin issue and this would clear the path for a meaningful summit conference.

The first phase of the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers, 11–26 May: the Western Plan and the Soviet proposals

The first phase of the Geneva Conference, convened on 11 May, was largely a propaganda exercise, with both sides presenting their respective proposals on Germany, West Berlin and European security. On 14 May Herter put forward
the Western Plan, which envisaged German reunification in the context of European security, as in 1955, but with some new concessions to the Soviet viewpoint. In the first stage it offered the reunification of Berlin by free elections, and the maintenance of Soviet and Western troops there, pending German reunification. Second, it proposed an all-German Committee comprising twenty-five members from West and ten from East Germany, which would discuss means of improving contacts between the two regimes and draft an electoral law to be ratified by a German plebiscite. Simultaneously, the Western Plan envisaged a reduction of forces, with agreed measures against surprise attack. In the third stage, all-German elections would produce a government free to control its internal and external affairs within two-and-a-half years, and this would be followed by the creation of a zone of controlled armaments on either side of an unspecified line. In the final stage, a peace treaty would be signed with the new government.

These proposals only represented the Western powers’ opening position, as they doubted whether these concessions over and above the 1955 Western Plan (such as the postponement of free elections, the establishment of an all-German Committee and more precise security measures to be introduced concurrently) would satisfy the Russians. In reality, the actual as opposed to the official aim of the Western powers was more limited and pragmatic and had been influenced by British thinking in the period of Western negotiation prior to the Geneva Conference, as summarised in the Four Power Working Group Report: a minimum prerequisite to justify a summit would be agreement on the definition of an interim Berlin solution, ready for a summit conference.

Gromyko opposed the Western Plan as unrealistic and pointless, on the grounds that it perpetuated the occupation regime and envisaged free all-German elections, and European security measures which would not apply until after German reunification. He demanded the delinking of the Western Package Plan and condemned ‘the equipment of the Bundeswehr with atomic and rocket weapons’ and ‘revanchist pronouncements in West Germany’, which led to insecurity in Europe. In spite of these criticisms, Gromyko signalled that some parts of the Western Plan were worth discussing ‘independently from the artificially created package, and that Mr. Khrushchev had said he would not oppose them’. These included the idea of a Four Power Declaration on the settlement of international disputes, some questions on disarmament, and the establishment of a limited armaments zone. However, prime emphasis should be accorded to negotiations on Berlin and the peace treaty with Germany.

The Soviet proposals presented by Gromyko on 15 May took the form of a draft peace treaty with Germany and were basically a repetition of the Soviet Peace Note of 10 January 1959, with certain concessions to the West – namely that the two sides would not be required to leave NATO and the Warsaw Pact immediately; that membership of regional economic units could continue; and that a united Germany could make its own decisions as to which alliance it would belong, could conduct research in the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and
would not be hindered from incurring the rights and obligations of Article 51 of
the UN Charter.\textsuperscript{18} These proposals were rejected by the Western powers. A
British Cabinet review of the opening weeks of the Geneva Conference blamed
the Federal Republic for the inflexibility of the Western position on a Berlin set-
tlement, and emphasised that many people in Britain would prefer the continued
division of Germany for several years to come.\textsuperscript{19}

On 24 May John Foster Dulles died, and there was a conference intermission
to allow delegates to attend the funeral. On return to Geneva, the Foreign Minis-
ters met privately at each others’ villas without the presence of the unyielding
German Delegations, and they engaged in substantive, secret discussions.\textsuperscript{20}
Christian Herter, the newly appointed US Secretary of State, signalled that the
Western powers were prepared to untie their Berlin proposals, and this enabled
the relationship forged between the Russians and the British in Moscow to bear
fruit.\textsuperscript{21} The Russians put forward ideas already discussed with the Prime Minis-
ter in Moscow, and used the Foreign Secretary to sound out Western reaction.
To break the deadlock Gromyko suggested to Selwyn Lloyd that the best course
would be to concentrate on certain topics one by one, such as Berlin and certain
aspects of European security on which the Soviet proposals were flexible and
took into account the Western position.\textsuperscript{22}

Gromyko was prepared to give guarantees for the Free City and access to it,
and emphasised that his government had no desire to take over West Berlin or
change its social system. What really mattered to the Soviet Government was
‘the presence of foreign troops and the risk of incidents which this created’.
The best solution would be the demilitarisation of West Berlin or, alterna-
tively, the substitution of token forces of the Four Powers or neutral countries.
The status and social order of Berlin would be safeguarded, and guarantees
would be given on access, economic life and so on. The DDR would give
similar guarantees, either as a signatory to the agreement or by making a
separate declaration or declarations. In the event of DDR interference with
access, he said it would be the joint responsibility of the Four Powers to
restore the situation. It would also be possible for the UN to take part in such
guarantees, though exactly how this could be done was a matter for
discussion.\textsuperscript{23} Gromyko admitted that Western rights existed, but should be
replaced by a new contractual agreement, which the UK Government had
originally discussed in Moscow. He also accepted that any solution must take
into account the existing social order in East and West Berlin, and the interests
of the DDR. He moderated the former Soviet position by conceding that the
presence of Western troops in Berlin was not illegal but ‘obsolete’. The Soviet
Government, he said, did not expect the Western powers to recognise the DDR
Government, but to be realistic about Berlin’s problems.\textsuperscript{24}

Reporting to Macmillan on the state of negotiations with the Russians,
Selwyn Lloyd argued that the Western powers should seek to improve the status
quo in West Berlin first by fixing a ceiling for Western troops and limitations on
their equipment, thereby reassuring the Russians that they were of symbolic
rather than military value, and second by obtaining a more complete agreement about access.25

The Western proposals on West Berlin, 3 June

On 3 June, the Western Foreign Ministers broke the deadlock and de-linked their Western Package Plan. At a private meeting with Gromyko they submitted a Western Paper on an Interim Settlement for Berlin, based on five main points: a statement on the juridical position or Western rights, by which it came to be known; an undertaking not to increase the number of Western troops in the City; the avoidance of illegal and clandestine activities in the greater Berlin area; and a modification of the procedures regarding the present access arrangements. The fifth point stated that the various arrangements which might be agreed should continue until the reunification of Germany.26 Initially Gromyko refused to accept the Paper as a basis of discussion because of its statement on Western rights and the fact that the Interim Agreement would last until German reunification.27 However, he was prepared to suggest a quadrupartite guarantee on access, a unilateral declaration by the DDR, and an agreement between the USSR and the DDR. This seemed to suggest an agency-type agreement between the Soviet Union and the DDR which might well have been acceptable to the West.

Macmillan again took the initiative and sent Lloyd ‘some thoughts in the bag’ on a possible compromise to break the impasse. In Macmillan’s view, the Berlin problem seemed to have ‘resolved itself into a discussion about occupation in fact or as of right’. To break the impasse he suggested a preamble in the Interim Agreement in which each side would maintain its own juridical point of view, but would agree to cooperate on practical arrangements for Berlin. If the arrangements were to be guaranteed by the Four Powers a committee could be formed, on the lines of Gromyko’s suggestion, which would discuss the technical problems of cooperation between the two Germanies on economic and other matters.28 To meet Soviet objections to an Interim Agreement lasting until German reunification, Macmillan proposed a moratorium of five years for such an agreement, as a quid pro quo for ensuring Western rights, and he resurrected the Western idea of a mixed German Committee.

In a private talk with Selwyn Lloyd, Gromyko explained that the West had got it wrong; the Soviet Union did not want recognition of the DDR, it only wanted the West to accept the fact that the DDR existed and had rights.29 As regards Western concerns about a separate peace treaty, he suggested that there could be a joint paper or communiqué in which they would not mention the question of rights but just specify points on which agreement had been reached. Nothing either positive or negative would be said about rights; they would neither be reduced nor extended, but he refused to say that Western rights would subsist. Broadly speaking, this was the Prime Minister’s position, but it was unacceptable to Herter, who said that Western rights were the main question. Nevertheless, Selwyn Lloyd was left with the impression that ‘the Soviets are...
genuinely feeling about for something which they could accept as a satisfactory agreement’.

**The Soviet proposals on Berlin, 9 June 1959**

On 9 June, these exploratory conversations led to a new set of Soviet proposals for a Berlin agreement: an all-German Committee should be set up for one year to settle problems of reunification and a peace treaty; meanwhile Moscow would accept temporary maintenance of Western rights in Berlin as long as the West accepted the Free City plan. The West would also be expected to stop hostile propaganda and clandestine operations against the DDR, to reduce their armed forces and armaments in Berlin to symbolic contingents, and to agree that there would be no atomic or rocket installations in West Berlin. The Soviet Union would undertake to maintain communications with the outside world, and all agreements would be registered with the UN. Finally, a supervisory body consisting of representatives of the Four Powers would be set up to deal with questions of access, to examine any violations of the agreement with regard to West Berlin, and to see that the arrangement would be fulfilled without encroaching on the sovereignty of the DDR. In his closing statement, Gromyko said that ‘if the Western Powers would not accept these proposals, the Soviet Government would not confirm its consent to the continuation of the occupation regime in West Berlin, and would be forced to sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR’.

The Western powers immediately objected to this ultimatum, as they refused to accept that the maintenance of their rights in Berlin depended on the success or failure of such a committee, and they feared that they would be forced into de jure recognition of the DDR. In a private note to Khrushchev dated 15 June the President said that events at Geneva could threaten a settlement of US–Soviet problems, and that if there was to be a summit then both sides had to abjure threats. Moreover, the Foreign Ministers had to have accomplished enough ‘to give us reason to believe that the Heads of Government would be able to reach agreement on significant issues’. On 16 June, at a White House Conference, the President emphasised alliance unity, and said that he would not be bludgeoned into a summit meeting and that he would rather be ‘atomised than communised’.

On 13 June, the Foreign Secretary flew to London to give the Cabinet a detailed personal account of the state of the negotiations in Geneva. He said priority had to be given to an immediate resolution of the Berlin problem. On the juridical position, he outlined the Prime Minister’s possible compromise, based on a statement that the Western powers would maintain their rights which could not be undermined by unilateral action by the Soviet Union, but that both sides would agree on certain improved access arrangements for West Berlin, which by agreement should continue until the reunification of Germany. The other delegations, he said, had now come some way towards this position. HMG
‘had not been at all moved by questions as to who stamps what documents’, and accordingly would be prepared to accept East German operation of the control system, provided the USSR guaranteed Western rights and accepted the ultimate responsibility. His Allies were aware that ‘no one was going to fight or even risk war on that sort of question’, and the crux of the matter was ‘whether the Soviet Government could present such an agreement as a change in status in West Berlin, and the West could present it as a maintenance of their rights’.

The Cabinet concluded that there was no point in taking up other important issues, such as European security, which might widen disagreement; that the latest proposals of the US delegation were still rigid and would require modification if they were to have any success; and, finally, that agreement on practical arrangements for Berlin could be presented as sufficient progress for a summit. The Prime Minister emphasised the need for any new Western Plan to be ‘demonstrably practical and sensible’. In the event of further deadlock the Allies would have to consider the next steps, but the UK Government was ready to envisage a summit even if the Geneva Conference ended in failure.34 Obviously, urgent diplomacy was required behind the scenes to restart negotiations, so a somewhat desperate Macmillan sent a message to the President suggesting that, in the event of negotiations breaking down, an informal Heads of Government Meeting should be held as a face-saving gesture.35 To his dismay, he discovered that Eisenhower himself was actively considering inviting Khrushchev over to see him alone – clearly a move to prevent the Prime Minister from once again seizing the initiative.36 Selwyn Lloyd quickly forestalled this move by persuading his colleagues to revise Western proposals on Berlin.37

The Western Paper on an Interim Agreement for Berlin, 16 June

In response to the 9 June Soviet proposals, the Western powers presented a Western Paper on 16 June, which was basically a revised version of their 3 June proposal.38 This included an arrangement limiting troop levels to the existing figure of 11,000 men ‘if developments in the future permit’. As a concession to the Soviets, and in response to the Soviet proposals of 9 June, the Western Paper also stated that West Berlin garrisons would only be armed with conventional weapons – a triumph for British policy, which had always been mindful of Soviet security fears. Free and unrestricted access to West Berlin would continue for all persons and goods. In addition, the Four Powers would restrict propaganda and subversive activities which might disturb public order or seriously affect their rights and interests, or amount to interference in the internal affairs of others. This interim arrangement was to be changed upon the reunification of Germany.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of this Western Paper was that it did not mention Western rights, an important victory for British pragmatism, and Selwyn Lloyd believed ‘the other delegations had come a long way to meet the British view, perhaps further than they at present realised’.39 The Prime Minister
considered this latest Western Paper to be an ‘immense improvement’ and a ‘great achievement for him’. The NATO Council was also impressed and firmly backed Britain’s more ‘reasonable approach’. However, the new Western terms were unacceptable to Gromyko, who rejected them on the grounds that there had been no substantial change in the Western position, based as it was on the indefinite prolongation of the occupation regime and leaving the garrison intact. Nevertheless, it was significant that for the first time Gromyko mentioned numbers, and said he would regard 3,000–4,000 troops as representing a ‘symbolic presence’, as long as this was implemented in connection with the question of the status of Berlin as a Free City.

Khrushchev’s reply to the President’s message, dated 17 June, stressed the need to end Western occupation rights in Berlin, which were ‘abnormal and a cause of tension’. In his view, prolonged negotiations over Germany would only allow the Federal Republic to continue its military build-up. He emphasised that the current problems were beyond the powers of the Ministers – ‘such a nut can be too hard for them’ – and he endorsed Macmillan’s proposal in Moscow that an initial summit might just mark the beginning, and several meetings of Heads of Government would be required to achieve success. Khrushchev’s message then became strikingly moderate in tone: he said that he had empowered Gromyko to take all possible measures to ensure the success of the Geneva Conference. He acknowledged that the work at Geneva had a ‘certain positive significance’ and had ‘permitted positions on both sides on a number of questions to be better clarified, to define the degree of the existing agreements, and to try in some measure to draw nearer the viewpoint of the sides on separate aspects of actual international problems’.

An important new document located in Ulbricht’s personal office provides invaluable insights into Soviet motivation, and shows that the Soviet Government certainly did not intend its 9 June proposals to be an ultimatum. More importantly, it emphasises Khrushchev’s desire to reach an agreement and gradually to end the Cold War. On 10 June Ulbricht sent a letter to the East German Politburo from Riga, saying that he accepted the Soviet proposals to the Western powers at Geneva. He then outlined Khrushchev’s latest thoughts on the situation. The Soviet leader had stated that tension had to be reduced by gradual rapprochement; that no ultimative demands should be made on the West; that the Western powers should be allowed to save face; that Gromyko should propose that the Commission had one-and-a-half years to complete its work until approximately 1961; and that the Soviet Union and the DDR would only conclude a peace treaty if the work of the Committee of the two German States had been exhausted without achieving a result. During this period, Khrushchev said, Western troops in the city would have to be reduced and espionage activities ended. As the DDR guarantee for West Berlin had not proved to be sufficient for the Western powers, the Four Powers could take over the guarantees and the DDR could supply an additional declaration. Significantly, Khrushchev emphasised that central importance would be given to the proposal
that atomic weapons and rockets would be given up by the two German States, and the Soviet side would continue their quest for a treaty between the two German States on disarmament. Khrushchev concluded his thoughts with an exhortation: our policy must be aimed at ‘gradual dismantlement of the Cold War’. This letter provides clear evidence that, despite the problems at Geneva, Khrushchev was very keen to reach détente with the West, and a settlement on West Berlin.

**Soviet proposals on an Interim Settlement for Berlin of 19 June 1959**

On 19 June, after probing Western intentions, Gromyko invited the Western Foreign Ministers to a meeting at his villa and submitted a new Paper on Berlin which attempted to address Western anxieties. These proposals extended the time limit for an Interim Agreement from one to one-and-a-half years, and provided for a resumed consideration of the Berlin question by the Four Powers during or at the end of the period. In response to Western anxieties that the Soviet Union would liquidate Western rights at the end of an Interim Agreement, Gromyko said that the Soviet Government had not touched upon the rights of the Western powers in their proposals, so the Western conclusion that they would have no rights at the end of the one-and-a-half year period was ‘of an arbitrary nature’. Moreover, should discussions resume after the expiry of the time limit, ‘such discussion should undoubtedly be conducted with due regard for the situation obtaining at that time’. These new Soviet concessions did not satisfy the Western Foreign Ministers, particularly as they coincided with one of Khrushchev’s characteristically hostile televised speeches to a DDR Delegation visiting Moscow in which he threatened to sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR if no agreement was reached on Berlin. Khrushchev had also said that it would be a ‘misunderstanding or deliberate distortion’ to characterise the Soviet one-year period for an interim settlement as an ultimatum, as it was negotiable and not the main question. He told the delegation that the Western powers insisted on maintaining their rights in Berlin because they wanted to continue the Cold War. If the Geneva talks failed, it made a summit all the more necessary. At this juncture, it was clear that diplomacy was needed at the highest level to break the logjam, so the Western powers suggested a conference recess until 13 July, to which the Soviet side readily agreed.

**The Geneva Conference recess, 19 June–13 July 1959**

Reporting to the Cabinet on 23 June, the Foreign Secretary seemed relatively optimistic. He believed that the latest Soviet proposals meant that ‘we might be able to obtain a moratorium, under which the existing position would be maintained for a further period’. The juridical issue would in effect be postponed for a period, and this respite might be secured at the cost of agreeing to the
Soviet proposal that an all-German Committee with wide powers should discuss the possibilities of political as well as economic cooperation. The Prime Minister suggested that some important points, such as troop numbers in Berlin and the duration of an Interim Settlement, could be reserved for a summit meeting. The Cabinet approved this course of action and suggested that further subjects for discussion at a summit could be nuclear testing and general disarmament, both intrinsic to Macmillan’s aims in East–West relations.53

On his return to Washington, Herter, who at Geneva had become amenable to British ideas, including a moratorium, found the prevailing mood in the State Department more hard-line. The DOS envisaged the worst-case scenario: that Russia would sign a peace treaty with East Germany, and that East Germany would impose unacceptable conditions on traffic and hence a probe would have to be ordered to determine whether the Soviet side would use force. Caccia advised Selwyn Lloyd that if Herter lost against the hawks in the State Department, then the British would have to take urgent decisions at short notice, possibly including a proposal for a visit by the Prime Minister to the US.54 British hopes for a modus vivendi with the Russians suffered a further setback following Khrushchev’s meeting on 25 June with Averell Harriman, the Governor of New York, and Ambassador Thompson. Exuding confidence, the Soviet leader issued his usual bombastic threats, said he would reply to force with force, and then expounded on his ideas for a settlement. He had ‘carefully studied the Western proposals which contained constructive elements’ and ‘were not bad’ except that they included one entirely unacceptable point, namely that they were to last until German reunification. He proposed that ‘we should all work for an interim arrangement, leading to a peace treaty, in such a way that it would avoid any appearance of an ultimatum’.55

On 29 June, Gromyko made a long, fairly positive statement in Moscow, describing the exchange of views at Geneva as of ‘definite benefit’. The time limit was negotiable, and Western allegations that the Soviet Union intended to take unilateral action and to absorb West Berlin were belied by Soviet willingness to negotiate a guaranteed interim status for Berlin and to resume joint discussion of the problem if an all-German Committee failed to reach agreement. The Soviet Union had a hopeful view of the outcome of the conference, and he advised the West to use the recess for realistic assessment.56

Meanwhile, in Washington a more pragmatic Western assessment of the situation, closer to Macmillan’s ideas on a moratorium, was gradually emerging.57 The President recommended taking Gromyko’s final remarks ‘in order to see whether we could make out of all these elements a remit of proposals, such as the duration of the agreement and the number of troops in Berlin, for final decision at a summit’. This was the view adopted by the British Cabinet on 23 June. The President reluctantly accepted the idea of a moratorium agreement for a strictly limited number of years, though he knew that he would need to sell it to his people. Lloyd told Caccia that the British were prepared to let the Americans play the hand in their own way, as it would be easier to bring the French and Germans around to their way of thinking in the stress of negotiation.58

113
The first plenary session of the reconvened Geneva Conference Gromyko emphasised that his government was not threatening unilateral action and he proposed that the Geneva Conference should resume with the Soviet proposals of 19 June, which Gromyko considered were not far apart from the Western proposals of 16 June. He said:

Any agreement based on these proposals would be for a fixed period of time. During that time an all-German Committee, or some such form of association acceptable to both German States, would discuss a peace treaty and other matters. If the Committee reached no agreement, then the Four Powers would resume discussions on West Berlin when the fixed period had expired.\(^59\)

Gromyko then made a concession. He stated that it was not the Soviet intention to abolish Western rights at the end of the eighteen-month time limit, and that the length of time was negotiable.\(^60\)

In response, Herter gave a gloomy resumé of the proceedings of the Geneva Conference to date, saying that the positions of the Soviet Union and the Western powers were so far apart that, without a change of approach, agreement seemed impossible. Selwyn Lloyd, on the other hand, emphasised the common ground between the two sides and recommended a serious evaluation of the Western proposals of 16 June and the Soviet proposals of 19 June.\(^61\) After this session, Gromyko took the Foreign Secretary aside and gave him a letter from Khrushchev.\(^62\) The Soviet leader wrote that it was the sincere desire of the Soviet Government to reach a solution by negotiation, either at the present conference or at a summit, but that if this was not forthcoming they would be driven to sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR. This, he said, was not meant to be a threat but would be an inevitable outcome because regarding interim arrangements for West Berlin, as at Stalingrad, the Soviet Government ‘had water behind them’ and ‘no room for manoeuvre or withdrawal’.\(^63\) Arguably this implied that Khrushchev was feeling under pressure, both internally and from China, regarding his policy of détente and his handling of the Berlin question. This may explain why the Soviets had made several concessions to the Western view, but were totally committed to one all-important point: that Western occupation rights could not carry on in perpetuity. This was the main stumbling block in the negotiations. Selwyn Lloyd rejected Gromyko’s optimism that there would be a summit whatever happened at Geneva, as he felt it would be unwise to hold such a meeting in an atmosphere of rancour. He told his Soviet counterpart that ‘a limited agreement on Berlin, together with a general discussion and agreement about the forum for the next disarmament talks, would be a good beginning’. Selwyn Lloyd saw this confidential exchange of views as a tribute to
improved Anglo-Soviet relations. Arguably, this was a definite result of their visit to the Soviet Union.

There were other indications that the Soviet Government wanted a negotiated settlement on Berlin. It is significant that when the British Ambassador in Moscow called on Vasily Kuznetsov, Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, he referred several times to a possible time limit of two rather than one-and-a-half years, and said that the Soviet Union would only sign a separate peace treaty as a last resort, after all possibilities of negotiation had been exhausted. Sir Patrick Reilly concluded that the Soviet Government would recognise neither Western rights in Berlin nor a provisional arrangement for Berlin without a time limit, though in the latter case he thought it might only be a date for the resumption of negotiations during which Western rights would continue. Ultimately he thought the Russians would agree to two years, and he advised that an ‘unsatisfactory arrangement’ of this kind was probably the best the West could get, though they should not pay too high a price for it, as the Russians were reluctant to sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR. The Ambassador wryly commented that the Russians had engaged in some vigorous wedge-driving, with some appreciative remarks about the Prime Minister’s role in the first stage of the conference, and criticisms of the Americans and West Germans.

As Macmillan was very anxious about the situation, he put forward radical ideas to break the deadlock. He thought the bargain would be some form of all-German Committee in exchange for a continuation of a moratorium at the end of the interim period, however long that might be. If the Russians were not able to give the DDR any real hope at the end of the interim period, they no doubt felt they had to give it something now, whereas the Western powers, on the other hand, would be no worse off at the end of the interim period than they were now. Macmillan assumed that the President would call a summit immediately to facilitate negotiations. However, the Prime Minister’s Allies were in no mood to entertain such a radical stance, and on 20 July the negotiations at Geneva became deadlocked over the question of an all-German body. Herter rejected the Soviet proposal for an all-German Committee, on the basis that it was linked with the Berlin question and would therefore perpetuate the division of Germany and end any possibility of German reunification based on free elections. The US feared that such a linkage would allow the Soviets to blackmail the Allies into making concessions on all-German affairs by threatening action against Berlin, if there was no agreement on Berlin at the end of the moratorium. Gromyko rejected Four Power intervention in all-German problems as unhelpful, and suggested that, as an alternative to the all-German forum, the existing talks in Geneva should be continued elsewhere.

Faced with firm Allied opposition, Gromyko gave way on this question of linkage, and on 23 July said his government was prepared for talks on Berlin and all-German questions to be continued in parallel but separately. Selwyn Lloyd believed that the Soviet Government was keen to prevent a breakdown of
negotiations and had shown flexibility, even in their Paper of 19 June, by conceding that if at the end of the agreed period no agreement was reached within the framework of the all-German Committee or otherwise, then the participants of the Geneva Conference should resume consideration of the West Berlin question.\(^{68}\) It appears that the Soviet goal was to gain Western acquiescence to all-German talks, thus achieving Western de facto recognition that German reunification was not a Four Power matter. By these means, Khrushchev’s ultimate goal, the continued existence of two German States, and the status quo in Europe would be confirmed.

Meanwhile, there were hopeful signs that the Americans were moving towards the British position regarding a compromise on Berlin. On 23 July, Herter informed the Foreign Secretary that, following a long battle with the US Delegation on the question of Western rights, he had won the day. The US had now agreed to accept the British formulation of 16 June on Western rights on the lines of the third sentence: ‘the Four Powers recognise that for blank years, the existing situation could be modified in certain respects’. Herter agreed that if Gromyko sent a satisfactory answer, the draft report could be sent to the Heads of Government. Herter thought Couve de Murville would agree to this wording, because he was under pressure from Adenauer to get an agreement limited to Berlin which would give the Chancellor a breathing space.\(^{69}\) Unexpectedly, Adenauer was so opposed to any discussion of the all-German question that he now appeared ready to negotiate a separate settlement on Berlin. This made the British objective of an Interim Agreement on Berlin potentially viable.

Developments regarding Macmillan’s quest for a summit were more disheartening. On 1 July, during the course of a visit to the US, Frol Kozlov, Soviet Deputy Prime Minister, had proposed to the President that he should meet Khrushchev.\(^{70}\) On 3 July, Robert Murphy of the State Department gave Kozlov an offer from the President for an exchange of visits. Unfortunately, Murphy forgot to mention that the invitation for Khrushchev to visit the US was based on ‘progress’ at Geneva.\(^{71}\) The Soviet leader’s reply of 21 July expressed both his keen desire to exchange visits and his belief in the usefulness of meetings at Head of State level.\(^{72}\) To Macmillan’s dismay, Eisenhower had successfully seized the initiative from the British, and dashed his hopes of an early summit.

At this stage, the US approach to East–West relations was somewhat contradictory. The President had issued an invitation to Khrushchev, yet simultaneously US policy at Geneva had become even more rigid on the question of rights. On 23 July, the President told Macmillan that, as a result of what he perceived as ‘the abrupt reversal of the Soviet attitude’ at Geneva, his minimum criterion for a summit meeting would be a Soviet assurance of Western rights in Berlin, and a programme which could be presented by the Foreign Ministers to Heads of Government for study and discussion. Otherwise, a summit ‘would be a fraud on our people and a great diplomatic blunder’.\(^{73}\) The President was backing down on both Herter’s more flexible interpretation of the question of
Western rights and also his assurance to the Foreign Secretary, on July 3, that there would be a summit in Quebec in early September.

Macmillan resented being sidelined by this bilateral summit, and immediately responded. On 23 July he sent a message to Eisenhower saying that although he appreciated his anxieties, bearing in mind the background of crisis which had developed since the Soviet Ultimatum of 27 November 1958, the outline of an Interim Agreement had emerged which justified the US condition that sufficient progress had been made at Geneva to convene a summit conference. Macmillan believed that the other contentious areas – of East–West disagreement on Berlin, the length of a moratorium, and discussions on the acrimonious all-German problem – could be left for discussion at a Heads of Government meeting. The Prime Minister said that, from his point of view, the best date for a summit, having regard to the President’s plans and his own preoccupations (namely the forthcoming General Election), would be the end of August or at the latest 1 September; otherwise it should be postponed until the end of September or the beginning of November. Macmillan preferred the earlier date, so that a summit would predate Khrushchev’s visit to the States, thus ensuring (he hoped) an electoral victory based on his foreign policy success. He suggested to the President that the summit should be preceded by a meeting of Foreign Ministers in Paris ten days before the summit, and he assumed that after dealing with the German question, a substantive discussion on disarmament could take place.

Whilst this exchange of views proceeded there had been no progress at Geneva on an Interim Settlement, and particularly on the questions of Western rights, the duration of an agreement and on troop levels for the Berlin garrison. On 27 July, Gromyko and Lloyd tried to resolve their differences in an hour-long confidential conversation prior to a private meeting of the Foreign Ministers. Lloyd said that the question of Western rights could be left for a summit, but Gromyko warned that unless there was agreement on troop reductions it was futile to discuss anything else: the present Western position that they would maintain existing levels, only considering reductions in the future, was not acceptable. However, privately the Foreign Secretary was optimistic that a compromise was achievable. He had already ascertained from the East Germans that they considered 7,000–8,000 as a possible figure. The Americans had also finally agreed with the French that they could reduce troop levels from 11,000 to 8,000, though this was kept up their sleeve for future bargaining. Gromyko and Lloyd then discussed the wording of a possible preamble to an Interim Agreement on West Berlin, but as it was inconclusive, they both agreed to produce Papers summarising their respective positions for the next formal meeting on 28 July.

The Final Western and Soviet Papers of 28 July 1959

A detailed analysis of the Western and Soviet Papers of 28 July is of crucial importance because they were the basis of the negotiating positions of the Soviet
Union and the Western Allies at the East–West Summit of May 1960. It indicates that there was considerable agreement on the two cardinal Western principles on which any agreement on Berlin should be based. These were freedom of Western access to the City of West Berlin; and the freedom of the people of West Berlin, entailing non-interference in the internal affairs of the city. The Soviet Paper included these two points. Moreover, both sides agreed that a Four Power body (called a Committee in the Western Paper and a Commission in the Soviet Paper) would supervise the implementation of the agreement. There was also agreement on the prohibition of atomic weapons in West Berlin, and on the curtailment of subversive and propaganda activities. On the question of troop levels: the Soviet Government mentioned a figure of 3,000–4,000, and the Western powers promised to maintain existing levels with a gradual reduction. However, it should be remembered that the Soviet Government had already compromised on its original demand that the occupation regime should be terminated. Furthermore, the Western powers were prepared to envisage reducing the garrison to 8,000, and intelligence sources had indicated that the East Germans were also discussing a figure of 8,000. Arguably, a compromise was possible given the President’s view that a reduction of 3,000 would not make the ‘slightest military difference’.

One of the areas of disagreement, on which it appeared that one side or the other would have to give way, was the Soviet proposal for an all-German Committee or some such similar institution to deal with all-German affairs. The UK Government had been prepared to compromise on the establishment of such a body, but under pressure from the FRG this had been dropped. The other major obstacle to a compromise on the Berlin issue was the question of the duration of an agreement and the position of Western rights when it terminated. The Western powers recognised that their opening position, namely that the agreement should last until reunification, was not tenable. Privately the Prime Minister and the President had mentioned a figure of three years, and Khrushchev had appeared flexible on this question. As to the question of rights, the Soviet Paper did not mention the subject and merely stated that at the end of the agreement, if no consensus had been reached, the States concerned would meet again to negotiate on West Berlin. This was in accordance with Macmillan’s original suggestion that the whole question of Western rights should not be mentioned in the agreement, to which Herter had virtually agreed, though the US later retracted on his statement.

On 1 August, the Prime Minister told the Foreign Secretary that he felt that Gromyko had said ‘as much on this subject, the Interim Agreement as we could reasonably expect from him’. For instance, on 22 June he had stated: ‘during an Interim Agreement and during the negotiations between the participants in this Conference for renewed consideration of the West Berlin problem, the Soviet Union would not take any unilateral action’. This was confirmed in Gromyko’s conversations with Herter on 29 July, and with Couve de Murville on 30 July, when he said:
the parties would meet again to discuss the question of West Berlin. In the course of the negotiations no unilateral action would be taken by the Soviet Union on any aspect, including access. The Soviet Union had bound themselves for the period of negotiations: so far the West had said nothing.

Macmillan could not understand the reluctance of the Western Ministers to accept the Soviet position, as Gromyko had virtually said that at the end of the Interim Agreement and during the ensuing negotiation, all would be in the same position as at the beginning of the Geneva Conference. He felt that the Western Ministers should stop worrying about rights. He felt it was unwise for the French and Americans to go on pressing so hard, unless they wanted the Russians to say that they would recognise Western rights in perpetuity, which was unrealistic, and would make all talk of an Interim Agreement or a moratorium absurd. The Russian ‘capitulation would then be complete’. Nevertheless, negotiations to try and bridge the gap between the two position Papers continued until 5 August, when the Geneva Conference was adjourned without any agreement.

Cabinet reaction to the distressing turn of events at Geneva reflected, amongst other factors, the importance it attached to public opinion prior to a probable autumn election. On 29 July, the Cabinet stated that ‘it was difficult to reconcile the rigid attitude of the US delegation at Geneva, with the invitation to Khrushchev to visit the United States’. It would hardly be possible to present this as a purely social visit, and there would be a widespread belief that the United States intended to negotiate with the Soviet Government without reference to its Allies. They also agreed that ‘the Soviet Government had not been unreasonable in the negotiations and that some progress had been made’. It was essential that as soon as the Geneva Conference was adjourned, there should be an announcement that the Western Heads of Government would meet in Paris before the end of August, and that it should be firmly understood that a decision would be taken to hold a summit before the end of the year. The Foreign Ministers would report to their Heads of Government that the results were sufficiently encouraging to justify the continuation of negotiations to reach a negotiated settlement at the meeting of the Heads of the Western governments. This should be presented as a logical development of the government’s policy.

Macmillan made one last attempt to persuade the President to ‘announce a summit in November, now’. In his letter of 29 July, he again pointed out the rigidity of the US position. ‘If we are asking for a moratorium, we cannot expect that our rights should be guarded beyond the end of renewed negotiation. That surely is what a moratorium means.’ Eisenhower’s reply justified Macmillan’s worst fears: he suggested a conclusion to the Geneva Conference during the coming week unless Gromyko accepted, as a minimum requirement for a summit, the Western position on rights of 16 June, with provision for a reasonable moratorium of two-and-a-half years. In his view, to go to a summit without progress would lead to ‘grave risk of spectacular failure or unthinkable
capitulation’. He was also against Macmillan’s suggestion that they should announce a sudden date for the summit. Instead he said that he intended to go to Moscow in October, following Khrushchev’s visit to the US, to pave the way to a summit in November or early December.

In Geneva, Lloyd made it clear to Herter that the President’s unwillingness to link his invitation to Khrushchev to conditions concerning negotiations at Geneva ‘had pulled the rug from under our feet’. He believed that Gromyko’s ‘toughness’ in the last forty-eight hours was probably due to the fact that he knew about the President’s invitation to the Soviet leader. Gromyko’s ‘toughness’ in the last forty-eight hours was probably due to the fact that he knew about the President’s invitation to the Soviet leader. ‘Khrushchev now knew he need not pay anything for a trip around the US.’ Later, the Foreign Secretary confessed to a sympathetic Prime Minister the feelings of intense disappointment and frustration he was experiencing at his inability to conclude a concrete agreement.

At the last plenary session of the conference, both the British and Soviet Foreign Ministers made positive statements about a resumption of the Geneva Conference in the future. Gromyko and Selwyn Lloyd were anxious that the communiqué summarising the Geneva Conference should reflect its positive achievements. Gromyko believed that the fact that the Four Powers had met after such a long period of interruption and had engaged in a frank exchange of views represented progress, and also that the two German States were represented reflected a more realistic approach to German problems. On Berlin, there had been a tangible rapprochement in that all accepted that an agreement on West Berlin should cover Western force levels, non-location of nuclear weapons and the control of subversive activities, and there should be a time limit. The DDR had stated that during the Interim Agreement communications ‘would remain as they are now’. He pointed out that this concession was an improvement on Herter’s earlier suggestion in the Western proposals. He hoped that the Western powers would reconsider their proposal that an Interim Agreement should last five years, as the Soviet Government could not accept this, and he reaffirmed that an Interim Agreement on West Berlin was naturally connected to all-German questions. He concluded by contrasting ‘circles’ in West Germany who wanted to continue the Cold War, with the contacts forged by the Prime Minister in Moscow, and the agreement of the President and Mr Khrushchev to exchange visits.

On 5 August, the Foreign Ministers issued a final communiqué which stated that the positions of both sides had become closer on certain points and that their discussions would be useful ‘for the future negotiations which are necessary to reach an agreement’. Macmillan, discussing the Geneva Conference with Lloyd, took the view that it may have been that Khrushchev had no intention of making an agreement on anything except at a summit. His opinion is borne out by Khrushchev’s speech on foreign affairs in Dniepropetrovsk on 28 July, when he stated that he was confident that the problems being discussed at Geneva would be solved not by the Foreign Ministers but by Heads of Government at a summit. In his Annual Report for 1960, the new British Ambassador to
Moscow, Sir Frank Roberts, assessed that the Soviet Union was ‘fairly satisfied’ with the Geneva Conference. The admission of the DDR representatives on the same basis as the FRG was an important gain, as was the acceptance of the principle of the limitation of Western rights in Berlin.\(^9^0\)

This was the first time that the Western powers had sanctioned the presence of the DDR at an international conference, and was a step, albeit only an initial one, towards achieving Khrushchev’s major policy objective: the de facto recognition of the East German regime and of the status quo in Europe. Gromyko ended on an optimistic note. He said a ‘great many misunderstandings had been cleared up’ and the conference was ‘valuable in itself for facilitating a further examination of areas of disagreement’.\(^9^1\) It could hardly be questioned that the conference had made ‘good progress towards a realistic approach to the settlement of questions relating to West Berlin’. He noted that the participants had agreed that the Interim Agreement would be limited in time – a question of fundamental importance for the Soviet Union. However, he emphasised that the length of duration of the provisional arrangement was, from the Soviet point of view, ‘neither a major one nor one of principle’.\(^9^2\) His positive assessment of the achievements of the Geneva Conference suggest that the implementation of an Interim Agreement on Berlin was the major objective the Soviet Union now sought at a future summit. The British Government virtually agreed that Western governments had been more rigid in negotiations than the Soviet Union, and judged that sufficient progress had been made to justify a summit conference. President Eisenhower still needed to be convinced that Khrushchev was sincere in his wish for a Berlin settlement, disarmament and détente.
The background to the Camp David Agreement

Macmillan was frustrated by the US’ failure to agree to a summit conference, and he felt upstaged by the President’s statement on 3 August that he had invited Khrushchev to visit America. Nevertheless, publicly he welcomed Eisenhower’s initiative on the basis that the President had at last accepted the British argument that it was essential for Western leaders to meet Khrushchev in person to assess his true objectives. However, in his diary he observed that the President was now trying to ‘substitute jollification for discussion’, which was ‘odd diplomacy’.1 The Foreign Secretary impressed on Herter that British public opinion would find it utterly incomprehensible if the President invited Khrushchev to the US and returned this visit, and yet still said that the time was not yet ripe for a summit meeting.2

Although the President made it clear that he was not empowered to negotiate unilaterally with Khrushchev on behalf of the Western Alliance, both Britain and France were apprehensive in case the visit might mark the beginning of a new era of a two power world directorate by the US and the Soviet Union. This would have negated Macmillan’s chosen role as mediator between East and West. With the General Election looming in early October, the Prime Minister also feared a humiliating setback to his hopes of achieving an early summit, so he was greatly relieved to find that both the British and world press attributed the President’s invitation to Khrushchev to his own pioneering efforts in Moscow ‘to break the ice’.3

On 24 August, in preparation for his talks with Khrushchev, Eisenhower began a series of informal visits to Allied European capitals, but he found little enthusiasm in Paris and Bonn for either a summit or further talks on Berlin. The President was delighted by his reception in London, where he was feted as a hero by the British people. Macmillan seized this public relations opportunity to
stress his long-standing friendship with the President and the excellent state of the ‘special relationship’. Unfortunately, he failed to reverse Eisenhower’s view that some promise of ‘fruitful results’ must be held out to him by the Soviet Prime Minister before he would feel able to go to the summit. On 29 August, Macmillan reported to his Cabinet that, during the course of the Chequers talks, the President highlighted the problem of Germany, pressing Adenauer to adopt:

a more flexible attitude and to consider new methods of ending the existing deadlock. He had warned him that the Western Powers could not expect to be able indefinitely to maintain the existing position in Berlin and that, even if agreement could be reached on a moratorium, this must lead eventually to some new arrangement. He had also urged him to accept some system of increasing contacts between East and West.

This significant statement marked a return to the more flexible approach which the US Government had adopted towards Berlin in late 1958 and January 1959. In the interim, the Chancellor’s intransigent attitude towards the German question and a compromise on Berlin had forced US policy to become more hard line. The President also wanted the Western powers to discuss nuclear tests and wider disarmament with Khrushchev. The focus of negotiations on Berlin now switched to bilateral US–Soviet discussions, and as Macmillan observed, everything depended on Khrushchev’s visit to the United States which began on 15 September 1959.

Asked at a Press Conference on 5 August what place the question of Berlin and a German peace treaty would occupy in his talks with the President, Khrushchev stated that although the question of West Berlin had become acute, it was not the main issue. His government was

primarily interested and concerned with liquidating the vestiges and consequences of the Second World War which was a Gordian knot. It was necessary to proceed from the fact that two German States now existed, and it was therefore necessary to establish a peace treaty with Germany (on the basis of a confederal Germany) or the two German States, and if this fact was addressed then the West Berlin question would be easily settled.

The Soviet leader likened the situation (in Germany and Berlin) to a ‘powder keg’ which might cause a sudden explosion. This statement reaffirmed the Soviet position adopted at the Geneva Conference, and reflected both Khrushchev’s commitment to the DDR, and his abiding fear of a nuclear holocaust.

Soviet accounts of preparations for Khrushchev’s visit to the US reveal the depth of isolation and inferiority felt by him personally and by his country
towards the West, and the importance he attributed to a successful outcome to the visit. In his memoirs, Khrushchev confessed his fears that the Americans might be tempted to put him in his place. As a result, the subsequent recognition by the US of the parity of the Soviet Union, as expressed in the protocol adopted for the visit, acquired a personal and symbolic significance for him. In retrospect, he admitted that once he had realised the prestigious nature of the Camp David talks, he felt ‘ridiculous and ashamed’. Khrushchev also felt worried about the prospect of one-to-one talks with Eisenhower without Gromyko at hand, so he assiduously prepared arguments and discussion of the complex issues so that he could defend the Soviet position without humiliating himself or going too far. Stalin, he said, missed no opportunity to convince his colleagues that they were ‘good for nothings’ who would let the imperialists ‘trample all over us’.

On the eve of his visit to America, Khrushchev stated his foreign policy aims in an article in *Foreign Affairs*. He emphasised the importance of détente and the removal of misunderstandings about the Berlin Crisis, and said that he expected the US to accept nuclear parity, recognise the DDR, leave West Berlin a Free City, and alter its commitment to Bonn. He believed these policies would eventually result not just in détente but in an entente between the two main enemies of the Cold War.

Khrushchev arrived in Washington on 15 September 1959. At their first meeting, Eisenhower agreed with Khrushchev that the Berlin situation was abnormal and that the question of Western rights was largely symbolic, but he emphasised that the US would not give up its Berlin responsibilities until there was a ‘reasonable settlement’. Khrushchev observed that his main interest was not in ‘Berlin as such’, but in concluding a ‘peace treaty in order to terminate the state of war with Germany’. He wanted to work out a ‘common language allowing both sides to recognise the “facts of the German situation” and establish that neither will try to use force to alter the situation’. The Soviets, he said, were prepared to find a way which would not threaten the prestige of either power. As his tour around the US progressed, the Soviet leader received a warm welcome, and a promising atmosphere developed for the official Soviet–US talks at Camp David which began on 26 September.

During the opening session, at which the two leaders’ advisors were present, the President told Khrushchev that he ‘did not want to perpetuate the present position in Berlin’ and keep US troops there forever. He said that Berlin was a symbol, and that Khrushchev’s statement that he was prepared to take unilateral action had alarmed the American people. If tension on this could be removed, it should be possible to make progress. In response, Khrushchev stated that he did not attach any strategic importance to Berlin, whether the West had 10,000 or 100,000 troops there, but for him, too, the question of prestige was involved. He reassured the President that the West could avoid giving Western recognition to the DDR: the US could sign a peace treaty with West Germany; and the Soviet Union could sign peace treaties with both Germanies. Khrushchev believed that
none of the Allies, including de Gaulle and Macmillan, wanted German unity. When the President replied that he had no objection to a peace treaty between the DDR and the USSR provided US rights in Berlin were not affected, Khrushchev’s response was that this was an impossible condition and prejudicial to the Soviet’s moral position. However, he emphasised that as his government wanted to achieve its objectives peacefully, it was prepared to ‘agree some period which might take the edge off the Berlin question so that there would be no injury to US prestige’. Khrushchev believed that ‘agreement could be reached on disarmament and both sides could avoid extremes and work out a document [on Berlin] which would neither set out a definite time limit nor be formulated in such a way as could mean that a perpetuation of the occupation regime was endorsed’.12

The next session of talks, on 27 September, was a private occasion with only the leaders’ interpreters present.13 Khrushchev, who had staked his reputation on the talks, was anxious that agreement should be reached on a communiqué. Eisenhower suggested a formula on the lines that the ‘US was not trying to perpetuate the situation in Berlin’ and Mr Khrushchev was ‘not trying to force the Western Powers out of Berlin’. Khrushchev told the President that ‘the question of the time limit was not one of principle but they needed to solve the German question by a peace treaty and by doing away with the vestiges of war’. He then put forward his own somewhat obscure formula for the communiqué. The statement should not be such ‘that could be understood to mean that the Soviet Union and the US were in favour of prolonging the occupation regime there and that the two countries were giving up the idea of a peace treaty’. The two leaders also believed disarmament was the principal problem and felt that if an agreement were reached both of them would be noted in history. In this area, unlike Germany, ‘rigid positions’ had not been adopted, so there was more room for manoeuvre.

Adopting a more flexible line, Eisenhower told Khrushchev that he was now willing to go to a summit if there was some progress which he defined as not having to act under duress. The two leaders believed that an ‘agreement could be reached on disarmament and . . . both sides could avoid extremes and work out a document [on Berlin] which could neither set out a definite time limit nor be formulated in such a way as could mean that a perpetuation of the occupation regime was endorsed’.

After the meeting, Eisenhower briefed his advisors.14 He told them he had made Berlin a catalyst – i.e. he would be ready to negotiate on disarmament if there were negotiations on Berlin. Khrushchev had then agreed that: ‘without regard to the date, the Soviets would negotiate to get a solution to Berlin which would be acceptable to all concerned’. The President had conceded that the West did not seek a perpetuation of the situation in Berlin. He did not believe the Allies contemplated fifty years in occupation there. At the time, some commentators suspected that Eisenhower made a secret deal at Camp David that the US would actively pursue a solution to the Berlin question in return for
Soviet withdrawal of their ultimatum. The FO noted that no proper record of the talks was kept, and those that were made were brief considering the length of the session. Moreover, the leaders were alone for much of the time.\textsuperscript{15}

A joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of the visit stated that disarmament dwarfed every other problem; that an exchange of views had been held on Germany; that they agreed to settle disputes ‘not by the application of force’; and that a visit by Eisenhower to Russia would be arranged in the spring.\textsuperscript{16}

Regarding the vital negotiations on Berlin, ‘an understanding was reached, subject to the approval of the other parties directly concerned, that negotiation would be reopened with a view to achieving a solution which would be in accordance with the interests of both parties’. The President came to an arrangement with Khrushchev that he would announce their formula for breaking the impasse on negotiations on Berlin at his 28 September press conference. Then, on 29 September, \textit{Tass} news agency released Khrushchev’s statement affirming the Camp David formula: ‘That these negotiations should not be prolonged indefinitely but there could not be a fixed time limit on them’. This was interpreted by the US as a withdrawal of the Soviet Ultimatum of 27 November 1958. The President informed assembled journalists that Khrushchev had given an oral assurance that the Soviet Union did not intend to threaten Berlin. In reply to a question as to whether any solution must still guarantee allied rights and the freedom of Berliners, he was disarmingly frank. He said:

\begin{quote}
I can’t guarantee anything of this kind for the simple reason I don’t know what kind of settlement may finally prove acceptable, but you must start with this. The situation in Berlin is abnormal. It was brought about by a truce, a military truce, after the end of the war, an armistice, and it put a number of free people in a very awkward position. Now we’ve got to find a system that will be really acceptable to all the people in that region including those most concerned, the West Berliners.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

The White House, worried about the President’s public admission that the situation in Berlin was ‘abnormal’, hastily intervened to say that the President did not mean that Allied rights could not be maintained, but merely that he could not predict the outcome of the negotiations. Herter, in a report to Congress, said nothing had changed except that now further conferences could be held without an element of duress intervening.\textsuperscript{18} However, the situation was not quite as simple as that. Eisenhower had spontaneously moved closer to the British position, both on the desirability of a summit conference and on reaching a formula close to that recommended by Macmillan during the Geneva Conference – i.e. an Interim Agreement on Berlin which would avoid mentioning points of principle important to both sides, such as Western rights and a time limit for Allied occupation of the city. Instead it would be based on practical provisions, such as Western access to the city and the prohibition of subversive activities. The
Camp David Summit thus committed the two sides to a negotiated settlement and introduced a new phase in East–West relations. The possibility of East–West détente, which had been in the air from 1953 to 1956, depended on whether the spirit of Camp David could be maintained until a future summit and on whether the US and the Soviet Union could convince their reluctant allies, Germany, France and China respectively, of the desirability of a summit conference and a modus vivendi on Berlin.

Before the Camp David talks, Khrushchev had a low opinion of Eisenhower because, at the 1955 Geneva Conference, he had noticed Dulles passing notes to Eisenhower which he read ‘like a dutiful schoolboy taking his lead from his teacher’. Compared to his formidable Secretary of State, Dulles, who was ‘hated but highly respected in the Kremlin’, Eisenhower was thus perceived by the Soviets as a ‘mediocre leader and a weak President’. After Camp David, Khrushchev changed his mind and frequently referred to the President as a man of peace. This led to shock-waves in the Chinese camp.

The impact of Camp David on Soviet relations with the West

On his return from America, Khrushchev was cheered by the Moscow crowds, who ‘acclaimed and thanked Mr Khrushchev for his great and successful mission of peace, and his dignified and proud representation in the US of the Soviet people and their Leninist cause’. According to his biographer, Khrushchev believed he had become the greatest Soviet statesman since Stalin, and had wreaked his personal revenge on Molotov, who had opposed his policy of détente and challenged his authority in 1957. This meeting with the President had been of symbolic importance for the Russians. They had discussed world affairs as equals, on American soil, and it had provided a safe opportunity to assert the Soviet position in the world and challenge the US claim to primacy in the international system. The British Ambassador testified to Khrushchev’s great popularity after the visit, and the growth of his personal authority with the Soviet people emanating from the ‘spirit of Camp David’. ‘By the end of the year, he was a front page story every day, and his policy of détente had won him a popularity which he had lacked hitherto’.

On 31 October, addressing the Supreme Soviet, in a bid to prepare the Russian people for serious negotiation, Khrushchev stressed the ‘great value’ of his talks with the President and recalled the important contribution to an improvement of the international situation made by his earlier talks with Mr Macmillan. He told the assembled gathering, ‘the hand of the barometer is moving towards fair though not as quickly as we should like it to go’. The priorities for the summit conference would be disarmament, and then Germany and Berlin, and he appealed to the powers to do nothing which might create new difficulties or could create distrust and suspicion – a fairly obvious reference to U-2 intrusions, which had been targeting the Soviet Union since 1955. He then
appealed for an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons; the banning of nuclear tests; the creation of a European area of control and inspection; the limitation of forces (Macmillan’s idea) and the creation of an atomic-free zone in Europe.\textsuperscript{26} The Americans noted that he spoke of the need for ‘mutual concessions’ five times in the space of two pages. Later, in December, after his meeting with Khrushchev in Moscow, Averill Harriman, the former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union and a presidential advisor, reported to the US Government that the Soviet leader favoured disengagement in Germany and was prepared to withdraw Soviet troops to within the Soviet frontiers, but that he had not elaborated on the conditions necessary for this step.\textsuperscript{27}

The other dominant theme of Soviet statements in this period was anticipation of a settlement of the Berlin question. In his October letter to de Gaulle, Khrushchev’s optimism was apparent:

as part of the process of putting an end to the Cold War there was no reason why some agreement should not be reached on Berlin, but if this were not possible the Heads of Government could provide general directives for further study which would improve the atmosphere and enable decisions to be taken at a later meeting.\textsuperscript{28}

Perhaps the most definite indication that some agreement of greater substance was achieved at Camp David can be found in Khrushchev’s exchange with Ulbricht in November 1959. Khrushchev told Ulbricht that at Camp David he had worked out an Interim Agreement on Berlin with Eisenhower, based on a version of the Interim Agreement on Berlin discussed at the Geneva Foreign Ministers’ Conference of 1959, which would have recognised the status quo in Berlin and committed the two Germanies more firmly to negotiating a peace treaty during the period of the agreement. ‘This was our concession to Eisenhower in order to save his prestige and not to create the impression that we had chased him from Berlin’.\textsuperscript{29}

Anglo–Soviet exchanges during the autumn of 1959 centred on the same questions of disarmament and Berlin, and on Soviet fears of the nuclear rearmament of Germany.\textsuperscript{30} On 14 October Khrushchev wrote to Macmillan congratulating him on his victory in the General Election, which had taken place on 8 October, and urging him to discuss and resolve disarmament and other international problems as a way of contributing to the end of the Cold War and creating peaceful coexistence. In a conversation with the Foreign Secretary on 30 November, Yakov Malik, the Soviet Ambassador, agreed that it was important to have an early summit to keep the momentum going, and that subsequently it would be advantageous to hold meetings every six to eight months, as discussed in Moscow. Khrushchev believed that public opinion would not accept postponement of a summit. Selwyn Lloyd told Malik that, in his view, they had the makings of an Interim Agreement at Geneva and they had reduced things to four or five issues which the Heads of Government could deal with in a morning. He

128
also reassured the Ambassador that the Germans had not been given permission to manufacture intercontinental ballistic missiles, or to have nuclear weapons under their own control. Malik then begged him ‘to realise the importance which the Russians attached to this question of German rearmament and of maintaining the restrictions of the Paris Treaties’.

At this time a Soviet Foreign Ministry internal report described British attitudes towards international problems and the German question. It noted the warmth of Britain’s response to Khrushchev’s visit to America, which had emphasised ‘the useful influence of Britain’s position on international problems’. On the other hand, post the election, the UK Government was now, contrary to previous indications, seeking to postpone the summit until the summer of 1960. Overall, however, the report gave the impression that the UK Government was making concessions to France and Germany in order to improve its relations with them. In light of this, Malik intended to use the Tass statement of 24 October, and Khrushchev’s to the Supreme Soviet on 31 October, to emphasise to the British people the importance to the Soviet Government of an early summit.

Britain now appeared to be encouraging West German production of nuclear weapons, forbidden in the Paris Agreements, and to favour the inclusion of Berlin as an intrinsic part of a German settlement. Malik considered that while Britain had supported German opposition to a zone of reduced military strength and conventional and nuclear weapons in Europe, nevertheless Macmillan had always appreciated the special Soviet interest in such a zone, and earlier had tried to convert her Allies to the viability of the idea. As regards disarmament, the British had not openly opposed the Soviet plan for general and full disarmament because of the strength of public opinion, and Selwyn Lloyd had agreed with Malik to start bilateral talks.

Although accurate in assessing Britain’s main aims, the Report failed to identify Britain’s true position, for behind the scenes Britain continued to promote an early summit and an Interim Agreement for Berlin, leaving it to the Americans to take any necessary public initiatives which the government fully intended to support. Soviet evidence suggests that the Soviet Government genuinely sought détente and disarmament, but was disillusioned with Britain’s lukewarm approach to an early summit which would deal with the Berlin problem.

The impact of Camp David on Sino-Soviet relations

Khrushchev’s commitment to the relationship had been subjected to further strains during the period after the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. According to Dr Li, Mao’s doctor, the Chinese leader never forgave Khrushchev for attacking Stalin, partly because he feared that any relaxation of relations with the West would threaten his control over his country at a time of socialist reconstruction, and also because he had not consulted the Chinese beforehand. As
leader of the most populous Communist country, Mao was ready to make a bid for the leadership of world Communism, posing as the true revolutionary in the world movement against the revisionist Khrushchev, who supported détente. Khrushchev felt that he had made a genuine effort to improve relations with China after Stalin’s death, so when Mao visited the Soviet Union in 1957 he expected to be rewarded with gratitude. Instead he was dismayed to find that the Chinese leader was nationalistic, condescending, and ‘reserved and even a bit cool’ with him. In response, Khrushchev derided the Chinese leader, accusing him of ‘Asiatic cunning’ and of considering himself as God, with ‘no equal on earth’.36

Relations further deteriorated in 1958, when Mao lurched ideologically to the left and embarked on ‘the Great Leap Forward’. From the Soviet point of view, the Chinese leader added insult to injury by resisting any of Moscow’s attempts to increase Chinese dependence on Moscow. Roy Medvedev describes the friction which developed between Moscow and Peking on a range of matters.37 Khrushchev’s brief visit to Peking in August 1958 exacerbated the already testy relationship between the two leaders. Mao treated with contempt Soviet proposals for a joint fleet to match the US’ Seventh Fleet, and to allow a Soviet radio station to be built on Chinese territory. In his memoirs, Khrushchev recalls ‘the anti-Soviet attitudes of the Chinese leadership’ in that year and Mao’s rebuttal of ‘our efforts to cooperate in military matters’.38

Unquestionably, the nuclear question was one of the main reasons for the decline of the Sino-Soviet relationship. In March 1958, the Government of the PRC announced that it fully supported the decisions of the Soviet Government to end nuclear testing, and ‘took a number of steps in the spirit of the agreed policy of the fraternal states including proposals for collective security in the Far East and the establishment of a nuclear free zone’.39 However, later in the year the Chinese adopted a new ‘rigid’ course at a time when the Soviet Union had adopted the Leninist cause of peaceful coexistence. The Chinese rejected what they saw as Khrushchev’s revisionism, particularly on key issues such as the destructiveness of nuclear war, which, in the Soviet view, had led to a change in the nature of imperialism where ‘sober circles strove to avoid war’. In contrast, Chairman Mao’s attitude towards the consequences of war were cavalier to say the least. In his memoirs, Khrushchev recalled Mao’s belief that the atomic bomb was a ‘paper tiger’, and the Chinese leader’s rejection of the arguments he had put forward against war. Mao had virtually accused him of being a coward.40

The most significant evidence revealing the Soviet Government’s fear of nuclear proliferation in the case of both Germany and China was the following statement in Pravda on 21 August, 1963:

It would be naive to say the least to assume that it is possible to conduct one policy in the West and another in the East – to fight with one hand against the arming of West Germany with nuclear weapons, and against the spreading of nuclear weapons in the world and to supply those weapons to China with the other hand.41
In September 1958 the Chinese began shelling Quemoy and Matsu, thereby risking US nuclear retaliation. Khrushchev was not against Mao indulging in nuclear brinkmanship as a means of achieving Chinese reunification, as long as the policy was coordinated with the Kremlin, and the Soviet Government was allowed to help build and retain some control over the nuclear bomb. However, he was totally opposed to this Chinese assertion of independence from Moscow, which was in contravention of the terms of the Sino-Soviet Treaty, and particularly blatant given that Khrushchev had visited Mao in August.

Crisis point was reached in 1959, when the tactical nuclear bomb was about to be shipped to China. Khrushchev convened the Party Praesidium and argued that the Soviets should not act as ‘docile slaves’ committed to the Sino-Soviet agreement while the Chinese violated the very spirit of the alliance. On 20 August 1959, the Kremlin leaders sent a letter to Peking informing the Chinese that they would not send them a prototype bomb. With this blow to his nuclear ambitions, Mao was made to feel the inferior partner in the alliance. Mao’s fierce attack on Tito’s revisionism during the course of 1959–1960 was in essence a veiled attack on Khrushchev’s revisionist policies, and an added cause of conflict was Khrushchev’s neutral stance in the Sino-Indian dispute. This resulted in a fiery debate between Khrushchev and Foreign Minister Chen Yi during Khrushchev’s Peking visit of September 1959, when the depth of antagonism between the two powers was revealed.

According to Ahzhubei, Khrushchev’s visit to Peking, immediately after the lauded Camp David meeting, was a diplomatic disaster. The Chinese colleagues did not hide their dislike of the emerging détente between Moscow and Washington, nor the fact that Khrushchev arrived one week late to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the 1949 Revolution. Adzhubei described a comic scene which was clearly designed to put Khrushchev in an inferior position. Mao suggested they swim in his pool whilst they discussed world problems. Khrushchev, a non-swimmer, had to suffer the humiliation of bobbing about in an old car tyre trying to keep up with Mao, a powerful and regular swimmer in the mighty Yangtze.

On a more serious level, the Chinese evidence suggests that the meetings, held behind closed doors, were extremely acrimonious, as Khrushchev put the forthcoming East–West summit before all other considerations. According to one Chinese source he demanded that the PRC leadership accept ‘two Chinas’, and declared it ‘unimportant’ whether the Indians penetrated five kilometres into China or not – a statement which outraged the Chinese. Inevitably, given Khrushchev’s fiery temperament, the argument descended into a shouting match between Khrushchev and the Foreign Minister, Marshal Chen Li. They refused to shake hands, and Khrushchev screamed, ‘don’t you try to spit on us from up there, Marshal, you haven’t got enough spit’. The Soviet leader was furious that he had received more respect in the US than from his Chinese Allies, whom he considered he had treated so generously in the past. On the way back to Moscow, Khrushchev muttered, ‘It’s hard to make an agreement with an old boot. He can’t forgive us for Stalin’. 
Nevertheless, during 1959–1960, Khrushchev continued to try and ‘mend fences’ with both the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the US as they were close to war over Matsu. Retrospectively, the Soviet Embassy in Peking noted that in 1959 the PRC did not take any steps to improve relations with America, whereas in the US ‘the voices advocating the necessity of changing the unrealistic course towards the PRC and ways of establishing contacts with China became more distinct’.49 Inevitably this Sino-Soviet clash on foreign policy, no doubt exacerbated by the U-2 incident, culminated in an open clash at the Bucharest Conference of June 1960, and the subsequent withdrawal of experts from China in July 1960. The problem was that whatever Khrushchev did in the West had immediate consequences in the East. Whenever he spoke about détente at Camp David or in Moscow, he felt the icy blast of the Maoist revolution at his back’.50

The impact of the Camp David meeting on negotiations within the Western Alliance for an Interim Agreement on Berlin

There had been a sea change in the President’s attitude to the Berlin question as a result of his meeting with Khrushchev at Camp David. He was convinced that the Russians wanted serious East–West negotiations and now felt in a position to strike a bargain with Khrushchev, but he knew his Allies would not accept unilateral action.51 On 30 September, briefing Antonio Segni, the Italian Premier, on his meetings with Khrushchev, the President said that the Russian leader wanted the West to remove their garrisons from Berlin, as their presence there meant that any attempt to use force would mean war.52 It was clear to Eisenhower that East and West Germany were not going to be reunified for a long time, so, in his view, it was time to ‘put all our heads together to see what we could accept by way of a solution’. To tie the question of Berlin to the reunification of Germany was not a ‘realistic approach’. Eisenhower believed that reduced garrisons attached in some way to the UN might be acceptable, as long as the agreement was consistent with the freedom and security of the West Berliners. Berlin, in the President’s view, was a ‘can of worms’, and there had to be some ‘new arrangement’ between the ‘extremes of war and surrender’.53 This was precisely the UK Government’s argument.

In preparation for the future meeting of Western leaders, the President called Moscow Ambassador, Llewellyn Thompson, to Washington. Thompson told him that Khrushchev’s motive for raising Berlin was not so much to cause trouble there but to raise the question of the peace treaty with West Germany and to ‘nail down the Eastern frontiers of Germany and Poland and thus remove these sources of future trouble’.54 When he added that the last thing de Gaulle wanted was a reunified Germany, Eisenhower thought there was much in this view, which Khrushchev had also put to him. He also was coming to the view that German reunification was not coming early. Thompson was also optimistic
about Khrushchev’s aim of a comprehensive test ban because he wanted to prevent the FRG and China from getting nuclear weapons. On this issue, he said Khrushchev was in advance of many of his people.

There followed a period of protracted negotiations amongst the Western Allies as to the advisability, timing and agenda for a future East–West summit. Seizing the initiative, the President sent messages to de Gaulle and Adenauer in early October, urging them to agree to a summit with the Russians to negotiate on an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and to attend a preliminary Western summit, preferably in October, to decide on Alliance policy on Berlin. He was rebuffed by his continental allies, who remained sceptical about the chances of an East–West agreement at a summit. Adenauer had warned that Germany would not accept a settlement contrary to her interests. He wanted disarmament to be the first and only topic on the summit agenda.

De Gaulle, piqued by Macmillan’s unilateral visit to Moscow, and Eisenhower’s bilateral diplomacy, was determined to postpone the summit, as he too wanted talks with both the President and Khrushchev beforehand. De Gaulle suggested 19 December as the date for a Western summit, and some time later in April for an East–West summit. Macmillan was frustrated by the constant delays and feared that Khrushchev might get impatient, turn nasty and start sending ultimatums about Berlin. If this happened, through the folly first of the Americans and then of the French, he would have lost all the ground which he gained by the Moscow visit.

Meanwhile, an exchange of views between the State Department and the Foreign Office on an Interim Agreement on Berlin revealed that suddenly there was a remarkable meeting of minds. On 9 October, the day after Macmillan’s overwhelming election victory by an overall majority of 107, the President wrote to the Prime Minister informing him that although Khrushchev had not altered the substantive position of the Soviet Government there was ‘sufficient indication of a change of tone to lead me to believe that further exploration would now be advisable’. Eisenhower proposed a summit meeting of the four Heads of State in the course of December, with a preliminary Western summit to ascertain whether they had a similar evaluation of the possibility of ‘reaching a modus vivendi on Berlin, to which they should give priority consideration at a summit’. He believed that elements of an agreement and the position of the two sides had been clearly revealed in the 28 July Geneva proposals, though he admitted that no progress had been made on the question of Western rights at the end of the interim period.

Lloyd suggested to the Prime Minister that a summit in December should conclude an Interim Agreement on Berlin and lay down guidelines on disarmament and general European security on the following basis: the agreement on Berlin would last three years; Western troops would be reduced to 8,000 without atomic weapons; some formula about propaganda would be agreed; the USSR would guarantee free access; and both sides would agree to resume negotiations at the end of three years if no new agreement about a statute for Berlin was
reached in the meantime. Macmillan sent a telegram on these lines to the President on 16 October, proposing that the summit should try to reach an Interim Agreement on Berlin by December, based on the Geneva Conference. He thought Khrushchev would agree in December to something on Berlin ‘palatable’ to the US and accepted ‘under protest by the Germans’.

Caccia, the British Ambassador, had reported that Eisenhower was convinced that the Russians could not accept the indefinite prolongation of occupation rights as the basis of a free West Berlin. Herter had even mentioned to Caccia the possibility of a new negotiated statute for Berlin lodged with the UN, under which Western troops would continue in West Berlin as guarantors for the UN. Immediately after the Camp David meeting, Eisenhower discussed the abnormality of the Berlin question with Gordon Gray, his Special Assistant. He said:

he felt there must be some way to develop some kind of Free City which might be somehow part of West Germany which might require that the UN would become a party to guaranteeing freedom, safety and security of the city which would have an unarmed status except for police forces. He reiterated that the time was coming and perhaps soon when we would simply have to get our forces out.

At a further White House Conference, on 16 October, the President challenged Herter’s view that they should merely buy time and pursue a moratorium on Berlin. He defended his readiness to address new ideas by arguing that the Western powers should consider where they should be in ten years’ time. As East Germany could easily stop all economic connections with West Berlin, the West now had to find a way to pay for the mistakes of 1944–1945. He was ready to consider ‘new measures on Berlin and Germany’ on the grounds that if the West were to stand on the status quo, there was no reason for a summit meeting. Eisenhower’s aim was to find a solution which was acceptable to Adenauer while Germany remained divided, but he acknowledged that the US, Britain and France might be obliged to discuss together the problem of German intransigence.

Following his discussions with Khrushchev, the President was also anxious to pursue disarmament and to consider force reductions in Europe. He felt he could strike a bargain with Khrushchev, but he knew that his Allies would not accept unilateral action. Responding to Eisenhower’s wish for new ideas, in October and November the US debated a range of options for West Berlin, even moving beyond the 28 July Western proposals at the Geneva Conference, including a study of the Soviet Free City proposal to see if elements of the proposal could be incorporated along the lines of a guaranteed city. This exercise was a serious attempt to provide the Soviet Union with a way out of the impasse on Berlin without sacrificing Western interests. In response to a US request, there was an exchange of British and American memoranda on the proposals they both envisaged for a future modus vivendi on Berlin. The US draft Four Power declaration

134
was a rearrangement of the Western proposals of 28 July, which provided that disputes would be settled amongst the Four Powers, not by the UN. The declaration would remain effective for three years, after which any of the Four Powers could propose a change. In that event, discussions would be resumed on the understanding that the existing responsibilities of the Four Powers on Berlin and access to the city were not affected or impaired by the declaration.

The British Memorandum of 21 October on an Interim Agreement noted the two points likely to cause most difficulty: Western rights at the end of the agreement, and the role to be played by the DDR in negotiations during the period of the agreement. The Foreign Office envisaged that matters such as force levels, nuclear weapons, subversive activities, access and some form of quadripartite supervision were not likely to cause insuperable difficulties. On the question of rights, it was considered impractical to get the Soviets to agree that Western rights would never be altered. Instead, the British were prepared to accept a Soviet statement that ‘they do not intend to take unilateral action purported to end Western rights at least until after the negotiations after the end of the interim period for a more lasting settlement had broken down’. As regards the DDR role in the settlement, instead of the 20 July proposal at Geneva that the Geneva Conference should remain in existence, the Foreign Office suggested a formula providing for a Four Power Commission which would meet during the Interim Agreement to consider all aspects of the German problem, including the question of a peace treaty, and de facto contacts between the FRG and the DDR. Initially, the State Department had reservations about the British proposals. They thought they were over-optimistic about agreement being reached on all the points, and that it was unlikely that Adenauer would agree to any undertaking instructing the two German States to reach agreement. Nevertheless, this Anglo/US exchange of ideas on Berlin during the autumn of 1959 demonstrated the President’s remarkable flexibility and pragmatism following the Camp David accord, and his readiness to take the initiative and debate the ideas which Macmillan had been promoting since the onset of the Berlin Crisis. After meeting Khrushchev at Camp David, Eisenhower, like Macmillan, became convinced of the Soviet leader’s good faith in wanting to end the Cold War and achieve disarmament. He was therefore prepared to enter into serious negotiations with the Russians on an Interim Agreement for Berlin.

Anglo-French and Anglo-German conversations on Berlin, November 1959

The Prime Minister still hoped that the meeting of Western Heads of Government, due to take place in December, would fix a date for an early summit, as he thought US policy was now ‘very sensible’ on the questions of Germany and Berlin. For the time being he was content to let the Americans ‘make the running on all of this’, and was anxious not to alarm his continental Allies or make them suspicious. On 4 and 10 September, Selwyn Lloyd met his
counterparts in Washington to discuss the summit, but there was no progress. They considered that disarmament should be given precedence over the Berlin and German problems at the summit, and that the 28 July Western proposals at the Geneva Conference ‘had taken the Berlin problem as far as it was safe to go’. It also emerged at the Foreign Secretary’s meeting with de Gaulle on 11–12 November that the latter was sceptical of Khrushchev’s sincerity on the Berlin question and East–West détente. Clearly, he intended to continue to support Adenauer’s aim of maintaining the status quo on Berlin in return for the Chancellor’s support for a Continental European bloc excluding Great Britain.

The Western Summit, 18–22 December 1959

On 19 November, the Prime Minister organised one of his brainstorming sessions on Berlin, the Test Ban Treaty and general disarmament in preparation for the Western Summit. It was agreed: first, that Macmillan should try and convince Eisenhower of the importance of reaching agreement with the Russians on a system of inspection and control at the Geneva Conference on Nuclear Testing which was due to resume in January 1960; and second, that the Prime Minister should ascertain de Gaulle’s views on NATO, the Russians, Germany and Berlin. Given the abysmal state of Anglo-German relations, Macmillan hoped to secure French agreement to a modus vivendi on Berlin, a series of summits, and to an arrangement between the Six and the Seven. He hoped to achieve this by supporting the General’s pretensions to tripartite status within the Western Alliance.

Macmillan was encouraged that the State Department no longer accepted Adenauer and de Gaulle’s preference for a settlement based on the status quo rather than a new Interim Agreement. En route to Paris, Eisenhower had told Herter that ‘he felt he had committed the US at Camp David to discuss the Berlin and German situations seriously’. He argued that the Berlin problem derived from mistakes of the past, and there was no legal barrier to Khrushchev signing a peace treaty with East Germany. If the Russians blockaded civilian communications with West Berlin, it would lead to a drastic decline in the standard of living. The West, he warned, could not go to war on this issue.

At the Western Summit, the Americans expected their Western Peace Plan to be reaffirmed, enabling the meeting to move on to the subject of Berlin, starting with the July 28 proposals. The State Department had prepared new proposals on Berlin, and wanted to discuss force levels and disarmament measures in Europe with their Allies, but only just prior to the East–West Summit in May, in case there were leaks. It was anticipated that their British Allies would follow the American lead at the Western Summit.

At the initial session on 19 December, Adenauer emphasised the importance of linking Germany and Berlin, and ruled out any de jure recognition of the DDR. He argued that any de facto arrangements would have to be examined in the light of developments; that the 28 July proposals represented ‘the absolute
limit of what was tolerable’; and that the proposed all-German Committee was
dangerous. Replying to Adenauer’s opening statement on Berlin, the President
appeared thoroughly exasperated and was ‘very firm, almost rude’. Adenauer
warned that if the West gave up its present position it would be a symbolic act,
and impossible to envisage the consequences on Germany as a whole. He used
one of his regular threats: that any doubt about the firmness of the West might
lead to a swing to the SPD, and a shift in the balance of power in Europe to the
Russians.  

President de Gaulle supported the Chancellor, maintaining that Khrushchev
was bluffing and the West just had to stand firm. Macmillan confined his com-
ments to the observation that an agreement might have been reached at the
Geneva Conference had Khrushchev not decided in advance that such an
important settlement should only be established at a summit conference, and that
a possible solution might be the status quo ante, i.e. an extension of the provi-
sional agreement on Berlin. As a result of President Eisenhower’s bullying
tactics, Adenauer ‘collapsed and did not speak again’. It was particularly
significant that the President said he himself had been studying Khrushchev’s
Free City proposal to see what could be done if international rights were to be
observed.  

It was left to the tripartite meeting of the US, Britain and France on 20
December to decide on the broad Western position at the summit. De Gaulle was
obviously gratified that the President, with British encouragement, had proposed
the establishment of tripartite machinery to cover the common interests of the
US, France and Britain, on a clandestine basis in London. Thereafter, there was
a remarkable degree of accord. The three leaders swiftly moved on to agree that
the Summit Conference would deal with West Berlin within the framework of
German reunification and disarmament; that the 28 July Western proposals on
Berlin should be the final Western position; and that the Eastern borders issue
should not be raised. The preparation of the detailed Western negotia-
tion was left to the Four Power Working Group, which would re-convene in the
New Year. The President suggested that they should avoid (or at least not
pursue) controversial questions at the summit, which were likely to worsen rela-
tions because of rigid positions. On 20 December the Prime Minister wrote to
Khrushchev, proposing a summit on 27 April.  

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were pleased with the outcome of
the Paris Summit, as their Allies had agreed to pursue an Interim Agreement on
Berlin based on the Geneva proposals of 28 July. Lloyd wrote to the Prime
Minister: ‘We have achieved our objectives about the Summit. On Berlin, we
have not given in to the West Germans, and we have done nothing to discourage
constructive US thinking about a new status for Berlin.’ Macmillan had also
supported de Gaulle on the political front, without endangering the ‘special rela-
tionship’ with the US which he had set himself to rebuild since the Bermuda
Conference. In return, the Prime Minister hoped that de Gaulle would be
accommodating to British economic aims in Europe. Macmillan’s main aims
had been achieved: the summit meeting for which he had striven for so long was definitely agreed, and it was clear that it would be the first of a series of summits.

**Soviet diplomacy, January–March 1960**

During the winter and spring of 1960, Soviet diplomacy was characterised by contradictory signals. Khrushchev’s intermittent threats that the Soviet Union would sign a separate peace treaty with the DDR, and Soviet attacks on Adenauer’s intransigence over Berlin and West German militarism, were interspersed with more conciliatory statements imbued with the spirit of Camp David, designed to make the Western powers optimistic about a modus vivendi on Berlin and disarmament at the summit. The stick came before the carrot.

During a New Year’s Eve banquet at the Kremlin, Khrushchev, in exuberant if drunken mood, warned the US and French Ambassadors that if there was no agreement in Paris, he would sign a separate peace treaty. He stated that he would not take steps to eject the Western powers from Berlin and would never attack them, but the treaty would end Western rights and access would be controlled by the DDR. The occupation status of West Berlin had to be ended but, mindful of Western prestige, the Soviet Government had made the Free City proposal. If Western aircraft tried to evade DDR control, they would be stopped by the DDR, who would receive full support from the Soviet forces.

Blandishments followed these threats. During his speech to the Supreme Soviet on 14 January, Khrushchev made a warm reference to the President’s forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union which was due to take place in June, where ‘the noble work begun at Camp David would be continued in Moscow’. He emphasised Soviet disarmament aspirations by suggesting the prohibition of nuclear tests should be a subject for the summit agenda. The Soviet leader said he still regarded peaceful coexistence as the ‘continuation of the struggle of two social systems but a struggle with peaceful means’. However, whereas previously he had argued that aggressive circles controlled US policy, now he believed that ‘a sober estimate of the current situation was beginning to take the ascendancy’. An International Review Lecture held in Moscow referred to Soviet disarmament proposals as a ‘turning point’ in East–West relations, and concluded by saying that ‘Moscow’s gates would be thrown open to the President’. However, the most positive sign of the Soviet desire for a modus vivendi on Berlin occurred on 13 January, when the Soviet Ambassador to the Federal Republic, Andrei Smirnov, handed a Memorandum to Herr Ollenhauer, Chairman of the German SPD Party, setting out Soviet proposals on an Interim Agreement for Berlin, based on the 28 July Soviet proposals. These were similar to those sent to General de Gaulle before the Paris Summit, on 9 May 1960. Disarmament and détente were the key long-term objectives of Khrushchev’s Berlin policy, and important new developments in these spheres, prior to the summit, were significant. On 14 January, Khrushchev announced that Soviet
troop strength would be reduced by 1.2 million men. The timing and justification for this decision were probably due to the deployment of SS6 intercontinental missiles which would be in place by the time of reductions, and the need for unilateral reductions in defence to improve economic competition. Khrushchev argued that in the face of these reductions, ‘not even the most malicious advocates of the Cold War could prove that the step was taken in preparation for war’. It is an indication of Khrushchev’s firm intent that he pressed ahead in spite of opposition within the Army and the Party. Marshals Konev, Commander of the Warsaw Pact Forces, and Sokolovsky, Chief of the General Staff, opposed the move and were sacked, and the Party ideologue, Suslov, warned that it would be dangerous to be ‘calm and complacent’ regarding the intentions of the West. Andrei Sakharov testifies to Army resistance to these cuts in military expenditure and the demilitarisation of the economy.

At Camp David, Eisenhower and Khrushchev had agreed that disarmament negotiations would be given priority at the summit, and in this sphere too there was evidence of Soviet concessions. On 9 March 1960, the Soviets decided to consider a supervised test ban treaty, which meant opening their borders to US inspection teams – a concession they had refused to make in the past. Macmillan saw this as a complete reversal of the old position and a conciliatory move towards the Western position prior to the summit, which made him very optimistic about the prospects of an East–West compromise. On 19 March he received a letter from Khrushchev ‘which although making no specific reference to the Russian moves at Geneva, was of so friendly a character and expressed so hopeful a view of the Paris Meeting that I felt correspondingly encouraged and almost elated’.

There were also signs of compromise within the DDR, in spite of a series of events in West Germany which caused anxiety in both Moscow and the DDR. In his report to the MID of 18 February on DDR policy and the Berlin question, Mikhail Pervukhin, the Soviet Ambassador, suggested that preparation for a compromise over Berlin at the summit was still going ahead. He said that their (East German) comrades were formulating a propaganda plan in connection with the Soviet proposals to give West Berlin the status of Free City. significantly, he stated that as a result of the Geneva Conference, party delegates and the East German press had adopted a ‘positive attitude towards a provisional settlement for West Berlin’. They were planning to develop contacts with West Berlin in connection with the Free City proposal, and Ulbricht was considering the possibility of talks between the West Berlin Senate and his Government. Pervukhin reported that ruling circles in West Berlin and Bonn were against any normalisation of the West Berlin question, only wanted to discuss West Berlin at the summit within the confines of the German question, and considered that the 28 July Western proposals on Berlin were not viable. After the Geneva Conference and Camp David, Bonn feared a potential agreement between the Soviet Union and the Western powers. The Report concluded by blaming West German pressure for the faltering attitude of the West to the summit negotiations.
Concerns about West Germany’s nuclear rearmament increased Soviet security fears. In late January 1960 the Defence Committee of the Bundestag approved the purchase of the American Sergeant missile for the Bundeswehr, and on 3 February Eisenhower said ‘he might be prepared to liberalise atomic energy legislation so as to give his allies access to information and possibly weapons withheld from them’. The following month General Norstad said the Allies had tacitly agreed to a proposal to establish a special NATO task force of 2,500–3,000 men which would be equipped with nuclear as well as conventional weapons.98 Neither of these proposals was implemented, but arguably, at this crucial time, they exacerbated Soviet security fears and led to Ulbricht’s announcement on 28 January that the DDR would soon ask the Soviet Union for missiles. At the Warsaw Pact Meeting in February, the Soviet Government remained silent on this issue even though Ulbricht’s demand received full support from the Chinese Government during a visit by an East German delegation. This led some commentators, such as Victor Zorza in the *Guardian* on 6 and 8 March, to suggest a Peking–Berlin axis was in existence.99 On 14 March, *Tass* protested against the latest US measures on the basis that they were a cover to enable the United States Government to supply nuclear weapons to the Bundeswehr.

Nevertheless, Khrushchev’s expectations of the summit were far more positive than Herter’s, and during his visit to France on 23 March he described Soviet aspirations on Berlin to General de Gaulle.100 Reviving memories of the war, when thirteen million Russians died, Khrushchev put forward a powerful case for his fear of Germany, and his desire for agreement on Germany, Berlin and disarmament at the summit. He said he felt very strongly about Germany, and was worried about German provocation leading to incidents in Berlin. He feared that nuclear war might be launched by accident or by a madman. To emphasise his point, he admitted that during the Soviet tests in the Pacific a 2,000-mile error had been made on the point of missile contact. Khrushchev accepted the idea of controls on nuclear tests, which boded well for the summit, and he told de Gaulle that he hoped agreements might be signed on disarmament in June and on Berlin in July.101

The Soviet leader accepted the idea of a modus vivendi on Berlin and said he would not insist on a peace treaty with Germany until two years had elapsed. When questioned by the French President about what would happen at the end of an Interim Agreement, the most important point for the Western powers, the Russian leader was not forthcoming. However, although he said he could not accept the use of Berlin as an espionage centre, Khrushchev hinted that the Western powers would be allowed to maintain a reduced number of troops in West Berlin – a compromise which had been quite acceptable to the West at the Geneva Conference. Macmillan and de Gaulle thought it sounded as though the Soviet leader was basing his proposals on the Soviet proposals of 28 July at the Geneva Conference.

Khrushchev envisaged West Berlin as a Free City under guarantees, rather
than an integral part of West Germany, and he spoke not about reunification, but of a confederation of three Germanies including Berlin, each with its own regime. He also said he would not sign a treaty with East Germany for two years or even more. Nothing new emerged on the subject of Germany’s borders, though de Gaulle reaffirmed he did not want any revision of the status quo. Both leaders agreed Berlin should be the first item on the agenda at the summit. From the Western point of view this was a good strategy, as Berlin was the area where they hoped to get Soviet concessions in return for an agreement on nuclear tests. Khrushchev promised he would send Soviet proposals on Berlin to de Gaulle, the Summit Chairman, at a later date.102

Macmillan’s diplomacy, January–May 1960

Macmillan’s personal diplomacy during the spring of 1960 was dominated by the Paris Summit, the Berlin question and the Test Ban Treaty. On Berlin, his aim was to achieve an Interim Agreement on the lines of that discussed at Geneva, with Soviet acceptance of the principle that nothing would be done in contravention of existing arrangements except by mutual agreement, otherwise a dangerous situation comparable to that of a year ago would ensue.103 There were also positive signs that the Soviet Government was keen to achieve an Interim Agreement on Berlin, based on their 28 July position, with amendments. On 14 April, an authoritative article in Pravda suggested that the summit might be able ‘to reach an agreement on individual principles’ toward resolving the Berlin question including de facto recognition of East Berlin. It also stated that the Geneva Foreign Ministers’ Conference had produced a realistic prospect for coming to an agreement on the question ‘even if only partial and temporary’.104

On 16 February, there was a new breakthrough at the Nuclear Test Conference at Geneva which had resumed in January 1960.105 Reversing their former position at the Geneva Conference, the Soviets agreed to allow inspections, and to accept the American position on tests above a certain magnitude as long as this was linked to a moratorium. Macmillan was full of hope, and immediately telephoned Eisenhower to urge him to pursue a test ban treaty. Subsequently, this led to talks between the two leaders in Washington from 27 to 31 March. Meanwhile, on 19 March, Macmillan had received another warm letter from Khrushchev thanking him for his efforts in the field of international relations and assuring him that the Soviet Government hoped that the ‘first in a series of conferences of Heads of Government which is to be held in Paris will already constitute an important step in the settlement of the problems to which you and I devoted no little time in the course of our talks in Moscow’.106

However, public expectation of a successful summit was on the decline in Washington, which was in the throes of pre-election politics, and where emotional pressure was building up over potential Soviet proposals. On 22 March, in direct contravention of the Camp David Agreement, Herter expressed his personal belief that East–West problems were too substantial to be resolved at the
The Defense Department feared that Eisenhower might be subjected to British pressure to yield to what they perceived as a Soviet trap.

During his visit to Washington from 27–31 March, however, the Prime Minister was delighted to discover that the US position on nuclear tests had become extremely positive. The joint Anglo-US communiqué envisaged the signing of an agreement banning tests, whether atmospheric or underground, as soon as possible. Macmillan viewed this development as a triumph for the President and the State Department over the Pentagon. It emerged that Eisenhower was fully aware of Soviet fears of German rearmament and Eastern revisionist tendencies, as Khrushchev had made strong representations on this point at Camp David. The President thought this could be explored at the Paris Summit.

On the Berlin question, the Prime Minister declared his preference for a Free City arrangement but, recognising that such an arrangement was not obtainable, there was no other choice but an Interim Agreement on Berlin. The President hoped that during the two-year period of the moratorium which Khrushchev had mentioned, the Chancellor would prove to be more flexible. The Foreign Secretary said he was hoping for an agreement for possibly three years, but even two years would get the West over the next elections in the FRG, and this was better than the Berlin issue hanging over their heads from meeting to meeting ‘like a sword of Damocles’. France and Germany continued to oppose the idea of zones of limitation of armaments and forces, which the Prime Minister had done so much to promote as a means of satisfying Soviet security fears. So the idea was dropped, and the Western powers lost a potential bargaining counter at the summit.

The preparation of an Interim Agreement on Berlin by the Four Power Working Group for the Western Foreign Ministers, January–May 1960

Perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of this period was the discrepancy between public statements of some members of the US administration and the policy quietly pursued by the Four Power Working Group in preparation for the summit, where the US and Britain appeared close to agreement on Berlin. However, the Germans and the French still had to be convinced of the viability of either a new status for Berlin or, if this proved impossible, an Interim Agreement based on the 28 July Geneva Conference proposals. The British were prepared to let the Americans take the initiative.

At the first Four Power Working Group Meeting, on 28 January 1960, the German representatives, in spite of US pressure, refused to budge from their position that the 28 July Geneva proposals were ‘the limit to which the Allies should go at the summit’, and at subsequent meetings, usually with French support, they even tried to retreat from this position. The Americans, whilst still floating ideas for a change of status for West Berlin, were ‘marking time’, so there was no point in pursuing this line of enquiry.
The Working Group Report for the Foreign Ministers’ Conference, scheduled for 12–14 April, anticipated that the Soviet side would commence by proposing a peace treaty which the West would, for propaganda purposes, counter by suggesting the US idea of a plebiscite for an all-German Assembly. Discussions would then move on to separate consideration of some aspects of the Berlin question. The only acceptable new arrangement was one ‘which would make minor and procedural arrangements whilst maintaining the essential features of the existing regime’. The Western proposals at the Geneva Conference of 28 July 1959 would remain the basis for an arrangement with the Soviets, and the fall-back position establishing an agency role for the DDR would be simplified. To prevent unilateral Soviet action, a high-level forum of subordinates would be established to discuss these proposals after the summit. In the event of Soviet rejection of the 28 July proposals or other Western fall-back positions, and if there was danger of unilateral Soviet action, the Working Group recommended that the West could implement existing agreed tripartite contingency plans, dating from April 1959.

The British had reason to be cautiously optimistic:

It is coming to be more and more accepted in Paris and Bonn as well as here and in Washington that the summit could end in an agreement on some sort of Geneva type interim solution for Berlin or at any rate, agreement about principles with details to be decided at another conference at a lower level. There have been indications that the Russians themselves would regard this as a satisfactory outcome.

The Foreign Office Brief for the Foreign Ministers also predicted that Khrushchev would prefer not to sign a peace treaty, and might well be prepared to make the concessions which Gromyko was not able to make at Geneva. Three problems would have to be surmounted: the manner in which the German question should be discussed in the future and the link to be established between such discussions and an interim solution; the question of subversive activities, including links between West Berlin and the FRG; and a formula to express the situation which would arise at the end of any Interim Agreement. Another crucial question facing the Western powers was whether they would be prepared to change the status of West Berlin, if Khrushchev made it plain that he would only sign an Interim Agreement on this condition.

The Foreign Ministers’ Conference of 12–14 April 1960 approved the main recommendations of the Working Group Report. The Foreign Ministers agreed that, before their next scheduled meeting in Istanbul on 1 May, the Working Group would try to improve on the 28 July 1959 Geneva Conference proposals in relation to Western rights, and freedom of communication between the Federal Republic and West Berlin. They agreed that the 28 July proposals had several advantages: they had already been submitted to the Soviets; the new access provisions would add a certain clarity to the existing situation; and they...
were generally acceptable to the Government of Berlin. The disadvantages were that a time limit might be regarded by the population of West Berlin as only a period of grace, and the reduction of troops might be seen by the Soviets as the first step to total withdrawal. The German Foreign Minister did not like the words ‘modus vivendi’, and instead pressed for the following title: ‘Essential Conditions for the Exercise of Western Rights in Berlin’ – which the Soviets would obviously reject. He also objected to the word ‘interim’, because it implied a time limit to the agreement. These demands exemplified the total unreality of the German position, for even at Geneva the Western powers were considering negotiating on the basis of a time limit. Selwyn Lloyd noted somewhat cynically that Couve de Murville now thought an Interim Agreement on Berlin was the ‘only hope about progress on Germany either at the summit or thereafter, whereas when he [Selwyn] said the same thing months ago, he was accused of ‘basic unreliability and of selling the pass’.120

In response to Soviet insistence on a mechanism for all-German talks, the Western powers agreed that they would discuss the question of Germany on a quadripartite basis and, if appropriate, include consultation with German experts. This countered the Soviet proposal of an all-German Committee, which the West perceived as the first step towards confederation. These conclusions were confirmed at a further Western Foreign Ministers’ Meeting at Istanbul on 2–4 May, where it was agreed that if an Interim Agreement on Berlin was to be achieved, it had to be on the basis that Western rights would remain intact when the Interim Agreement expired.121 They also decided privately to warn Khrushchev at the summit that if there were any provocative actions in Berlin it would endanger the chances of détente and early disarmament, two themes which they recognised as crucial to Khrushchev’s objectives. As regards Soviet strategy, the Foreign Ministers anticipated that their major tactic would be to start with maximum demands for a ‘Free City’, which proved to be a correct assumption.122

Thus the evidence suggests that the Camp David accord marked a turning point in East–West relations, characterised by a new personal and cordial relationship between Eisenhower and Khrushchev, with both committed to an Interim Agreement on Berlin. Furthermore, there were indications that both sides might make concessions based on the 1959 Geneva proposals and ensure virtually a status quo agreement. The fact that both sides were committed to disarmament and détente meant that Macmillan and Khrushchev could look forward to fulfilment of their hopes for the forthcoming summit.
8

THE U-2 CRISIS, MAY 1960

The story unfolds, 1–16 May 1960

On 1 May, the most important day in the Soviet calendar, and only two weeks before the Paris Summit, which was the first East–West meeting since 1955, the skies cleared and the U-2, postponed due to bad weather, finally took off. The US Government believed the surveillance was impregnable, as in the event of an accident the plane and pilot would automatically be blown up, and the pilot was in any case supplied with suicide pills. As it happened, Gary Powers’ desire for life was greater than his superiors bargained for. No comprehensive impartial investigation of the downing of the U-2 has ever taken place, but the semi-official US enquiry verdict concluded that on 1 May, Gary Powers’ plane, which normally should have been travelling at 72,000 feet over Sverdlovsk, was downed by a Soviet SA-2 missile.¹

On the same day, in Moscow, Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, the Minister of Defence, addressing the Soviet armed forces, said ‘the people of the whole world are expecting from the coming summit meeting a just and urgent settlement on complete and general disarmament and a liquidation of the remnants of World War II’ (i.e. a German peace treaty), but he warned the West that ‘a smashing blow would be delivered to anyone attacking his country’.²

The Eisenhower administration believed they were justified in despatching U-2s over the Soviet Union, because Russia had turned down Eisenhower’s Open Skies proposal at the 1955 Geneva Conference. These high-altitude flights by Lockheed aircraft began in 1956, as a result of the recommendations of a scientific panel headed by James Killian. Eisenhower had been under pressure from the Democratic Party, which claimed that he had allowed an ICBM missile gap to develop. This was long before Oleg Penkovsky passed information to Greville Wynne which enabled the CIA to inform the President that the Soviet Union had no operational ICBMs, and that by mid-1960 they would only have thirty-five.³

One of the key discoveries of CIA expert Ray Kline, who interpreted U-2 intelligence, was that ‘the military’s claim of Communism hell bent on world domination was not backed up by the evidence . . . there was no sign that the Communists were either ready or able to resort to direct military action’.⁴ Thus
the President was able to resist pressure from the military for increases in
defence expenditure, because the U-2 programme had shown first that there was
no bomber gap, and later that there was no missile gap. However, as Paul
Lashmar has shown, even when the U-2 flights proved that the Soviets were not
building up to the extent that the Air Force claimed, General LeMay, Head of
Strategic Air Command, and his colleagues waged a publicity campaign in the
media working on fear of a surprise Soviet attack. Eisenhower was caught in a
trap, unable to rebut the charge that he had neglected defence matters because he
did not want to reveal to Congress and the public the existence of the U-2 pro-
gramme, knowing that it was most provocative to the Russians.5

Until that fateful day, 1 May, the U-2s had penetrated Soviet air space with
impunity, because they flew above the range of Soviet surface-to-air missiles
and planes. Americans did not wish publicly to admit that they were violating
Russian air space and the Soviets were humiliated by the intrusions, so neither
side publicly acknowledged the flights, though the Russians sometimes filed a
complaint with the US Government. Back in Russia, though, Khrushchev fumed
and berated his generals.6 Moreover, in October 1959, at Camp David,
Khrushchev had publicly warned the West to take no action before the Paris
Summit that would ‘worsen the atmosphere’ and ‘sow seeds of suspicion’.7

After Camp David, the President, newly converted to seeking disarmament
and a compromise with the Russians, refused to permit U-2 flights, but in April
1960 he was reluctantly persuaded by the CIA to authorise two further flights to
monitor ICBM developments. The President, unlike his colleagues, was far
more aware of Soviet sensitivities concerning intrusions by spy planes. He knew
that flights would increase Soviet fears of encirclement by United States bases
on the Soviet perimeter, especially as the Russians had sensitive memories of
the German invasion in 1941, which was accompanied by overflights.8

Given his optimism and customary caution, why did Eisenhower take such a
risk in authorising the 1 May U-2 overflight at such a pivotal point in East–West
relations? Eisenhower faced formidable opposition to his policy of détente. His
chief advisors, Dulles, and later Herter, and General Nathan Twining, Chief of
the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were either lukewarm or openly antagonistic to détente.
In an election year, both parties in the US vied with each other to play the anti-
Soviet card and, as both Robert Divine and Stephen Ambrose, the President’s
biographers, emphasise, powerful men in the CIA, the Atomic Energy Commis-
sion, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the DOD and their suppliers in the Defence
industry were firmly opposed to any outbreak of peace and collectively under-
minded Eisenhower’s vision of détente.9 All the declassified US documents have
confirmed Goodpaster’s statements that Eisenhower, usually eminently cautious,
was reluctant to sanction U-2 overflights, and from March 1958 to July 1959, in
spite of constant pressure from the CIA and Strategic Air Command, there were
no flights at all.10

General Andrew Goodpaster, Eisenhower’s Staff Secretary, had somewhat
prophetically warned that the President’s tremendous asset, his honesty, would
be impugned and his effectiveness threatened ‘if one of these aircraft were lost when we [were] engaged in apparently sincere deliberations’. At a National Security meeting after the Camp David Summit, the CIA and defence officials objected to the cessation of the flights arguing that they needed the chance to photograph the first operational ICBMs under construction. Eisenhower backed down and gave his personal permission for two more flights, on 9 and 30 April. Allen Dulles, the CIA boss, wanted fresh photos of Tyuratam, military-industrial sites near Sverdlosk, and of Plesetsk, about 600 miles north of Moscow, where the first operational Soviet ICBMs were reportedly being prepared. Khrushchev was furious when, on 9 April, a U-2 plane photographed the Soviets’ three most secret sites: the nuclear test site in Semipalatinsk, the anti-ballistic missiles complex at Sary Shagan and a space complex at Tyuratam. Soviet air defence under Marshal Biryuzov had failed yet again to shoot the plane down.

The crisis broke on 5 May, when Khrushchev publicly announced that an American aircraft had been shot down over Soviet territory and that even earlier, on 9 April, another US plane had crossed the Soviet border. NASA put out a statement saying that ‘the plane might be one of its Lockheed U-2 aircraft engaged in high level weather studies over Turkey which had been missing since 1 May, when its pilot had reported oxygen difficulties’. It was immediately apparent that even if the violation was a mistake, the Soviet Union could make propaganda out of the incident. A shorter statement was therefore issued on 5 May by the State Department, stating that the plane might have accidentally violated Soviet air space due to oxygen failure, the implication being that the Soviet Union was responsible for creating an incident out of the affair. The President ordered an immediate enquiry and sent a note to Moscow, naming the pilot as Gary Powers and asking for further details. This US cover-up played into Khrushchev’s hands, as they had already captured Gary Powers, who had crashed thousands of miles from the border.

Apparently, as soon as the U-2 was shot down Khrushchev told Oleg Troyanovsky, one of his advisors, that it might ruin the Paris Summit, and during the ensuing days Troyanovsky has since revealed that Khrushchev laid ‘a kind of trap for the White House and did it with relish’. This is corroborated by Anatoly Dobrynin, who at that time was in the American Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, working on the U-2 affair. He said Khrushchev deliberately forbade anyone to mention the affair, as he hoped the Americans would consider Powers dead and put forward a face-saving story to excuse the flight. Nevertheless, Khrushchev still could not believe that the President, ‘a sober and peaceful man’, could have personally ordered the flight on May Day. He blamed the forces of evil in the State Department, the Pentagon and the CIA, but it seemed he did not want to exacerbate the situation, because from 2 to 4 May nothing was said in Pravda about the U-2 incident. Adzhubei described the speech Khrushchev made to the Central Committee informing them of the incident ‘as quite a circus’, as he appeared to down-play the incident, which struck the members as unusual.
Furthermore, on 5 May, at the meeting of the Supreme Soviet, there was no evidence of a government retreat from defence cuts and the needs of Soviet consumers. Khrushchev reaffirmed his goal of détente and his aims for the Paris Summit: disarmament, the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, and agreement over Berlin. Only after speaking for two hours did the Russian leader inform the Supreme Soviet of the violations of Soviet sovereignty. Whilst he condemned the act, Khrushchev gave Eisenhower the benefit of the doubt, implying that the Pentagon was responsible and had not informed the President. As Khrushchev put it, ‘it was not a harbinger of a third world war, but an attempt by the American military to play on nerves for Cold War purposes’. He would therefore still go to Paris ‘with a pure heart and the best intentions’. It also emerged from the speech that Khrushchev was offended that Nixon, for whom he had little regard, was due to replace the President at the Paris Summit, if it went on after 23 May. ‘It was a case of setting a goat to guard the cabbages’, said Khrushchev. In contrast, both Gromyko and Marshal Malinovsky made tough speeches condemning the US action, and stated that they would act against ‘pirate flights’ and would wipe out the bases and aerodromes.

Khrushchev’s son, Sergei, a rocket scientist engaged in secret research on missiles, was close to his father, who often confided in him. He emphasises that at this stage, his father reacted calmly to the crisis, saying that ‘spying was spying, and diplomacy was diplomacy’. He expected the President to apologise on behalf of his subordinates, and he did not have any clear plan about what he was going to do. Even on 6 May, in a letter to the President concerning the organisation of the forthcoming Paris Summit, Khrushchev expressed his anxiety that ‘a series of public declarations by highly placed official representatives of the US on questions concerning the forthcoming conference were conceived in the spirit of the Cold War’. He did not mention the U-2, but merely stated that they needed to seek a solution of disputed questions on a mutually acceptable basis.

What did infuriate Khrushchev was the State Department’s elaborate cover story before it had tested the extent of Soviet intelligence. So, notwithstanding conciliatory gestures, saying that in spite of the U-2 incident he was determined the summit should go ahead, Khrushchev’s hand was forced. On the same evening, at a diplomatic reception, Thompson overheard Jacob Malik, Soviet Ambassador in London, say that Gary Powers had been captured. He tried to alert the State Department, but it was too late. His telegram had arrived minutes after a duplicitous NASA public statement that the U-2 might be a NASA research plane studying meteorology.

In his 7 May letter to Macmillan, whom he clearly valued as an intermediary, Khrushchev expressed his anxieties over provocative speeches by Douglas Dillon, Under-Secretary of State, Herter, and Vice-President Nixon, in April and May, and his anger about the U-2 intrusion. The latter, he said, ‘attempted to preclude any possibility of a fruitful exchange of views and made null and void all that of a positive nature we achieved during our preliminary talks’. He asked
Macmillan, what was the point of a provocative and aggressive action on the eve of the Paris Summit, and did those involved want to torpedo it? Khrushchev said he was expressing these sentiments because he wanted Macmillan to understand his motivation for the sake of peace and a solution of problems.

Finally, in a speech on 7 May, Khrushchev let the world know what he had himself known since 1 May: that the Soviet Government had proof that the U-2 was a spy plane for aerial reconnaissance, and that they had retrieved the wreckage of the plane and captured Gary Powers, whom they intended to put on trial. However, the patient Khrushchev gave the President an escape hatch: ‘I am prepared to grant that the President had no knowledge of a plane being dispatched to the Soviet Union’. Whilst exposing the blundering lies of the United States Government, he added, ‘I think it quite possible that the President knew nothing about the plane’. He blamed the flight on ‘militarists’ in America who were ‘running the show’. The Soviet leader’s apparent strategy was to give Eisenhower the opportunity to make a conciliatory gesture which would enable the summit to proceed on track.

It was now left to the Americans to react. Faced with the choice between public disavowal (an impossible option given the flagrant evidence) and the unprecedented public association of the government with its own espionage, the US Government chose the latter course and gave a limited confession. The State Department issued a press statement on 7 May stating that the U-2 had ‘probably’ crossed the Soviet border to ‘give a measure of protection against surprise attack’. The press release added a note of defiance: that ‘such flights had been made along the frontiers of the free world since 1956’. It then made matters worse by lying, stating that, ‘insofar as the authorities in Washington are concerned there was no authorisation for any such flight, as described by Mr Khrushchev’. This was disastrous on two counts; it suggested that the White House had no control over the administration and that some unauthorised person had decided to sabotage the Paris Summit. More importantly, it revealed that the security of the US made espionage imperative, only two weeks before the most important East–West meeting since the 1955 Geneva Conference. The question of responsibility for the flight was left unclear. Macmillan, through his American friend Bob Murphy, tried to hint to the President that he should follow the British example and decline to discuss intelligence activities in public, but to no avail.

On 9 May, Herter completed the US volte face and publicly stated that the President had authorised the espionage programme, but not specific missions, and that the US had not and did not shirk its duty to collect intelligence in the absence of Soviet cooperation. James Reston reported in the New York Times that the capital was caught in a swirl of charges of clumsy administration, bad judgement and bad faith. Nevertheless, Khrushchev, even at this late stage, though horrified by the latest news, reacted in a conciliatory fashion, saying that the incident need not be on the summit agenda. Nevertheless, he expressed doubt about Eisenhower’s forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union, saying ‘I am a man and I have human feelings, put yourself in my place’. Commentators
hoped that a private meeting between the two leaders in Paris could heal the rift. Khrushchev was still trying to blame anyone other than the President for the U-2 disaster. At a reception at the Czech Embassy on 9 May, he blamed Allen Dulles for putting the US Government in such a spot. Meanwhile, Soviet generals had hinted to Llewellyn Thompson, the US Ambassador in Moscow, that the Soviet leader was being ‘impetuous and running risks’, and Khrushchev himself whispered to the Ambassador, ‘this U-2 thing has put me in a terrible spot you have to get me off it’.

Nevertheless, on 9 May Khrushchev signalled that it was still his intention to negotiate with the Western powers in Paris by sending General de Gaulle, the Summit Chairman, a new Soviet Interim Agreement for Berlin, broadly based on the Soviet Paper of 28 July 1959 at Geneva. This was hardly the action of a government determined to scupper the Paris Summit. Sergei Khrushchev states that his father considered the ‘door was still open’ and that he was ready to search for any way out of the situation. In an effort to save the summit the Soviet leader paid a visit to Llewellyn Thompson, a person whom Khrushchev respected both as the representative of his country and as a man. Khrushchev thought Thompson knew nothing of the U-2 intrusion and did not approve of the flight, and he hoped that an appeal by the US Ambassador to the President would help to establish unofficial and confidential contacts with Eisenhower, thus allowing a mutually acceptable resolution of the crisis. Unfortunately it was too late for Thompson to take preventive action, for the same day, 9 May, the State Department completed the US volte face and issued a statement directly attributing the U-2 espionage programme to the President, and implied that the flights would go on in defiance of Moscow.

Two developments on 11 May – Eisenhower’s confirmation of his own responsibility for the flights, which was made contrary to Thompson’s advice, and Herter’s inflammatory speech stating that the US Government needed to take ‘such measures as are possible unilaterally to lessen the Soviet threat’ – only exacerbated the situation. Both speeches were condemned by Khrushchev and Gromyko. Gromyko said that Herter’s statement that the flights were necessary for the ‘national defence of the USA’ was an incredible violation of international law and of those very principles of national sovereignty to which the American Congress had subscribed several times in the past. Sergei said his father was furious over what he saw as a ‘betrayal by General Eisenhower, a man who has referred to him as a friend, a man whom he had sat with at table ... a betrayal that stuck him in his very heart. He would never forgive him for the U-2’. Khrushchev said he would not like to be President Eisenhower when he came to the Soviet Union because ‘questions are going to be put to him’. This certainly suggested that the President’s invitation to Moscow with his family, issued at Camp David, was still on. Khrushchev said he believed America’s other partners, Britain and France, would not be pleased with what the Americans had done. Finally, he pleaded with the Western press not to say anything which would increase tension further.
For our part we shall do everything so that present tension could be digested; we want international relations to return to their normal boring rut, and we want good relations to be restored between the Soviet Union and the United States . . . but the USA will have to help in this.39

The Soviet leader then stated that the ‘incident would not necessarily be put on the agenda of the summit’, and he announced his departure for Paris on 14 May, two days before the summit was due to start. It was clear from both Khrushchev’s actions after 1 May and the hints he had dropped that he expected Eisenhower to contact him personally beforehand and at least make a private apology, or some gesture to save him losing face. Sergei Khrushchev’s recent account also suggests that Khrushchev still hoped that the Paris Conference would go ahead. Walking with his father at their dacha just before his departure for Paris, Sergei said there was no hint that Eisenhower’s visit to the Soviet Union in September was not being postponed. However, he did notice that his father seemed worried that they were going to Paris as ‘supplicants’, especially after the Americans’ latest statement that they had confirmed their right to continue espionage flights.40 Thus, 11 May is generally interpreted by contemporary commentators and historians as having been a crucial day for Khrushchev, who admitted that the US had placed him in a very difficult position in relation to those who had reservations about his policy, whether the Chinese, or those in the Kremlin who doubted his policy of détente. Significantly, Marshal Vershinin’s visit to Washington was cancelled and Mao Tse Tung was invited to Moscow for the first time in three years.41

In Paris, Macmillan became the intermediary between the Russians and the Americans. On his arrival in the French capital on Sunday 15 May, Khrushchev paid private visits to de Gaulle, Chairman of the Paris Summit, and Macmillan, his intermediary, and he urged the Western leaders to persuade the President to accept his conditions. The Soviet leader said he was sure that Britain and France could not possibly have approved of the U-2 flight. He then read a prepared statement presenting Soviet demands: the ‘US must denounce the impermissible provocative actions of the American Air Force, refrain from continuing such actions and call strictly to account those responsible’.42

He told Macmillan he was not prepared to negotiate under the ‘real threat’ of the U-2. If the US Government ‘were ready to admit they had made a bad mistake and had been caught and say they were sorry the situation would be quite different; but their attitude was that they were justified in doing it and that they should go on doing it. The Soviet Government could not accept such a bandit’s philosophy.’ He said he was prepared to sit down to negotiate but only if the US Government withdrew what it had declared to be its national policy of sending aircraft over the Soviet Union. Although Macmillan’s appeals to the Soviet Prime Minister failed to move him, he did agree to the suggestion that nothing should be said to the press.43 Khrushchev ended by asking the Prime Minister to ‘work on the Americans’.44
On 16 May, de Gaulle opened the Paris Summit and announced that the preceding day he had received a statement from Mr. Khrushchev which he had passed on to the other participants, and he asked if anyone wished to say anything. Khrushchev stood up and read out a prepared statement and, in Macmillan’s words, ‘began to pulverise the President as Micawber did Heep with a mixture of abuse, vitriolic and offensive, and legal argument’.45 He proclaimed that the summit had been torpedoed by reactionary circles in the US, but that nevertheless the Soviet Union was prepared to wait for a change of thinking by a new American President. He proposed that the summit conference should be postponed for six or eight months.46 Looking furious, Eisenhower made yet another inflammatory statement, ‘the US would not shirk its responsibility to safeguard against surprise attack’, but then he somewhat mollified Khrushchev by stating that the U-2 flights had been suspended after the recent incident and were not to be resumed, therefore this could not be the issue. The Americans, he said, were prepared to continue with the summit and have simultaneous bilateral talks with the Russians. This more conciliatory approach came too late. Khrushchev then addressed Eisenhower: ‘I don’t know what the devil pushed you into this provocative act to us just before the Conference. If there had been no incident we would have come here in friendship and the best possible atmosphere. God is my witness that I come here with clean hands and a pure soul.’ De Gaulle then proposed that the conference statements should not be released to the public, but Khrushchev refused. He said that if he didn’t release this statement, ‘public opinion might think that the US has forced the Soviet Union to its knees by negotiating in the face of threat, since the threat and insult were known to the whole world, the world must know he had not come to Paris to ask NATO for mercy’.47 De Gaulle then adjourned the Conference.

The order to suspend flights had in fact been made on 12 May, but unfortunately the President decided not to make it public until he had seen Khrushchev at the Paris Summit. The President told Herter that if Khrushchev brought up the U-2 incident at the summit, he planned to suggest that the two leaders should have a private talk about it. Herter told the President that the British and French Ambassadors had thought this a ‘fine idea’.48 Unfortunately the invitation to Khrushchev did not materialise, and the tragedy was that no action was taken and entrenched positions were publicly adopted. According to Sergei Khrushchev, his father thought the initiative should be taken by the side which had insulted the national pride of the other side.49 Sergei understood that Eisenhower had been prepared to do this and had asked Herter to arrange for Khrushchev to call at the Residence of the US Ambassador at 4 pm on the first day in Paris. Apparently, this never happened. When Lloyd asked Herter at their meeting in Paris on 14 May why the President couldn’t say he was sorry, Herter said that the President’s first reaction was that he and Khrushchev would have to sort it out by themselves. However, later, as Herter left the US for the summit, the President’s inclination at that time was to wait for Khrushchev to raise it, and then the President intended to suggest a talk between the two of them.50
During the evening of 16 May, after the official meeting, Macmillan went in turn to see de Gaulle, Eisenhower and Khrushchev. According to the Foreign Secretary, they had a civil talk with the Soviet leader, but it made no impression.\textsuperscript{51} The Prime Minister pleaded with Khrushchev to avoid a violent break and to allow the process of détente to be pursued. Khrushchev’s response was that he would still be prepared to talk, if President Eisenhower expressed his regret: ‘after all it was normal to apologise even when treading on someone’s foot and the Soviet Union was not a colony of the United States’.\textsuperscript{52} He said he did not accept the statement made by President Eisenhower at his press conference on 16 May that the Soviet Government had presented an ultimatum. In Khrushchev’s opinion, ‘it was an elementary requirement to condemn and express regret for the flights and say they would not be repeated’, as the Soviet Union had done when their aircraft accidentally flew over Iran. Again, he seemed to be giving Eisenhower a let out. He said:

\textquote{the difficulty was that President Eisenhower reigned but did not govern. He had some fine qualities, but political leaders must be judged by the acts which they did and the present situation was one in which the United States military gave President Eisenhower papers which he signed without reading. No doubt Mr. Allen Dulles had drawn up the plans for the overflights and had probably shown the photographs to the President. The President in turn had probably congratulated Mr. Dulles. Therefore he was not now in a position to condemn Mr. Dulles. Khrushchev said he quite understood how it had happened.\textsuperscript{53}}

The Prime Minister made a last unsuccessful appeal to Khrushchev, who planned to stay in Paris for a few days, not to break up the Conference the following day but to start their work and thereby allow it to continue in six or eight months, as Khrushchev had suggested. Macmillan told the Soviet leader that ‘the peace of the world and the future of mankind were in Mr. Khrushchev’s hands’.\textsuperscript{54} Khrushchev recalled in his memoirs Macmillan’s words at this meeting. The Prime Minister told him that they had demanded too much and should have been more flexible, but Khrushchev could tell from the expression on his face that basically Macmillan understood their position but was saying all this as a formality to register his general solidarity with the US.\textsuperscript{55} The Conference reconvened on 17 May but Khrushchev stayed away, hoping that Eisenhower would give in. By the evening, when it had become clear that the summit was doomed, the Western leaders made a statement that they would be ready to meet ‘at a suitable time in the future’.\textsuperscript{56}

At his press conference on 18 May, Khrushchev made a vituperative speech about the U-2 and US policy, still stating that he thought the President wanted peace but was unable to impose it on his administration. He thanked de Gaulle and Macmillan for their efforts in making the summit possible, but regretted that they had not taken a sufficiently ‘objective’ view of what had happened and had
not therefore been sufficiently firm with Eisenhower. He said that the Soviet Government would still strive for disarmament and suspension of nuclear tests, and had not ruled out the possibility of a future summit. Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar, a member of the British Delegation in Paris, heard from de Gaulle that when Khrushchev came to say goodbye, he told him:

he had come to Paris with some Soviet proposals about control of missiles and their means of delivery etc. which he thought if things had not turned out so badly he meant to have presented at Geneva. Now he would have to consider whether or not to proceed with their proposals in the light of altered circumstances.

The fact that Khrushchev did not fulfil his threat and sign a peace treaty with the DDR en route home through Berlin reinforces the argument that he was still hoping for a compromise on Berlin. He told Ulbricht that he did not want to create the impression that he had deliberately sabotaged the Paris Summit as an excuse to go ahead with his threat on Berlin. Instead he proposed another summit six to eight months later, when a new and stronger US President had been inaugurated. True to type, Khrushchev later boasted that he had ‘voted’ for Kennedy by detaining Gary Powers until after the election.

On 28 May, Khrushchev said he thought Eisenhower wanted peace but he had been unable to impose it on his administration. The Soviet Government, he said, would continue to strive for disarmament and suspension of nuclear tests, and he did not rule out the possibility of a summit in the future. Later in June, in his speech to the Third Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, Khrushchev not only amazed delegates by his anti-Chinese rhetoric but he also defended his pursuit of détente despite the failure in Paris. As some observers at Geneva had expected that disarmament negotiations might come to a halt after the Paris débâcle, it came as a surprise to find that Gromyko still hoped for a test ban treaty. According to Sir Patrick Reilly, the new Soviet proposals were a serious attempt to meet Western views, and must have been prepared for the Paris Summit. On 4 June, Brezhnev had assured him ‘with emphasis and the appearance of complete sincerity that the Soviet Government were really serious about these proposals’.

**An analysis of Soviet reaction**

Khrushchev put himself on record as favouring a long-term accommodation with the West, and was prepared to make as well as to receive concessions. Why, given this major objective in foreign policy, did Khrushchev insist on a public apology from Eisenhower for the U-2 incident, thereby endangering his chance of negotiating an Interim Agreement on Berlin and disarmament measures? From 1960 until the present day, there has been an ongoing reassessment of Khrushchev’s foreign policy and his objectives and attitude to the German
and Berlin questions, both of which were the greatest centre of conflict in the Cold War in Europe.

Prior to the Paris Summit, Sir Patrick Reilly, the Ambassador, reported to the Foreign Office that Khrushchev was ‘unquestioned master of the country and the sole director of its foreign policy’. The only serious critics of détente on the Praesidium were Otto Kuusinen and Petr Pospelov, but they had now dropped their opposition, and the only other possible critic was Suslov, who was ill. After the summit in June 1960, the UK Delegation to the NATO Council concluded that there had not been changes in the Soviet leadership on 5 May in response to the U-2 incident, but that Khrushchev had been under internal pressure from party die-hards and the Army, who were indignant at the affront to Soviet pride, and under external pressure from the Chinese and the East Germans. The Soviet leader could not be seen to be betraying Soviet interests by being soft, and he could no longer portray Eisenhower as a man of peace. Hence it was incumbent on him to demand an apology from the US and an end to flights, but Khrushchev did not understand that the conditions imposed on Eisenhower were unacceptable.

Victor Zorza, a highly acclaimed contemporary journalist, and witness to events unfolding in Moscow and Paris, argued, in the Guardian, that the decision to demand an apology from the President was taken after the Soviet leader arrived in Paris. He dismissed the idea that Khrushchev faced an internal revolt and went to Paris with the aim of deliberately sabotaging the summit. However, he noted that the statement which Khrushchev read out in Paris was an altered version of the original he took with him from Moscow. Zorza surmised that after Khrushchev’s arrival in Paris ‘the Central Committee probably swayed by Suslov and the Marshals held a rump session and compelled Khrushchev to change his position’.

From the 1960s until the 1990s, when access to Soviet sources was virtually non-existent, Western historians generally interpreted what they saw as Khrushchev’s irrational and provocative behaviour in Paris as a response to opposition by groups of hardliners in the Kremlin and the Army, and also by the Chinese, to his policy of détente. According to Tatu’s analysis, Khrushchev’s position had weakened within the leadership, and it was no longer unthinkable that an opposition might rally behind men such as Suslov, Kozlov and Kosygin. Given his serious doubts about the summit, and aware of strong opposition to his policy, Khrushchev therefore decided on a showdown and then to wreck the Conference. In deference to Chinese views and those of the Soviet elite who opposed détente, it was likely that a meeting of the Praesidium on 10 or 11 May ratified a decision by a ‘hard line’ majority to ‘wreck the summit conference’.

Undoubtedly there were voices in the Army opposed to Khrushchev’s policy of détente and defence cuts. After Camp David, Marshal Zhukov, who was in charge of cultural relations with the West, warned that ‘these relations must not become a Trojan horse of bourgeois ideology within Soviet society’. In 1960,
Khrushchev appointed Suslov, a member of the Praesidium since 1955, to conduct an indoctrination campaign to persuade the Armed Forces to accept his controversial programme. The generals felt very worried and humiliated by the US and British U-2 intrusions, for they had known about them for years but had failed to shoot them down. The Army considered them a threat to Soviet security, and a flagrant flouting of Soviet sovereignty. Generals M. Zakharov, Chief of the General Staff, and Andrei Grechko, Commander of the Warsaw Pact Forces, favoured a firm foreign policy and opposed any agreement on détente at the Paris Summit, and Leonid Brezhnev reportedly opposed Khrushchev’s troop cuts in 1960. So the downing of the U-2 on 1 May must have seemed a long-awaited victory in the Cold War for both the Army and Khrushchev.

The Foreign Office pointed to the fact that Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, the Minister of Defence seemed to be glued to Khrushchev’s side during all his meetings with Western leaders in Paris, seeing this as an indication that he was exerting his influence on the Soviet leader. However, a Soviet source from the Foreign Ministry gave Thompson, US Ambassador in Moscow, a far more straightforward reason than this sinister explanation. He said the Soviet Government had noticed that US Secretary Thomas Gates was on the US Delegation, and accordingly had sent Malinovsky.

Chinese opposition to Khrushchev’s policy of détente may well have been an additional element in Khrushchev’s reaction to the U-2 incident. The Paris Summit was convened only one month before the Bucharest Communist Party Conference of June 1960, during which the Sino-Soviet split became public knowledge for the first time. Undoubtedly, Mao’s public opposition to détente was strident and relentless. On April 20, he denounced Khrushchev’s policy of détente with the West. After the U-2 incident, Peking newspapers published articles against détente and the belligerent nature of imperialism, and Mao made five statements within ten days accusing the US of war preparations, and obliquely attacking Khrushchev. Mao said he hoped the U-2 incident would wake up ‘certain people’ who had considered Eisenhower as a ‘lover of peace’. The Soviet Embassy in Peking informed Khrushchev that Mao was conducting a campaign to convince the Party and people of China that the Chinese Communist Party’s analysis of the international situation was correct. The U-2 incident produced a strong reaction in China. For five days, fifty-three million people demonstrated all over China, and the Chinese leadership proclaimed that ‘aggression and provocations against the Soviet Union are aggressions and provocations against the Peoples’ Republic of China, against the socialist camp in general’.

Since 1991, new light has been thrown on the events of May 1960 by the gradual (though partial) opening of the Soviet Archives, and the possibility of accessing the views of the participants in these events and of Soviet historians. There is now general consensus amongst Soviet historians, including General Dimitri Volkoganov, Yury Aksuitin, and Vladimir Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, and Khrushchev’s Western biographers, William Taubman and William
Thompson, that following Khrushchev’s overthrow of the anti-Party group in 1957 and his dismissal of Marshal Zhukov four months later, his foreign policy was virtually unopposed. Adzhubei emphasised his father-in-law’s dominance in this area. Sergei Khrushchev also rejects the view that in 1960 Khrushchev’s leadership was in jeopardy, with Kozlov as a potential rival to his father: ‘without doubt Kozlov expressed the views of the right wing, but we don’t know how he would have acted in power. All I know is that Khrushchev saw him as his successor and that there were no open clashes between them’. When Kozlov retired because of ill health, Khrushchev said to his son, ‘I was really counting on him. He was already in place, he was the kind of person who could decide things on his own, he knew the economy. I don’t see a replacement for him, but it’s already time for me to think about retiring.’ Thus, speculation about factions within the Kremlin and Army, and the Chinese pressurising Khrushchev into a change of policy on détente prior to his departure to Paris, may now largely be discounted.

However, the timing of Khrushchev’s decision and the exact role played by the Praesidium prior to the Paris Summit are still contentious and open to debate. Did Khrushchev decide to wreck the summit at the airport, or on the plane or in Paris, or alternatively, did he still arrive in Paris hoping that he could negotiate with the Western powers at the summit? According to William Taubman, ‘the die was cast at Vnukova 2 Airport where members of the Praesidium gathered in the Glass pavilion and under the wing of the plane’ before Khrushchev and his delegation left for Paris. Likewise, Fedor Burlatsky, one of Khrushchev’s foreign policy apparatchiks, believes that before flying to Paris Khrushchev called a meeting of the Praesidium at the airport and proposed scrapping all the proposals and documents that had been prepared for the Paris Conference on the grounds that it was a bad time for an agreement in every respect.

This version of events was totally rejected by Aleksei Adzhubei, foreign policy advisor to and confidant of Khrushchev, who actually accompanied his father-in-law to Paris. He told the author that the ‘grey men’, his term for the Praesidium, always saw their leader off when he went on a foreign visit, but there was no meeting of the Praesidium at the airport and no decisions were taken to scuttle the summit. Khrushchev went to Paris, still hoping to negotiate with the Western powers, when he could easily have stayed at home. ‘He was prepared to fly to Paris to show this [but] he couldn’t come back to Moscow having backed down. It would have meant loss of face, especially after his earlier visit to the United States.

Oleg Troyanovsky, Khrushchev’s foreign policy assistant and interpreter at the Paris Summit, states that the official instructions of the Soviet Delegation ‘were still to make a serious attempt to negotiate with the Western Powers on Germany, disarmament and other issues’, but when Khrushchev arrived at the airport he told the Praesidium members waiting to see him off that he believed that the old instructions should be scrapped and negotiations should begin only
after Eisenhower had apologised for the spy flight. Deputy Prime Minister Ignati Novikov’s recollection of the occasion was that Khrushchev briefly described what he intended saying to the French leaders, in the departure lounge at Sheremetova airport. To Novikov, ‘this seemed like a new style, with the party leader actually consulting his colleagues. When Khrushchev had finished, he asked for comments, apparently confident of support. And indeed everyone began voicing their approval and praising his ideas’.

Undoubtedly Khrushchev, as a shrewd politician who had himself assumed the leadership by ousting his contemporaries on the Praesidium, would have been fully aware that some members of the Praesidium, and the Army, as well as the Chinese, were opposed to his policy of détente with the West and defence retrenchment. However, the weight of evidence, and particularly the testimony of those closest to the Soviet leader, must lead to a rejection of the view that there were factions combining or actively plotting against Khrushchev within the Kremlin, but, as Oleg Troyanovsky points out, those who doubted the wisdom of Khrushchev’s détente policy were nevertheless triumphalist after the débâcle in Paris. He recalls that the breakdown in the Khrushchev–Eisenhower relationship after the summit led to ‘gloating and handrubbing’ within the Central Committee and the Praesidium amongst those who had doubts as to whether it was worth endangering the Sino–Soviet alliance for the sake of détente. Nevertheless, he still concludes that prior to the Paris Summit ‘there were no serious challengers to Khrushchev within the Kremlin’.

One further important factor which determined Khrushchev’s response to the U-2 incident should be emphasised. The U-2 flight was a direct challenge to his doctrine of peaceful coexistence, which he had first enunciated at the 1956 Congress of the Communist Party, and to his policy of détente. Alexander Werth, a well-known contemporary journalist who witnessed events in Moscow and Paris, reported an extremely illuminating conversation on this question with an unnamed Soviet diplomat, Comrade ‘N’, following the collapse of the Paris Conference. He said that Khrushchev had desperately wanted the summit but the United States had dealt a terrible blow by attacking his basic doctrine of peaceful coexistence. According to ‘N’, the latter was based on two elements: Khrushchev’s personal negotiations with Macmillan, de Gaulle and Eisenhower; and ‘a continuous reinforcement of international legality, to us an essential corollary of the socialist legality inside the Soviet Union’. An acceptance of the status quo in Eastern Europe and Berlin was basic to this approach and, as has been shown, was one of Khrushchev’s most important objectives.

The other essential component of Khrushchev’s policy of peaceful coexistence was the acceptance by the US of absolute Soviet sovereignty, and a willingness on their part to deal with the Soviet Union, a totalitarian state, as an equal partner. The aerial espionage activities of the CIA, like the nuclear rhetoric of the Secretary of State, symbolised for Khrushchev long years of technological inferiority, humiliation and impotence, and, according to Adzhubei, Khrushchev ‘felt that Eisenhower had pulled the rug out from under
In his memoirs, Khrushchev reveals that if the Soviet Union allowed the US ‘to spit in our faces, it would have highly damaged our authority in the eyes of world public opinion, especially our friends, communist parties and those countries that struggle for independence’. In the final analysis, it is the testimony of Khrushchev, ‘the single most comprehensive candid and authoritative account of the inner workings of the Kremlin Leadership’, dictated to his son Sergei, and then smuggled out of Russia, which should be accorded the greatest weight. Khrushchev admitted in his memoirs that hopes for reaching an agreement in the forthcoming Four Power Talks in Paris had suffered a ‘terrible setback’ as a result of the U-2 incident, and he could not simply go to Paris ‘pretending everything was fine’. Nevertheless, he was still positive in attitude before leaving for Paris:

Before leaving we prepared the necessary documents. These were devoted to advancing the goal of peaceful coexistence and finding a solution to controversies, above all the German question and disarmament. I was in particular concerned about disarmament. Recently a great deal of flammable material had accumulated. If an explosion were touched off by a spark a terrible war would break out.

However, during the plane journey Khrushchev pondered on the fact that the US had dared to send a U-2 against his country. It was as though ‘the Americans had deliberately tried to place a time bomb under the meeting’. He wondered if such a country could come to a reasonable agreement, and he also had nagging doubts about the effect on the Soviet Union’s prestige, especially in the Third World. As the injured party, he therefore needed to defend his country’s honour and extract an apology from the President. ‘The idea came to me that we should make some basic alterations in the declaration we had prepared for presentation at the outset of the negotiation in order to defend our honour’. He decided to present the Americans with an ‘ultimatum’. They would have to apologise officially for sending their spy plane into the USSR, and the President of the United States would have to retract what he had said about America’s ‘right’ to conduct reconnaissance over Soviet territory.

After consulting Malinovsky and Gromyko, Khrushchev telephoned Moscow from the plane to inform them of the new Soviet position. He was assured by the Kremlin that at the highest level there was no opposition to the Soviet change of position. Gromyko and the MID staff worked very hard on the plane changing the documents, especially the Soviet opening statement in which Khrushchev demanded an apology from the President. Khrushchev’s own account of what happened endorses the opinions of Sergei Khrushchev, Adzhubei and Troyanovsky. On balance, it appears that Khrushchev discussed the fact that he might demand an apology from the President with his Praesidium colleagues at the airport, but that he alone made the final decision to demand an apology on the journey to Paris and he was not forced into his decision. Adzhubei described
to the author how when the plane was approaching Paris, Khrushchev gathered everyone together, including Gromyko and Malinovsky. He suggested that on arrival in Paris they should hold a meeting with the French President at which they would demand an apology. He also asked one of his aides to go on arrival in Paris, to the Soviet Embassy and inform Sergei Vinogradov, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris, of their decision.92

This straightforward and believable account, taken together with the fact that Khrushchev was pre-eminent in foreign policy formulation, provides a convincing version of events. It emphasises the centrality of Khrushchev to the decision-making process, and the acute feeling of personal betrayal he experienced as a result of Eisenhower, his ‘friend’s’, actions. Sergei portrays Khrushchev’s struggle regarding his attitude to the forthcoming summit not as ‘one with an opposition but as a struggle with himself’: a struggle between two objectives in international relations – first, to banish war; and second, after ten years of struggle against Western imperialism, to ensure that his country was granted due respect.93 According to his son, Khrushchev was still hopeful that a private meeting with the President would sort matters out, so when he arrived in Paris Khrushchev took steps to see whether Eisenhower was trying to arrange a private meeting between them. He was told that there had been no attempt to make contact.94 On 31 May, Pravda reported a speech by Marshal Malinovsky in which he continued to defend Khrushchev’s decision to go to the summit in spite of the U-2 incident, and his quest for détente:

The Soviet Government would have been fully justified in not attending the Paris Conference. Nevertheless, faithful to its peace-loving policy, the Head of Government went there in the hope that a personal meeting between the Heads of Government, would, with the courage and tact befitting gentlemen, openly condemn this aggressive act.95

A lost opportunity?
The central question is this: had the Paris Summit taken place, would there have been a possibility of an East–West modus vivendi on the Berlin question and disarmament? In the past, it has been suggested that even before the U-2 incident on 1 May ‘the summit was heading for deadlock . . . and British optimism was misplaced’.96 However, the Soviet and Western negotiating positions on an Interim Agreement on Berlin in readiness for the Paris Summit reveal that a compromise may have been achievable, given the basic desire for a modus vivendi. The fact that Khrushchev sent de Gaulle his proposals for an Interim Agreement on Berlin on 9 May, after the U-2 incident, and that, as Adzhubei put it, he was so keen to achieve an accommodation with the West that he was still prepared to go to Paris, suggests that the Soviet leader was hoping for serious negotiations with the West.97

The 9 May Soviet proposals were a revised version of the 28 July Soviet pro-
posals at the Geneva Conference. What was the initial Western reaction to these new Soviet proposals? The general impression of the Four Power Working Group was that the new proposals did not change the Soviet position. They were a restatement in more concrete terms of the memo the Soviet Ambassador to West Germany, Smirnov, gave to the German SPD Chairman, Eric Ollenhower, on 13 January.

In spite of the concession that the agreement would last for two instead of one-and-a-half years, as in the 28 July 1959 Geneva Soviet proposals, the Foreign Office thought the new proposals were a change for the worse in two respects. This was because this new document expressly saw an Interim Agreement as preparing the way for a conversion of West Berlin to a ‘Free City’ at the termination of the agreement, whereas the 28 July proposals stated that if there was no agreement between the two German States, the Four Powers would resume talks on termination of the Interim Agreement. Second, in the new document, the two German States were required to work together on all-German questions. The British knew that any agreement resulting in a change of status for West Berlin, and establishing an all-German Committee, suggested that a confederal solution to the German problem would be pursued, and would therefore be rejected by the West Germans.

On 14 May, the Western Foreign Ministers met to consider the Soviet proposals. Herter circulated a US document giving a preliminary assessment of the points of difference between the Western and Soviet positions. The new terms were, as Selwyn Lloyd admitted, ‘a step backwards’ from the 28 July Geneva terms. Nevertheless, the Western powers were still prepared to re-submit their own revised 28 July proposals to the Soviet Union, and they agreed that the Paris Summit negotiations should elucidate what would happen on expiry of the Interim Agreement. It is important to note that during their discussions in Paris the FRG was pressurised by its Allied partners to agree to delete one clause in the existing Western proposals, on the controversial question of Western Rights in West Berlin, as a concession to the Russians. This stated that the rights of the Four Powers in relation to Berlin and access thereto shall ‘remain unaffected by the conclusion or the termination of this agreement’. The Western Heads of State then approved the revised 28 July Geneva proposals ready for the summit. In the final analysis, Macmillan’s pragmatic approach to this question had won the day, and it seemed that the Western powers might prove to be more flexible in negotiation.

On 15 May, when Adenauer had arrived in Paris, the Soviet proposals were discussed at greater length. Both Macmillan and Eisenhower were positive, and thought that a two-year moratorium could provide the means to find an acceptable formula. They agreed that the crucial question as regards Berlin was as follows: the Western powers, France, Britain and the US, had the right as occupying powers to maintain their troops in West Berlin and to supply the city, but ‘how could they prevent the Russians from making difficulties on the supply routes to the city without doing anything so serious as to be an obvious “casus
belli’? Macmillan had thus gained the President’s support for the British position on an ever present danger: that the implementation of current contingency plans on access could ultimately trigger a nuclear war.\textsuperscript{106}

Adenauer argued in uncompromising terms, but ultimately unsuccessfully, that disarmament should take precedence over discussions on Germany. This was an attempt to divert Western leaders away from the basic questions of Berlin and Germany. All the Western leaders agreed that the worst part of the new proposals was that Berlin would be accorded the new status of a Free City at the end of the two-year Interim Agreement. The Prime Minister argued that it might be better to negotiate a new status for Berlin now, rather than be driven later to accept an arrangement on Berlin which was very much worse. He also thought the position as it had been left at Geneva on 28 July 1959 was not unsatisfactory. De Gaulle rejected any change of status after two years, but Eisenhower adopted a far more conciliatory position: he considered it might be possible to find a formula that preserved Western access conditions and provided for a plebiscite at the end of two years. He was also prepared to see cuts in the Western garrison.\textsuperscript{107} Significantly, the President said ‘the West cannot go on saying no’. De Gaulle remained doubtful, and repeated his customary maxim that everything depended on whether the Soviet Union wanted détente. In fact, throughout the Berlin Crisis in public he was ambivalent, outwardly supporting Adenauer’s tough stance, but on the issues of contingency planning and German reunification the evidence demonstrates that he supported Macmillan. He summed up his position in the following words. ‘One can never use the word “never, never, never” on this problem.’\textsuperscript{108} Certainly, it was the view of the Foreign Office that if there was the will on both sides to reach an Interim Agreement, a formula could be found on the difficult question of Western rights at the end of two years, which would save the honour of both sides. In May 1960, as Anthony Rumbold argued, ‘France and America were not insisting on an affirmation that their rights will not be unimpaired, what they are insisting on is a form of words which could be interpreted as meaning that their rights would not be impaired. What we tried to get at Geneva in 1959, but failed’. It was a question of splitting hairs.\textsuperscript{109}

Two questions vital to any consideration of the viability of an Interim Agreement on Berlin are did the Soviet proposals merely represent the Soviet Government’s opening position, as usually happens in negotiations? Second, would the Soviet Government have been prepared to make further compromises which might have been acceptable to the West? Two documents from the SED Archive in Berlin, in Ulbricht’s office, suggest that this may have been the case. The first document, entitled ‘Starting Points and Possibilities for Compromise Proposals on the West Berlin question’, and dated early May 1960, suggests that further compromises over and above the 28 July 1959 Soviet proposals for an Interim Settlement at Geneva were under discussion in the DDR.\textsuperscript{110}

The document then deals with three crucial questions for the West: the duration of an Interim Agreement, the all-German Committee, and the Free City pro-
posal. On the first, it suggests extending the time limit from the one-and-a-half years proposed by the Soviet Union to three. (The Western proposal at Geneva had put forward a period up to reunification, or five years, and the latest Soviet concession of 9 May had extended the duration of an Interim Agreement from one-and-a-half to two years). Arguably, the two-year period mentioned in the 9 May Soviet proposals was to be the opening position for the negotiations. If this was indeed the case, it made the possibility of agreement that much closer, for the US and Britain both agreed that they would be satisfied with a three-year agreement, which would take them well beyond the next general election in Germany in 1961.

The second question concerns the connection between an Interim Agreement and the creation and activity of an all-German Committee, as proposed by the Soviet Union at Geneva. This document proposes that the demand for such a connection should be the starting point for the Soviet negotiation but if the Western powers could not accept it and agreement had been reached on other questions, the Soviet side could give up the connection. The third question deals with the Free City proposal. In response to West German fears that the creation of a Free City would bring about a breakdown in currency and economic relationships, the DDR draft document suggests that for a certain period a currency and economic–political link with the FRG could be maintained in its present framework.

The DDR draft document puts forward further new proposals on several points in the 28 July Geneva proposals for an Interim Agreement. First, the clause in the Soviet Geneva proposals, that no atomic weapons should be stationed in West Berlin, should be maintained, as the Western powers had already conceded this in principle. Moving on to the proposal on espionage and propaganda activities, the report rejects the initial Western proposal at Geneva that an agreement should cover the whole of Berlin, and proposes that it should cover only West Berlin. It then discusses the Geneva proposal whereby the DDR undertook not to interfere in West Berlin, to respect the agreement for its duration and to lodge the undertakings with the UN. In this new document the DDR is ready to give this up, presumably because it was unacceptable to the FRG, as it might imply recognition of the DDR by the UN. Instead, an exchange of letters between the Governments of the DDR and the USSR, pledging the DDR to these undertakings, could be lodged with the UN Secretary-General and would remain in force for the period of an Interim Agreement. On the question of control of the observance of West Berlin’s duties, a committee of representatives of the Three Western powers could be created, and in the event of a complaint a representative of the Soviet Union could be brought in. A UN representative stationed in Berlin could report to the Secretary General on breaches of the agreement and make corresponding recommendations to the governments of the Four Powers.

Regarding the vital question of access, the document states that the Soviet Union and the DDR were ready to declare that connections between West Berlin
and the outside world for military traffic would be maintained in their present form, based on the agreement which came into effect in April 1959. On the question of free traffic between East and West Berlin, it states that the Western proposals for a binding agreement for the future, and a Four Power Commission on access, are unacceptable. Alternatively, there could be a recommendation from the Four Powers that military traffic should be maintained as hitherto, and the DDR could make a corresponding declaration. This agreement could also be dealt with by an exchange of letters with the Soviet Union. Significantly this conceded the Western objective on access, namely the status quo.

Hence their agreement to an exchange of letters with the Soviet Union. There was to be no change in existing arrangements for civilian access dating back to the April 1959 agreement – a most important point for the Western powers. Furthermore, the concession extending an Interim Agreement from one-and-a-half to three years would meet even the Americans’ demands. The DDR was prepared to drop the link between an Interim Agreement and the all-German Committee, which was one of the sticking points for the West at Geneva. The Western powers were worried that this link could be used to hold Berlin to ransom by threatening Western access, if there was no agreement on the all-German Committee. The Free City proposal was to stand, with modifications. However, in spite of these last two concessions it was unlikely that the Western powers, and particularly the Federal Republic, possibly supported by France and/or the US, would ever agree to the Free City status or to the all-German Committee. This is why the next piece of Soviet evidence is crucial to the argument that an East–West Interim Agreement on Berlin would have been a possibility in May 1960, had the summit proceeded.

Soviet draft proposals for an Interim Agreement on Berlin, dated 11 May, which were found in the SED Party Archive in Berlin, suggest a further crucial compromise was being considered. The fact that they were amongst Ulbricht’s personal papers indicates that the proposals were at the very least under discussion at the highest level. They present vital evidence that the Soviet Government was possibly prepared to make two very important concessions over and above their 9 May proposals: first, point (6) states that the present agreement will end after two years and the participants in the agreement will start new negotiations. No mention is made of West Berlin becoming a Free City, a proposal which the Western powers had opposed from the outset (although Britain and the US were prepared privately to concede that, ultimately, a new status for Berlin with adequate guarantees would have to be accepted.) Second, no mention is made of the establishment of an all-German Committee, as in the 1959 Geneva Soviet proposals, which, given Adenauer’s intransigence, was the other major hurdle for the Western powers in accepting the Soviet/DDR position. Furthermore, the accompanying draft Note of 11 May from the Soviet Government to the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America would have given the Western powers guarantees of the readiness of the Soviet and DDR Governments to recognise an Interim Agreement on Berlin, and during its
The discussions of the Foreign Ministers and the Four Power Working Group during the Spring of 1960 suggest that these proposals, had they been put to the West, would have been a welcome concession and possibly the basis of a modus vivendi on Berlin, especially if linked to the disarmament proposals so dear to Eisenhower and Macmillan. On 28 March at Camp David, when Macmillan discussed a potential nuclear deal with the Russians at the summit, it emerged that the President was ready to take more risks and make concessions, including a two-year ban on testing. Eisenhower knew from his talks with Khrushchev at Camp David that the Soviets were worried about the Chinese getting the bomb and wanted a test ban, and thought he could use this as a bargaining chip as a quid pro quo on Berlin. In late May the Foreign Secretary told Herter that he would prefer to see a firm Interim Agreement on Berlin for a limited period of three years. He suggested that a period of even two years would get the West well over the next election in the Federal Republic, and ‘such an agreement might suit us better than allowing Khrushchev to keep Berlin hanging over us as a sword of Damocles from meeting to meeting’.

As late as 10 May, Sir Patrick Reilly informed the Foreign Office that the ‘advance of détente would extend Soviet influence’ and ‘raise the standard of living of the people’. Khrushchev would therefore be ready at the summit to forego a separate treaty with the DDR if a temporary agreement on Berlin, linked to some machinery on all-German discussion and disarmament, could be achieved. However, Khrushchev needed to demonstrate to the Soviet people that détente paid off and, after the U-2 incident, that ‘any discussion of an Interim Agreement was likely to be even more difficult’. This assessment of prospects for the summit may have been too pessimistic. On 10 May, Nekrasov, the London representative of Pravda, told Leo Murray of the Irish Times that Khrushchev was anxious to improve relations with the West and he wanted to pledge the Soviet Government to accept the principle of general and complete disarmament. Furthermore, the Soviet Government was ready both to accept the Western proposals of 28 July on an Interim Agreement for Berlin, and to guarantee the continuation of the Allied troop occupation in West Berlin. They would even consider expanding the period of the agreement to ten years.

Perhaps the best indication of Soviet intentions in Paris can be found in Khrushchev’s discussion of the Berlin issue with President Kennedy at the Vienna Meeting of 1961. On that occasion Khrushchev recalled his visit to Camp David, where Eisenhower had agreed that the situation in Berlin was ‘abnormal’ and that ‘US prestige was involved’. He had discussed with Eisenhower an ‘interim arrangement’ that ‘would not involve the prestige of our two
countries’. He had hoped to reach such an agreement with Eisenhower at the Paris Summit, ‘but the forces that [are] against the improvement of relations between the US and the USSR sent the U-2 plane. The USSR decided that in view of the tensions prevailing as a result of that flight, this question should not be raised’, and Khrushchev said he was willing to ‘accept such an arrangement [on Berlin] even now’. 

121
Macmillan recorded in his diary that 16 May 1960 was the ‘most tragic day’ in his life. The Paris Summit, for which he had striven so long, had ‘blown up like a volcano’, it was ‘ignominious, tragic, almost incredible’. Khrushchev had felt that his visit to the US seemed to ‘herald a promising shift in US policy, but now thanks to the U-2, the honeymoon was over’. It was indeed a terrible blow for both statesmen who, since the onset of the Berlin Crisis in November 1958, had pursued an Interim Agreement on Berlin, in the face of the doubts or indeed opposition of their respective allies.

Both Macmillan and Khrushchev, in spite of the fact that they were such different personalities, with opposing ideologies, hoped that by institutionalising a series of summit conferences on East–West problems they could achieve disarmament and détente. Macmillan’s face-to-face discussions with Khrushchev in Moscow and the President’s meetings with Khrushchev at Camp David had already done much to break down mutual Cold War suspicion. For Khrushchev, a successful summit on Berlin and disarmament would be a fitting climax to his revolutionary policy of peaceful coexistence with the West, which he first proclaimed at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. It was also a safer way to assert the position of the Soviet Union in the world, and hopefully to achieve the beginning of disarmament. His ambition gradually to dismantle the Cold War is now widely recognised by Soviet and Western historians. Since 1958, Macmillan too had been trying to persuade the Americans that they should respond to the Soviet interest in a summit to address East–West problems, the chief of which was Berlin and the future of Germany. Within days of receiving the Soviet Ultimatum in November 1958, the British took a more positive view than their Allied partners in their assessment of Soviet motives. They argued that Khrushchev was not interested in expansion in Europe, or in driving the Western Allies from Berlin, as happened under Stalin in 1948. His objective was the stabilisation of the status quo in Germany and Europe. Khrushchev also favoured atomic-free zones in Central Europe and the Pacific to meet what he perceived as the growing nuclear threat from the Soviet Union’s two potential enemies, the Federal Republic to the West, and China to the East.

The problem was that it was an intrinsic element of Khrushchev’s character
to use threats, bluster and bluff, and nuclear blackmail as a means of achieving
his objectives. These methods often had the effect of alienating Western leaders
and blurring the Soviet leader’s true and ultimately peaceful aims. Thus, in
threatening to hand over control of Western access to the DDR, Khrushchev was
using Berlin – which he, in typical fashion, called ‘the testicles of the West’ – as
a lever to force the West to the negotiating table on the German problem.

Khrushchev knew that until the German problem was settled, there could be
no easing of Cold War tension in Europe. He wanted the West to recognise the
sovereignty of the DDR, with a special status for West Berlin, and he rejected
the Western model of German reunification based on free elections and the
choice to remain in NATO. For Khrushchev, reunification was a long-term goal,
based on a confederation of the two German States. In 1960, even a partial reso-
lution of the Berlin problem such as an Interim Agreement for a period of two or
three years, would limit Western espionage and propaganda in the City and
advance the DDR’s international prestige. The transfer of control of Western
access to the DDR would also have been a step towards the main Soviet goal of
de facto recognition of the DDR, thus stabilising the regime both politically and
economically.

The Western use of the word ‘ultimatum’ for the Soviet Note was a mis-
nomer, as the Soviet leader was remarkably flexible throughout the crisis, as
long as he had the hope of East–West negotiations. When he appreciated the
depth of Western opposition and the alarm aroused by his initiative on Berlin, he
immediately softened the tone of Soviet policy, clarifying Soviet intentions and
inviting Western counter-proposals. He demonstrated his flexibility by with-
drawing the deadlines on handing over control of access to the DDR, following
Macmillan’s visit to Moscow, and again after Camp David. And even after the
break-up of the Paris Summit in 1960, he said he was ready to negotiate with a
new US President whom he could trust.

Berlin was of crucial symbolic and strategic importance to both sides during
the Cold War. Against the background of the arms race, Khrushchev feared that
if, as in 1953, there was rioting in East Berlin, the Federal Republic might be
tempted to intervene. By 1958, with the looming danger of the Federal Republic
controlling its own nuclear weapon, Khrushchev saw West Berlin as a powder
keg waiting to be lit. Thus, an initiative on Berlin was his solution both to
Russia’s security problems and to the mounting economic and political pressures
facing the failing DDR.

The British were sympathetic to these genuine Soviet security concerns on
Germany, a mere thirteen years after the end of a war which had brought terrible
suffering to Russia, and the death of twenty-five million Soviet citizens. For
strategic and historical reasons, Macmillan, the Foreign Office and his COS also
supported the status quo in Germany and Europe, although they could not
overtly abandon the Western Allies’ stated objective of self-determination for
Germany, with its goal of German reunification. They too were fearful of
Germany controlling her own nuclear weapons which, as Trachtenberg has
demonstrated, was a distinct possibility in the late 1950s. Eisenhower, on the contrary, still believed in the ultimate and long-term goal of German reunification for strategic reasons, and in nuclear sharing with his NATO Allies in Europe to ensure that West Germany remained a loyal member of the Western Alliance. By 1959 the British could count on French agreement to their stance, even though de Gaulle was obliged to indicate continued public support for his recent ally in Europe, Chancellor Adenauer.

Macmillan’s pursuit of an independent role for Britain as mediator between East and West in the Cold War has in recent assessments been criticised as unrealistic, based on delusions of grandeur and an exaggeration of Britain’s influence in a period of post-war decline when the US and the Soviet Union dominated the world scene. However, Oleg Gordievsky, a KGB colonel who passed invaluable information on Soviet missile development to the West, has testified that during this period the KGB regarded Britain as extremely important and their major enemy after the US. Furthermore, the Soviet evidence in this study has shown that Khrushchev saw Macmillan as an invaluable mediator throughout the crisis. While the Prime Minister had similar long-term goals, namely détente and disarmament, nevertheless he was flexible and pragmatic, though Khrushchev appreciated after their diplomatic brush in Moscow that Macmillan would firmly adhere to basic Western principles on Berlin.

The Prime Minister was not driven by a narrow Germanophobia, but by an assessment of where Britain’s best interests lay. The mainspring of his proactive approach to the Berlin Crisis was his acute awareness that it could lead to an escalation of tension and ultimately to a nuclear holocaust for Britain, which, unlike the US, was well within range of Soviet IRBMs. Moreover, his approach was not revolutionary; it followed in the mainstream of British foreign policy since the early 1950s, and was an acknowledgement that ‘soft power’ could be successfully exercised in the Cold War. In 1958, Macmillan’s policy of mediation and compromise was wholeheartedly supported by his COS, the Foreign Office and his imaginative foreign affairs advisors in Downing Street, especially Freddie Bishop and de Zulueta. Although Macmillan was the dominant voice in foreign policy, Selwyn Lloyd was a loyal and effective operator with his allied counterparts, and also developed a good working relationship with Gromyko at the Geneva Conference.

Whilst the ‘special relationship’ and Britain’s support for NATO remained the central tenet of the Prime Minister’s foreign policy, nevertheless during the first months of the crisis he was ready to oppose the hardline and risky US policy on contingency planning for Berlin. This envisaged a ‘showdown’ with the Russians at the ultimatum’s expiry date of 27 May, when the Soviet Union had threatened to sign a peace treaty with the DDR giving it control over Western access. In this event, the US was initially ready to use limited force, such as a military probe to reopen autobahn routes to Berlin. Macmillan and the COS warned that this step could easily escalate to global war, given the sensitivity of the Berlin situation. Macmillan’s policy thus showed that Britain could be
a loyal member of NATO, yet the special relationship did not entail a blind acceptance of the policies of the US when they went counter to British interests. Possibly a lesson for future governments!

Macmillan, through skilful intra-alliance diplomacy, urged his Western Allies to moderate their policy on contingency planning and to negotiate with the Russians. During his visit to the US in March 1959, he persuaded the US both to accept the agency principle on access to Berlin, whereby the DDR acted in substitution for the Soviet Union in exercising control of access to the City, and to reject the automatic use of force in contingency measures such as a land probe unless it had the consent of all Allied governments. He also managed to retain a veto in the decision-making process of ‘LIVEOAK’, the new secret tripartite organisation for contingency planning.

Far from being reactive to the crisis in East–West relations over Berlin, as asserted by some critics, Macmillan immediately took steps to implement a new initiative which he hoped would lead to negotiations with the Russians. Within days of receiving the Soviet Note, he asked the Foreign Office and his policy advisors in Downing Street to analyse Soviet policy and the options open to Britain. On 14 February, he issued a Prime Ministerial Directive based on Sir Gladwyn Jebb’s Report. This contained a broad review of government policy on the interconnected problems of Germany, Berlin and European security, focusing on a demilitarised zone in Central Europe, a provisional settlement for Berlin; and a confederal solution to the German problem. The report maintained that the Russians would refuse to countenance German reunification without German neutrality, and that ultimately neither Britain nor France would support it. Herter, the US Secretary of State, told the President in 1960 that even Adenauer was paying lip-service to reunification, as he was acutely aware that the left would dominate in a reunified Germany, to the detriment of his own Christian Democratic Party.

An integral part of Macmillan’s initiative was his decision to visit Moscow, which has been criticised as a futile appeasing gesture and a unilateral act of disloyalty to his Western Allies. However, the US Ambassador in Moscow, and all the other Western Ambassadors, admitted that the visit was justified by its results, as Khrushchev had learnt much from the meetings and it had been a unique opportunity for the West to understand how his mind worked. In his face-to-face discussions with Khrushchev in Moscow, the Prime Minister ascertained that the ideas which most interested the Russians were a demilitarised zone in Central Europe, and a compromise arrangement on Berlin which reconciled the signing of a peace treaty with the DDR with the two cardinal points of Western policy: the securing of the Western position in West Berlin; and guarantees for Western access to the city and the freedom of its citizens. Khrushchev openly acknowledged that he only sought de facto not de jure recognition of the DDR, but he regarded it as crucial that the DDR along with the FRG would be represented at any future East–West Conference on Germany, as an initial a step to the regime’s de facto recognition.
In March and April, Macmillan undertook a series of visits to Paris, Bonn and Washington, to brief his Allies on his perceptions of Khrushchev and on Soviet policy. His overriding impression was of the Soviet leadership’s obsessive insecurity, and hatred and distrust of the Germans. He emphasised the defensive nature of their objectives, even on Berlin, and their determination to maintain the Soviet grip on Eastern Europe. However, he believed Khrushchev was unlikely to unilaterally sign a peace treaty with the DDR whilst the West was ready to negotiate. He was also ready to compromise and, as an initial step, to agree to attend a Foreign Ministers’ Conference, as proposed by the Western Alliance. Macmillan also warned his Allies that Khrushchev had an inferiority complex and was therefore very sensitive to any imagined slight, or anything which could be construed as a threat: a human factor which was ignored by the President in his disastrous handling of the events from 1 to 17 May. Significantly, the Russian documents reveal that this diplomatic incident occurred precisely because Macmillan’s stance in Moscow was perceived as a threat. In the Russians’ eyes, there was no question of Macmillan being seen as an appeaser.

From February to May 1959, the British made a major contribution to the planning of the Western negotiating position at the Geneva Conference. The death of Dulles and the appointment of Christian Herter as Secretary of State – a less intransigent personality, more sympathetic to the British viewpoint – led to a decline in US support for the Chancellor’s intransigent stance. Thus, at the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting of 29 April 1959 he was forced to adopt a more compromising and realistic approach towards negotiations with the Russians. The French also agreed with British policy on contingency planning and the basic principles which might guide an Interim Berlin settlement at the forthcoming conference.

The discussions which Macmillan and Selwyn Lloyd had with Khrushchev in Moscow also made an important impression on the Soviet leadership and bore fruit at Geneva. Personal correspondence between Khrushchev and Macmillan on critical issues, and private meetings between Selwyn Lloyd and Gromyko prior to official sessions, led to important compromises on both sides. The Soviet documents show that the British were seen as flexible but not appeasing, as they refused to make concessions on the status of West Berlin or on the maintenance of foreign troops to guarantee the freedom of the City.

Previous assessments of the Geneva Conference, which opened in May 1959, have underestimated its importance in advancing East–West negotiations on Berlin. In their final position paper of 28 July, the Russians showed their keenness to reach an agreement by compromising on the two issues fundamental to Western policy in Berlin: an access agreement which enshrined a variation of the agency principle, and the acceptance that more than token Western occupation troops should remain in West Berlin during an Interim Agreement, thus guaranteeing the freedom of Berlin. The British felt that at a future summit they would probably have conceded a three-year term for an interim Berlin agreement, based on the status quo.
For their part, the Western Allies agreed to address Soviet grievances on the Western occupation of the city and to ban nuclear weapons in Berlin. The fact that for the first time the representatives of the FRG and the DDR participated in questions concerning Germany at an international conference was seen as a crucial initial step towards achieving de facto recognition of the East German regime, and of the status quo in Eastern Europe. Gromyko’s positive assessment at the close of the conference suggests that an Interim Agreement on Berlin, along with disarmament, was now the major Soviet objective for the summit.

The Camp David meeting, in September 1959, saw a sea-change in Eisenhower’s attitude to Khrushchev, whom he believed genuinely wanted an Interim Agreement on Berlin and disarmament, and an end to the Cold War. Despite resistance from the Pentagon and the State Department, the President admitted to Khrushchev that the situation in Berlin was ‘abnormal’ and a ‘can of worms’, that the question of Western rights was largely symbolic, and that he did not intend to keep his troops there for ever. Some commentators were even convinced that the two leaders made a secret deal on Berlin and disarmament, ready for the summit, as many of their talks were in private and no minutes were kept of their conversations. Because of the symbolic importance of Berlin, Eisenhower and Macmillan agreed that they could work out a form of words on an Interim Agreement which would satisfy the honour of both countries. In October 1959, an Anglo–US exchange of ideas on a Berlin settlement indicated that the President had become more flexible and much closer to the British position in his approach to planning for an East–West summit. He was ready to discuss new ideas other than the status quo, and he even considered discussion of Khrushchev’s Free City idea as long as the freedom of West Berlin was guaranteed. A draft US agreement for Berlin was drawn up based on a three year term and the renewal of East–West negotiations at its termination.

In December 1959, at the Rambouillet Conference, Macmillan supported the President’s new flexibility and countered Adenauer’s obstructionist stance on a compromise. This led to the adoption of the Western Paper of 28 July at Geneva, as the final Western negotiating position for the summit. Thus, the summit which the Prime Minister had been pursuing since he was first elected was at last to become a reality. In March and April Eisenhower told his allies that he would derive tremendous satisfaction from seeing some specific practical disarmament steps agreed, as he knew from his Camp David discussions that Khrushchev was so keen on disarmament that a quid pro quo on Berlin was achievable at the Paris Summit.

The evidence suggests that the Soviet Government also saw the Camp David accord as a turning point in East–West relations, characterised by a new personal and cordial relationship between the two leaders, on which Khrushchev set so much store. Khrushchev’s emphasis during the course of the year on peaceful coexistence and disarmament as the twin pillars of Soviet foreign policy, together with indications that the Soviet Government was prepared to negotiate on the 28 July Soviet proposals, boded well for the summit. It was clear that
Khrushchev was so keen to reach an accommodation with the West that he was prepared to sacrifice Soviet relations with her most powerful ally, China, with all that implied for future Sino–Soviet relations.

In 1960, Khrushchev’s policies of massive troop reductions and progress towards a test ban treaty at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva were proof that his aims were détente and disarmament, and gave the President and Prime Minister great cause for optimism. During Khrushchev’s visit to France in March it emerged that he had high hopes of the Paris Summit, where he said he would negotiate on an Interim Agreement for Berlin based on the Soviet Paper of 28 July 1959. Furthermore, the evidence shows that Ulbricht was ready to support a compromise on Berlin. As Gromyko emphasised, the two sides were not so far apart in their respective Papers, and there was reason for optimism.

Given this optimistic scenario, why did the Paris Summit fail, and, with it, all Macmillan’s and Khrushchev’s hopes for a provisional agreement on Berlin and disarmament? Since Camp David, Eisenhower had sought an agreement with great vigour and persistence and de Gaulle was supportive of an Interim Agreement. The President must shoulder a large burden of responsibility for the failure of the Paris Summit. His misjudgement in allowing one final U-2 flight at a time of such sensitivity, when he knew that both he and Khrushchev were so close to a breakthrough on disarmament and a potential provisional accommodation on Berlin, was fatal, and Goodpaster revealed that on several occasions he had even said that it amounted to ‘an act of war’. The President was well aware that it was provocative to authorise the May 1 flight, and had made prescient remarks to this effect on several occasions. In 1955, the President had told the U-2 team: ‘Well, boys, I believe the country needs this information, and I’m going to approve it. But I tell you one thing. Some day one of these machines is going to be caught and we’re going to have a storm.’ In February 1959, at a meeting with General Twining, he said ‘nothing would make him request authority to declare war more quickly than violation of our air space’. At another meeting during the same month, Goodpaster noted that the President had warned General Doolittle, who was urging more overflights that he had ‘one tremendous asset in a summit – his reputation for honesty. If one of these aircraft were lost when we are engaged in apparently sincere deliberations, it could be put on display in Moscow and ruin the President’s effectiveness.’ Tragically, on this fateful occasion he gave in to pressure from the CIA, and after the U-2 was shot down, fearful of losing face and aware of the humiliation of the attempted cover-up, he would neither apologise nor even make private approaches to Khrushchev through his Ambassador in Moscow before leaving for Paris. In the aftermath of the U-2 incident the President stubbornly refused to announce in public that U-2 flights would not be continued, though he had in fact already made this decision. He planned to reveal his decision at the opening of the Paris Summit, emphasising that the US wished to negotiate a Berlin settlement and a test ban treaty. The failure to communicate his intentions even privately to Khrushchev was a fatal error of judgement.
Macmillan thought Eisenhower ‘should have made the right statement at the right time to let Khrushchev off the hook, it was such a childish thing’. Eisenhower defensively recorded in his memoirs that the Paris Summit was unlikely to end in détente between the powers and his only regret was the ‘erroneous cover story’, and this view has influenced many subsequent analyses. This statement, though, was merely for public consumption. An analysis of Eisenhower’s policy, and the views of his biographers, present a different and far more positive picture of his intentions. On arrival in Paris in May 1960 Eisenhower was still optimistic, in spite of his administration’s deception and mismanagement of the crisis, and its repercussions in Moscow. At their first meeting in Paris, Western Heads of State agreed to negotiate on a compromise agreement on Berlin based on the 28 July Geneva proposals, and eventually, the President hoped to move the Chancellor away from a rigid policy of non-recognition of East Germany, whilst still preserving the freedom of Berlin. It was therefore doubtful that he would have sacrificed some type of East–West accord solely on the German issue, in spite of the importance he placed on Adenauer’s West Germany.

General Andrew Jackson Goodpaster’s, recollection as the President’s Chief of Staff, was that Eisenhower was willing to make concessions, and was prepared to adopt a negotiation process on the German issue that might have allowed Khrushchev to claim that the ultimatum was bringing results. Ambrose too considers that the President was ready to go to Paris and sign a genuine accord, and never in the Cold War had they been so close. The President revealed his true feelings in his conversations with Macmillan and de Gaulle in Paris, when he said that all last year’s talk about an ‘armed division going down the autobahn to Berlin was bunkum, we have to negotiate’. Selwyn Lloyd, who had played a central role throughout the negotiations on Berlin and in Paris, recorded in his diary that Eisenhower was distressed at the turn of events. ‘He thought all his work had been ruined by that piece of silliness, the timing of the flight, the silly explanations given’.

Immediately after the summit, George Kistiakowsky, his scientific advisor, said that Eisenhower had confided in him and said how he had concentrated the
last few years on ending the Cold War, how he felt that he was making progress, and how the stupid U-2 mess had ruined all his efforts. Years later, describing the impact of the deception, he said: ‘I didn’t realise how high a price we were going to pay for that lie – if I had to do it all over again, we would have kept our mouths shut’. A clue to Eisenhower’s true feelings on his decision-making in general, as revealed in his farewell address to the American people in January 1961, are very appropriate:

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and continues to exist.

Surely a prophetic comment for today’s foreign policy dilemmas.

Turning to Khrushchev’s part in the failure of the summit, undoubtedly his character – a blend of arrogance and volatility and an inferiority complex – made him sensitive to any snub or supposed slight, and likely to overreact to any situation when he felt threatened, as happened when Macmillan was in Moscow. As Mikoyan reminisced years later, Khrushchev engaged in inexcusable hysterics. Nevertheless, the British were sympathetic to his dilemma after the downing of the U-2 on 1 May. The British Ambassador, Sir Patrick Reilly, believed that, from the Soviet point of view, the advance of détente would have extended Soviet influence and raised the standard of living of the people. Khrushchev then would have been in a position to reject Chinese attacks on his policy of détente with the West, to sign a partial test ban treaty, and to agree regular East–West meetings on culture and technology. However, he needed to show his people, the Army and his critics in the Kremlin that détente paid off. After the U-2 incident, ‘any discussion of an Interim Agreement was likely to be even more difficult’. Alexei Adzhubei believed that even if there had been no pressure from the Praesidium or the Chinese, it would still have been difficult for Khrushchev to have been more conciliatory in his reaction to the U-2. He could not regard the spy flight, ordered at such a sensitive time, as a routine aspect of espionage used by both sides in the Cold War, and to lose face before the whole world at the first East–West Summit since 1955 was too great a risk. For such an emotional and volatile man, it meant personal and public humiliation. The 1960 Paris Summit was indeed an example of the hazardous and risky nature of summitry when things go wrong.

The most fundamental reason for Khrushchev’s highly-charged reaction was the challenge to the Soviet leader’s personal relationship with Eisenhower, established at Camp David, which was an intrinsic element in his approach to peaceful coexistence with the West. Sergei Khrushchev said his father could not forgive Eisenhower, either the President or the man, for the fiasco of the U-2 flight. On 16 May, Thompson, the US Ambassador in Moscow, asked a member of the Soviet Delegation why Khrushchev had exploited the U-2
incident so hard, and was told that ‘Khrushchev in his statement had exonerated the President personally and could not understand how he could endorse such flights as government policy’. This report had also been confirmed by other Soviet sources. Anatoly Dobrynin, Head of the US Division in the Soviet Foreign Ministry, was a member of the working group on the U-2, and half a century later he recalled that Khrushchev had tried to pursue the public fiction that Eisenhower was not responsible for the spy missions, but after the President’s admission of responsibility Khrushchev was no longer able to deal with him without public loss of face.

Anatoly Dobrynin emphasises that the view of some US historians that Khrushchev used the Paris Summit to make propaganda were incorrect: ‘our delegation brought with it intensive directives for each item on the agenda all of them approved after active deliberation within the Politburo’. These included measures on Germany, disarmament and other issues. The Soviet leader was desperate to secure a reconciliation after 1 May, but the Russians felt genuinely affronted by the United States’ action. That is why a private meeting with the President in Paris, and at least some form of apology, was so important to Khrushchev. This was Eisenhower’s greatest mistake, for a private meeting between the two leaders, as advocated by Macmillan, might have allowed them to reach a formula by which both could save face, and then they could have proceeded with the negotiations. The Soviet leader acknowledged that both de Gaulle and Macmillan had made serious attempts to reconcile the parties: ‘he had chosen Macmillan to accept the role of intermediary because he felt that he had the most sober assessment of the situation and would be genuinely interested and had made every effort to achieve results, but the Americans refused’. When Eisenhower was not going to meet him halfway, his son said he changed and was not prepared to reach an agreement.

The new evidence in this book on discussions in Moscow and the DDR indicates that a compromise Interim Agreement was indeed possible at the Paris Summit. As late as 10 May, and despite the downing of the U-2 and the US Government’s reaction, the Soviet Government and the DDR were nevertheless discussing further concessions to the West, over and above both the Soviet position of 28 July 1959 at the Geneva Conference, and the later document on Soviet proposals on an Interim Agreement which they gave to President de Gaulle on 9 May. Arguably, the latter merely represented their initial negotiating position in Paris. These concessions would have removed the two key Western objections to Soviet proposals; namely that Berlin should change its status to a Free City, and that an all-German Committee should be established, which Adenauer feared would lead to a confederal constitution for Germany.

Thus, the two Allies of each side who might have resisted the compromise, namely the FRG and the DDR, would probably have consented to an Interim Agreement, albeit Adenauer with extreme reluctance and under pressure from the President; and the DDR, by virtue of Khrushchev’s dominance in Eastern bloc foreign policy making on Berlin. If an agreement had been reached
between the US, France, Britain and the Soviet Union, it was unlikely that Adenauer would have blocked it. After all, on 27 May 1959 he agreed with Eisenhower that reunification ‘would have to come in a step by step process in which the two sides of Germany would themselves have to exhibit a clear readiness to be conciliatory and reasonable’. Even though publicly the Chancellor opposed progress involving the DDR, an Interim Agreement in 1960, even for a limited period of two or three years, would have got the West over the next elections in the FRG, in which the Chancellor’s intransigence might well have been replaced by a more realistic view of the situation.

We are left with Anatoly Dobrinin’s sobering words to Henry Kissinger in 1969, when he was Soviet Ambassador to the UN, that great opportunities had been lost in Soviet–American relations, especially between 1959 and 1963, when he was Head of the American Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry. He knew that Khrushchev seriously wanted an accommodation with the US. George Kennan, the Western guru of Soviet policy in the post-war period, believed that Khrushchev was ‘the only Soviet statesman of the post-Stalin period with whom we might conceivably have worked out a firmer sort of coexistence’.

Had an East–West modus vivendi on Berlin emerged from the Paris Summit, Macmillan’s mediating role during the negotiations would have been seen as invaluable to the Soviet Union, to the US and to the world at large. A compromise on the contentious problem of Berlin, and agreement to proceed with a test ban treaty (eventually achieved in 1963) and disarmament might well have marked the beginning of a period of real peaceful coexistence. Thus, the implications of the Paris Summit breakdown were enormous. As Sergei Khrushchev, Alexsei Adzhubei, Anatoly Dobrynin and Burlatsky have stated, and the evidence in this book indicates, the Soviet Government, with the support of the DDR, had worked hard to prepare a package for the Paris Conference which they hoped would lead to an acceptable compromise for the West. For Khrushchev, the wounds resulting from the President Eisenhower’s deception after the U-2 incident never healed, and led directly to his overbearing treatment of President Kennedy at the Vienna Summit of June 1961. Both Sergei Khrushchev and Burlatsky believe that the failure of the Paris Summit led to an escalation of tension, precipitating the Berlin Wall Crisis of 1961, and influenced Soviet conduct in sending missiles to Cuba in 1962. Moreover, the psychological climate in the Soviet Union changed dramatically; earlier hopes for an agreement were nullified. It was only after a massive increase in defence spending by both sides, and the arms race of the 1960s which followed the Cuban Missile Crisis, that relative strategic parity was achieved. Arguably, the beginning of a détente process was delayed for a decade.

A journalist once asked Macmillan, what was the most difficult problem he had to face during his premiership? His reply, which has now become common in political parlance, was ‘Events, dear boy. Events’! It can certainly be applied to the U-2 incident and its momentous consequences. President Eisenhower’s
decision to send a spy plane over Soviet airspace at such a sensitive time, and his subsequent handling of the crisis, had a disastrous impact on the fragile US–Soviet relationship and destroyed the possibility of a viable Interim Agreement on Berlin. In his memoirs, Khrushchev claimed that it was ‘a landmark in the history of the Cold War’. Macmillan encapsulated the tragedy in the following heartfelt words:

We are only now beginning to realize as the weeks go by the full extent of the summit disaster in Paris. For me, it is perhaps the work of two or three years. For Eisenhower it means an ignominious end to his Presidency. For Khrushchev, a set back to his more conciliatory and sensible ideas, for the world, a step nearer disaster.40
# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: The Geneva Foreign Ministers’ Conference, comparison of the Soviet and Western Papers of 28 July 1959

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soviet proposals</th>
<th>Western proposals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Duration and rights</strong>&lt;br&gt;The participants in the Geneva Foreign Ministers’ Conference agree to implement the following measures of an interim nature for a period of one year and a half</td>
<td>The arrangements to be for five years, after which, if there is no reunification, they can be reviewed by the Foreign Ministers conference on request of any of the Four Governments. Arrangements are described as modifications in respect of the ‘existing situation and the agreements at present in force’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Armed Forces</strong>&lt;br&gt;US, UK and France will reduce West Berlin garrisons and correspondingly to token contingents totalling not over 3,000 to 4,000 men.</td>
<td>US, UK, and France to declare they intend to limit forces in Berlin to present combined total of about 11,000. They will discuss further reductions if developments permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Activities</strong>&lt;br&gt;US, UK and France will not allow West Berlin territory to be used for interference in internal activities of other states or for any kind of subversive activities or hostile propaganda against the USSR, GDR or other socialist states.</td>
<td>Measures consistent with fundamental rights and liberties will be taken to avoid activities in Berlin which might disturb public order or seriously affect the rights and interests, or amount to interference in the internal affairs of others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Access
The Government of USSR will declare that for the duration of the agreement communications of West Berlin with the outside world will be preserved in present form. Free and unrestricted access to West Berlin by land, water and air for all persons, goods and communications, including those of Western forces in accordance with procedures in effect in April 1959. Freedom of movement between East and West Berlin will continue.

5. Atomic weapons and missile installations
US, UK and France shall not locate nuclear weapons in West Berlin. US, UK and France will declare their intention to continue not to locate atomic weapons or missiles in West Berlin.

6. Disputes mechanism
A committee of representatives of US, UK, France and the USSR will be set up within a month of date agreement enters into force to supervise and take measures implementing these agreements. All disputes will be raised and settled between the Four Governments, which will establish a quadripartite commission meeting in Berlin to examine such and seek solutions in the first instance. If necessary, the commission may consult German experts.

7. Role of the United Nations
The Secretary General of the United Nations will be requested to have a representative and staff in Berlin who will have free access to all of the city for the purpose of reporting propaganda activities in conflict with the foregoing principles. The Four Governments will consult with the Secretary General on appropriate action to be taken on any such report.

8. Negotiations between the two German States
US, UK, France and the USSR to announce they favour setting up an all-German committee of representatives of the two parts of Germany to consider a peace treaty with Germany and to work
out measures on reunification of Germany and development of contacts. All decisions will be taken by agreement between the two sides. If no agreement reached after the one-and-a-half year period, the states represented at the Geneva Conference will again negotiate on West Berlin.
Appendix B: Proposals by the Soviet Government on an Interim Agreement for Berlin, 9 May 1960, given to General de Gaulle on 9 May 1960

The Soviet Government is in favour of proceeding immediately to the signature of a peace treaty with the two German States. Nevertheless, since such a solution of the problem for the time being gives rise to objections on the part of the Western powers, the Soviet Government, which continues to try to assure concerted action on the German question by the four principal players of the anti-Hitler coalition, is ready in the meantime to agree to an interim solution. This interim solution would consist of the signature of a provisional agreement on West Berlin of a kind to prepare conditions for its later transformation into a Free City and the adoption of measures leading to a future peace settlement. The Soviet Government therefore proposes the following:

1. The conclusion of a provisional agreement on West Berlin for two years. The agreement would comprise approximately the same list of topics as those already discussed by the Foreign Ministers at Geneva in 1959, and without bringing any radical change in the present status of West Berlin would open the way to the elaboration of an agreed new status for the city in keeping with peacetime conditions.

   The provisional agreement must provide for the reduction of the forces of the Three Western powers in West Berlin. This reduction could be carried out progressively, in several stages. It would be appropriate also to record in writing the intention expressed by the three powers not to locate either atomic arms or rocket weapons of any sort in West Berlin.

   The agreement ought also to include the undertaking to ensure the prohibition of the use of the territory of West Berlin as a base for subversive activity and hostile propaganda directed against other states. Arrangements for the prohibition of subversive activities and hostile propaganda against West Berlin might equally be provided for in some appropriate form.

   The agreement would also take account of the declaration of the Soviet Union and of the DDR on the maintenance of the communications of West Berlin with the outside world in their present shape for the duration of the provisional agreement.

   The undertakings involving the DDR might take a form which would not imply diplomatic recognition of the DDR by the Western powers, as parties to the agreement.

   To supervise the carrying out of the obligations arising from the provisional agreement on West Berlin and to adopt, as necessary, measures intended to guarantee the application of the agreement when it has been concluded, a committee might be created consisting of representatives of France, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States.

2. At the same time as they conclude an agreement on West Berlin, the Four
Powers should make a declaration inviting the two German States to take advantage of the interim period fixed by the agreement to try to arrive at a common point of view on the German question. A contact might be established between the two German States through the creation of an all-German Committee or in some other form acceptable to them both.

In putting forward these proposals, the Soviet Union starts from the idea that, if the German states refuse to engage in discussions with each other, or if, on the expiry of the provisional agreement, it is evident that they are not able to reach an understanding, the Four Powers will sign a peace treaty with the two German States, or with one or them as they think fit. Of course, if the DDR and the Federal Republic succeed in reaching an understanding, there will be no obstacle to the conclusion of a single peace treaty for all Germany. Measures will be taken, moreover, to turn West Berlin into a Free City. As for the status of the Free City of West Berlin, the Soviet Union would prefer to work this out in conjunction with France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In proposing to turn West Berlin into a Free City, it is not the intention of the Soviet Union to harm the interests of the Western powers, or to change the present way of life in West Berlin, or to try to integrate the city into the DDR. The Soviet proposals derive from the realities of the situation and are intended to make more normal the atmosphere in West Berlin, while taking account of the interests of all the parties. The creation of a Free City would not harm the economic and financial relations of West Berlin with other states, including the Federal Republic. The Free City could establish in its own way its relations, foreign, political, economic, commercial, scientific and cultural, with all states and international organisations. Completely free communications would be assured with the outside world.

The population of West Berlin would receive solid guarantees for the defence of its interests, the Governments of the Soviet Union, the United States, France and the United Kingdom assuming the necessary obligations to guarantee the precise execution of the conditions of the agreement on the Free City. The Soviet Union declares itself also in favour of the participation of the United Nations in the guarantees given to the Free City. It is self-evident that in the case of the reunification of Germany there would no longer be any reason for a special status for West Berlin as a Free City.

Appendix C: Revised version of the Western proposals of 28 July 1959 (as at 13 May 1960)

The Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have examined the question of Berlin in the desire to find mutually satisfactory solutions to the problems which have been raised and which derive essentially from the division of Berlin and of Germany. They agreed that the best solution for these problems would be the reunification
of Germany with the consequent re-establishment of Berlin as its capital. They recognised, however, that meanwhile the existing situation and the agreements at present in force can be modified in certain respects and have consequently agreed upon the following:

a The Soviet Foreign Minister has made known the decision of the Soviet Government no longer to maintain forces in Berlin.

The Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom and the United States declare that it is the intention of their governments to limit the combined total of their forces in Berlin to the present figure (approximately 11,000). The three Ministers further declare that their Governments will from time to time consider the possibility of reducing such forces if developments permit.

b The Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom and the United States further declare that it is not the intention of their governments to continue to locate atomic weapons or missile installations in West Berlin.

c Free and unrestricted access to West Berlin by land, by water and by air shall be guaranteed for all persons, goods and communications, including those of forces of the Western powers stationed in Berlin. The procedures in effect in April 1960 shall be improved with a view to facilitating communications. Freedom of movement will likewise be guaranteed between East and West Berlin. All disputes which might arise with respect to access will be raised and settled between the Four Governments. The latter will establish a Quadripartite Commission which will meet in Berlin to examine in the first instance any difficulties arising in connexion with access and will seek to settle such difficulties. The Commission may make arrangements if necessary to consult German experts.

d Measures will be taken, consistent with fundamental rights and liberties, to avoid activities which might either disturb public order or seriously affect existing rights. The Secretary General of the United Nations will be requested to provide a representative, supported by adequate staff, to be established in Berlin, with free access to all parts of the city for the purpose of reporting to the Secretary General any activities which appear to be in conflict with the foregoing principles. The Four Governments will consult with the Secretary General in order to determine the appropriate action to be taken in respect of any such report.

e The arrangements specified in sub-paragraphs (a) through (d) above can in the absence of reunification be reviewed at any time after five years by the Foreign Ministers’ Conference as now constituted, if such review is requested by any of the Four Governments. The rights of the Four Powers in and relating to Berlin and access thereto shall in no way be affected by the conclusion or eventual modification or termination of this agreement.

f All parties to this agreement shall refrain from any act prejudicial to the execution of the terms of the agreement.
Appendix D: Soviet draft Interim Agreement on Berlin, 11 May 1960

The Governments of the Soviet Union, France the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, having examined the ways of promoting a mutually acceptable resolution of the Berlin Crisis, have recognised the necessity of achieving a broad settlement based on the following:

1. The Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America declare their readiness to reduce the number of their troops in Berlin to (...) thousand men. They will bring their troops to an agreed level by the day on which the agreement comes into force.

2. The Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America declare that as in the past they will refrain from installing any nuclear weapons or missile installations in West Berlin.

3. The Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America accept measures to prevent the use of the territory of West Berlin for activities which might lead to the breakdown of public order and security or which might lead to interference in the internal affairs of the other states, as well as hostile propaganda against them.

4. The Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America acknowledge the contents of the Note from the Soviet Government of 1960 declaring that during the period of the agreement communications between West Berlin and the outside world will be guaranteed in their existing state.

5. A committee will be set up on the day of the month on which the agreement is due to come into force, composed of representatives of the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, the United States of America and France, to observe the fulfilment of commitments arising from the present agreement and for the adoption of necessary measures, pertaining to the fulfilment of the agreement.

6. The present agreement will last for two years, after which the participants in the agreement will start new talks.
The Soviet Government today notifies the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of their receipt of the following DDR Declaration.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic declares its readiness to respect the Interim Agreement drawn up by the Governments of the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America on the Berlin question (...) 1960, and pledge their cooperation in its enforcement.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic takes note of the acknowledgement in the agreement that the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America will take measures to prevent the use of West Berlin for activities which might prove a threat to the maintenance of public order and security either regarding the internal or external affairs of other states and likewise with regard to propaganda against other states.

For their part, the Government of the German Democratic Republic declares that it will not allow the use of the territory of East Berlin or any other area subject to its authority to be used for any activity which might disturb public order or the security of West Berlin.

The Government of the DDR declares its agreement during the duration of the said agreement to guarantee West Berlin’s existing communications with the outside world.

The Government of the Soviet Union, for its part, supports the declaration on the maintenance of the communications of West Berlin with the outside world, in their present form, for the duration of the abovementioned agreement, and following discussions with the Government of the DDR states that there is no objection to accepting the Soviet Note as an appendix to the agreement on the Berlin question.
NOTES

INTRODUCTION


4 The Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), formerly the Archive of the MID or Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow; Social Unity Party (SED) Party Archive, Berlin. See Bibliography for record of interviews in Moscow.


7 In 1991, there were only a few articles and books on Khrushchev available in the Lenin Library, Moscow.


11 The majority of documents in the PRO refer to the Berlin Crisis, even when they refer to the Western sectors of the city. This form will be therefore be adopted.

12 Meeting between de Gaulle and Adenauer, Bad Kreuznach, 27 November 1958.


1 THE BACKGROUND TO THE BERLIN CRISIS, 1958–1960


2 Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p. 175.


4 S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev on Khrushchev*, p. 22.

5 Ibid., pp. 180–181; see also Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p. 181.


9 Diary of PM’s Visit to SU, 9 March 1959, FO 371/143439.


16 Interview with A. Adzhubei, in N. Khrushchev’s former apartment, Moscow, 12 September 1991.
17 Ibid., p. 178; Interview with Russian historians, Dmitry Aknalkatsi and Vladimir Batyuk, US Canada Institute, 12 September 1991, Moscow.
21 Khrushchev, *Khrushchev on Khrushchev*, p. 22.
22 Reported to John Christopher Wyndowe Bushell, when he was Ambassador to Pakistan, 1976–1979.
27 See White, *Britain Détente and Changing East–West Relations*.
32 Smirnov and Zubok, ‘Nuclear weapons after Stalin’s death: Moscow enters the Nuclear age’, p. 17.
35 Interview with Adzhubei, Moscow, 12 September 1991; see also Burlatsky, *Khrushchev and the First Russian Spring*, p. 157.
39 Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p. 175.
40 Interview with the author, Moscow, 12 September 1991.
42 Ibid., pp. 7, 54–55.
43 Aldous and Lee, *Harold Macmillan and Britain’s World Role*. 

NOTES


Ibid., p. 7.


S. Ball, ‘Macmillan and British defence’, in Aldous and Lee (eds), *Harold Macmillan and Britain’s World Role*, Ch. 4.

Young, *Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century*, and Dunn, *Diplomacy at the Highest Level*, Ch. 11.

Selwyn Lloyd’s Diary, Churchill College Cambridge, pp. 2–3.


For US policy, see Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy*; and *A Constructed Peace*.


Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, Ch. 2.


Gaddis, *We Now Know*.


Zubok, ‘Soviet foreign policy in Germany and Austria’, p. 16.
NOTES

69 Filitov, ‘Soviet policy and the early years of the two German States’, p. 4.
70 Gaddis, We Now Know, p. 132.
72 Ibid., p. 189.
73 The Treaty of Rapallo, 1921, was an example of two revisionist powers allying.
74 SIA, p. 584. A Polish Delegation had arrived in Moscow to discuss the revised proposals of Adam Rapacki regarding a zone of nuclear disengagement in Central Europe.
78 Ibid., p. 193.

2 SOVIET POLICY ON THE BERLIN QUESTION, NOVEMBER 1958–FEBRUARY 1959

1 Filitov, ‘Soviet Policy and the Early Years of the two German States’, p. 4.
4 Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 53.
5 See V. Zubok, and C. Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, p. 197.
7 Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, p. 196; H. M. Harrison, ‘Soviet and East German policy during the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1962, CWIHP Conference, Moscow, 1993 (passim).
10 Ibid.
11 Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 454.
19 Ibid.
20 Trachtenberg, History and Strategy, p. 184.
21 Ibid., p. 188.
25 NSA no. 553, 23 December 1958.
28 Ibid. For an account of Duncan Sandys’ reorganisation of British Defence, see Central Organisation for Defence, July 1958, CMND 476.
29 D 58, Memo 88, 3 November 1958, CAB 131/20.
30 Ibid.
33 Childs, The GDR, Moscow’s German Ally, p. 43.
34 Ibid., pp. 42–43.
35 SIA, p. 581.
36 Ibid.
38 Ibid., p. 18.
39 Ibid., p. 20.
40 Foreign Ministry Archive, Moscow, known as AVP RF, Fond 069, Opis 45, Papka 190, Delo 14, pp. 114–116.
42 E. Barker, Britain and a Divided Europe, 1945–1976, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972, pp. 60–61. Khrushchev was mistaken when he claimed that Western rights derived from the Potsdam Agreement.
43 Khrushchev met Humphrey in Moscow, on 3 December 1958. NSA Chronology, p. 61.
45 Sir Patrick Reilly, British Ambassador to the Soviet Union to Selwyn Lloyd, 28 November 1958, no. 1563, FO 371/137338 WG 10113/182.
46 Reilly to Lloyd, 2 December 1958, no. 1576, FO 371/137339 WG 10113/211.
49 Jorisse, the Dutch First Secretary in Prague, informed his Western counterparts that the Czech Foreign Ministry had informed Moscow about this problem. See NSA no. 465, 8 December 1958.
51 Berthoud to Lloyd, 4 December 1958, no. 624, FO 371 137341 WG 10113/249.
NOTES

52 Berthoud to Lloyd, 1 December 1958, no. 104, FO 371/I37340 WG 10113/232.
53 Report from the Moscow Embassy, ‘Trends of Communist Foreign Policy, December 1958’, FO 371/143417 NS 1023/2; See also Novoye Vremya, 48, 28 November 1958, p. 10.
57 Ibid.
58 SIA, p. 168.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
64 Heidelmeyer and Hindrichs, Documents on Berlin 1943–1963, pp. 242–244.
65 See ‘PM Visit to Moscow, Synopsis of Government Public Positions’, 24 February 1959, FO 371/145820 WG 1073/98A.
67 Ibid.
68 Secret Intelligence Report 4, 29 January 1959, NSA no. 684; see also NSA no. 722, 2 May 1959 for a DOS appraisal of the Mikoyan visit.
69 Ibid.
70 Dolgilevich, The Struggle of the Soviet Union and the DDR, p. 11; see also D. Melnikov, International Relations since the Second World War, Moscow, 1970, p. 206.
71 Dulles-Mikoyan talks, NSA no. 636, 16 January 1959.
72 Ibid.
73 NSA, no. 684, 29 January 1959. Since 1956, Moscow had been interested in establishing an inspection zone as a means of preventing surprise attack.
74 Ibid.
75 Reilly to Lloyd, no. 38, 21 March 1959, FO 371/143412 NS 1022/36.
76 The Times, 20 February 1959, p. 8.
77 Novoye Vremya, 13 February 1959, no. 7, pp. 7–8.
78 Ibid., no. 8.
79 Reilly to Lloyd, no. 284, February 1959, FO 371/143433 NS 1053/94.
80 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 591.
81 FO Minute, 17 February 1959, FO 371/143436 NS/1053/106.
84 Proposals for the Talks with the British Prime Minister in Moscow, AVP RF Fond 069, Opis 46, Papka 194, Delo 15, pp. 115–129.
85 Ibid.
3 BRITISH REACTION TO THE SOVIET INITIATIVE ON BERLIN, NOVEMBER 1958–FEBRUARY 1959

NOTES

1 FO Minute by Sir Frederick Hoyer-Millar, 11 November 1958, 371/137334 WG/10113/35.
2 FO Minute by CM Rose, 12 November FO 371/137335 WG 10113/96.
3 US Ambassador, Thompson, Moscow to DOS, NSA no. 274, 14 November 1958.
4 FO Minute, Brooks to de Zulueta, 15 November 1958, PREM 11/2715.
5 FO Minute, 14 November 1958, FO 371/137335, WG 10113/100.
6 Lloyd to Caccia, 15 November 1958, no. 8113, PREM 11/2715.
7 Lloyd to Caccia, 15 November 1958, no. 8112, PREM 11/2715.
8 Lloyd to Caccia, 15 November 1958, no. 8133, PREM 11/2715.
9 Contemporary Record, 6, pp. 129–130.
10 Aide-memoire, Lloyd to Caccia, 17 November 1958, 3FO 137335 WG 1013/77.
11 Steel to Lloyd, 16 November 1958, FO 371/137334 WG 10113/171.
12 H. Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 571.
13 Minute by Hoyer-Millar, 26 November 1958, FO 371/137338 WG 10113/172.
14 Conversation between Lloyd and the US Ambassador, 19 November 1958, FO 371/137339 WG 10113/199.
15 Burr, NSA Essay, 21 March 1958, p. 34.
16 Under normal procedures, Soviet officials manned border checkpoints.
18 Burr, NSA Essay, p. 35.
19 Rumbold to Reilly, 20 November 1958, 3FO 371/137337 WG/10113/159.
21 Ibid.
22 Hood to Lloyd, 26 November 1958, no. 3216, FO 371/137338 WG/10113/162.
23 NSA no. 426, 27 November 1958.
25 NSA no. 325, 21 November 1958.
26 Parliamentary Question no. 51 (2868), 1 December 1958, FO 371/137340 WG 10113/229.
27 Note from Soviet Government, 27 November 1958, Reilly to Lloyd, no. 157/2E, FO 371/137341 WG 10113/254.
29 FO Minute, 5 December 1958, no. 1303, FO 371/137341 WG/10113/277.
30 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, pp. 574–576.
31 Ibid., p. 573.
32 The issue of contingency planning and an airlift had dominated Cabinet discussion on 17 November 1958.
34 FO to Ottawa, 15 December 1958, FO 371/13744 WG 10113/347.
35 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 574.
37 C. (58) 246, 5 December 1958, CAB 129.
38 Cabinet Conclusions C. 84 (58), 10 December 1958, CAB. 128/32.
40 Minute, de Zulueta to Bishop, 2 December 1958, PREM 11/2715.
41 Minute, Bishop to PM, 10 December 1958, PREM 11/2715.
42 Lloyd to Steel, 22 January 1959, no. 210, PREM 11/2715.
NOTES

43 Lloyd to Steel, 22 January 1959, no. 210, PREM 11/2715.
44 Selwyn Lloyd Diary, Selo 4/22, 5 August, Selwyn Lloyd Papers, Churchill College Cambridge, pp. 2–3.
45 FO Minute by Rumbold, 3 December 1958, FO371/137340 WG/10113/244.
46 FO Minute by Ormsby-Gore, 10 December 1958, FO 371/137343 WG/10113/344.
50 NSA no. 508, 12 December 1958.
51 For British reaction, see COS Meeting, 31 December 1958, JP (58) 175, DEFE 4/58.
54 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 577.
56 COS (59) 1st Meeting, 1 January 1959, DEFE 4/115.
57 PM Minute, 5 January 1959, PREM 11/2715.
58 PM to Dulles, 8 January 1958, T. 14/59, PREM 11/2715.
59 Caccia to PM, 12 January 1959, T. 20/59, PREM 11/2715.
63 Lloyd to Steel, 22 January 1959, no. 210, PREM 11/2715.
65 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Papers on Germany and European security, 20 February 1959, FO371/145820 WG/1073/95.
69 Annex to Gen. 676 ‘PM’s Visit to Moscow, February 1959’, FO371/145820 WG/1073/98 A.
70 Ibid.
71 COS (59) Meeting, 5 March 1959, DEFE 5/89.
72 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 582.
73 Ibid.
74 Conversations between the President and Dulles, 20 January 1959, NSA nos 643, 651, 671.
75 Lloyd to Caccia, no. 493, 23 January 1959, PREM 11/2715.
76 Letter from Dulles, 26 January 1959, NSA no. 673.
77 White House Conference, 29 January 1959, NSA no. 686.
78 Burr, NSA Essay, pp. 35–36.
79 COS (59) 15th Meeting, 24 February DEFE 5 (89). A compromise was confirmed on this issue when Macmillan met Eisenhower at Camp David.
81 Conversation between PM and Ambassador, 30 January 1959, PREM 11/2715.
82 Steel to Lloyd, no. 160, 3 February 1959, FO 371/145817 WG/1073/35.
84 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 586.
85 Conversation between Lloyd and Dulles, PREM 11/2715 WG/1073/39G.
4 THE PRIME MINISTER’S VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION, 21 FEBRUARY–3 MARCH 1959

1 For accounts of the PM’s visit, see Macmillan, Riding the Storm, pp. 582–635; and Horne, Macmillan 1957–1986, pp. 116–136.
2 Anthony Eden visited the Soviet Union in 1941.
4 PM Visit to Moscow, Steering Brief, 12 February 1959, CAB 130/159, Gen. 676/1; Ibid. 17 February 1959, Gen. 676, 2–3.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Horne, Macmillan 1957–1986, p. 120. The Russo-Finnish War of 1940 was a defeat for the Russians.
8 Ibid., p. 122. Malcolm Muggeridge said the PM looked ‘as if he were at Chatsworth’.
9 Visit of the PM and Foreign Secretary to the Soviet Union, 21 February–3 March Doc. 26, Part 2, p. 8; henceforth cited as PM Visit to SU, CAB 133/293. PREM 11/2690 also covers the PM Visit.
10 Sir Patrick Reilly’s Diary of PM’s Visit to SU, 9 March 1959. no. 32, FO 371/143439 NS/1053/179.
11 PM Visit to SU, Doc. 2, pp. 10–14, CAB 133/293.
12 For FO Review of Western policy on Germany, Berlin and European security since the 1955 Geneva Conference, and for the Soviet attitude to these questions, see PM’s Visit to Moscow, FO 371/145820 WG 1073/98 (A).
13 Meeting at Semonovskoye, 22 February 1959, PM Visit to SU, Doc. 2, pp. 11–12, CAB 133/293.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., p. 29.
16 Ibid.
17 FO Steering Brief, 12 February 1959, CAB 130/159 Gen. 676/1.
18 PM Visit to SU, Doc. 2, p. 13. CAB 133/293.
19 Ibid.
20 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 600.
21 PM Visit, Doc. 3 pp. 14–20, CAB 133/293.
22 Ibid.
23 PM Visit, Doc. 4, pp. 21–25, CAB 133/293.
24 Ibid., p. 23.
25 Conversation between Lloyd and Gromyko, en route to Dubna, 24 February 1959, CAB 133/293, Doc. 15, p. 59.
26 Reilly’s Diary of PM Visit, 9 March 1959, point 5, FO 371/143439 NS/1053/179.
28 PM to President, 23 February 1959, T. 99/59, PREM. 11/2690.
29 PM to de Gaulle, T. 101/59, 23 February, PREM 11/2690.
NOTES

31 See Horne, op. cit., pp. 122–129; and Macmillan, Riding the Storm, pp. 591–634, for accounts of the PM’s Visit.
33 PM Visit, Doc. 5, p. 29, CAB 133/293.
35 Reilly’s Diary, no. 32, 9 March 1959, FO 371/143439 NS/1053/179; and PM Visit, Doc. 6, pp. 36–37, CAB 133/293.
36 Ibid.
37 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 617.
38 Reilly’s Diary, 9 March 1959, no 32, FO 371/143439 NS 1053/179.
42 See Don Cook’s report in The Times, 26 February 1959, p. 10.
43 Sunday Times Editorial, 28 February 1959.
44 Cabinet Conclusions 13 (59) Minute 1, 27 February 1959, CAB 128/33.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 619.
49 FO to Reilly, February 27 1959, no. 383, PREM 11/2690.
50 Adzhubei told the author that prior to the meeting of the General Assembly in New York in September 1960, when Khrushchev banged his shoe on the table to emphasise his point, before the meeting he said to the Soviet Delegation, ‘let’s have some fun today!’ It seems that rather childish and boorish behaviour appealed to the Russian leader’s sense of humour. Interview, Moscow, 12 September 1991.
53 Reilly’s Diary, 9 March 1959, no. 32, FO 371/143439 NS1053/179; also see Burlatsky, Khrushchev and the First Russian Spring, pp. 160–161. The latter emphasises the intensity of Khrushchev’s inferiority complex when he met foreign leaders, including Eisenhower at Camp David. He was extremely sensitive if he thought he was being slighted.
54 The Times, 28 February 1959, p. 6.
55 Ibid.
56 Reilly to FO, 28 February 1959, no. 379, FO 371/143437 NS/1053/143.
57 Reilly’s Diary, 9 March 1959, FO 371/143439 NS/1053/179.
58 PM Visit, Doc. 17, pp. 60–61, CAB 133/293.
59 Private Conversation in Leningrad between Lloyd and Gromyko, 1 March 1959, PM Visit, Doc. 19, pp. 65–67, CAB 133/293.
60 Ibid., p. 67.
61 Ibid.
63 Private conversation between the PM and Gromyko, 1 March 1959; PM Visit, Part 3, Doc. 50, pp. 38–42. CAB133/293.
64 SIA 1959–1960, p. 20. On 24 February, in an election speech in Moscow, Khrushchev called for a summit conference to discuss not only the German Peace
Treaty but also a wider range of topics, including European security, disengagement, test bans, and nuclear and conventional disarmament.

65 Ibid.
66 PM Visit, Doc. 7, pp. 38–42, CAB133/293.
67 Ibid.
68 AVP RF, Fond 069, Opis 46, Papka 194, Delo 15, pp. 115–129.
69 PM’s Visit to SU, Meeting in Kremlin, 2 March 1959, Part 1, Doc. 7, p. 39; CAB 133/293.
70 Ibid. On 3 December 1958, Khrushchev had assured Senator Humphrey (during his visit to Moscow) that the Soviet Note was not an ‘ultimatum’, and that he would consider alternative proposals on Berlin.
71 FO to UK Del. NATO, 5 March 1959, no. 343 FO 371/145822 WG 1073/116.
72 PM Visit to SU, Part 1, Doc. 7, p. 39, CAB 133/293.
73 Ibid.
74 Roberts, UK Del. NATO to Lloyd, Statement for NATO Council, 4 March 1959, FO 371/145822 WG 1073/116.
75 Ibid.
76 Reilly to FO, 3 March 1959, no. 422, PREM 11/2690.
77 PM Visit to Moscow, 2 March 1959, Part I, Doc. 7, p. 41, CAB 133/293.
78 This exchange was not in the official record but emerged in a letter from Bishop, PPS to the PM, to Northern Dept. March 4 1959, PREM 11/2690.
81 Ibid.
82 The Times, 4 March 1959.
83 Ibid.
84 Daily Telegraph, 4 March 1959, p. 1.
87 Reilly’s Diary, 9 March 1959, FO 371/143439 NS/1053/179.
89 Ibid.
90 Cabinet Conclusions 14 (59) Minute 1, 4 March 1959, CAB 128/33.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Statement by Sir Bernard Ledwidge at a Witness Seminar at Kings’ College, p. 129, op. cit. He was discussing the content of FO Memorandum 8113, 15 November 1958, which, he said, had received the approval of the Prime Minister. It faced vociferous opposition from Britain’s Allies.
95 Ibid. Burlatsky, one of Khrushchev’s advisors, mentions the crucial symbolic importance for the Soviet leader of Western recognition of the political parity of the Soviet Union with the US. See Burlatsky, op. cit., pp. 160–161.
96 Ibid.

5 BRITAIN SEEKS TO CONVERT HER ALLIES TO THE MACMILLAN INITIATIVE, FEBRUARY–MAY 1959

1 Cabinet Conclusions 14 (C59) Minute 1, 4 March 1959, CAB 128/33.
3 Ibid.

198
NOTES

5 Lloyd to Caccia, 9 March 1959, FO 371/145824 WG/1073/125.
7 FO Report, ‘The Visit of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary to Paris’, 9–10 March 1959, Doc. 2, pp. 7–8, CAB 133/294.
8 PM Visit to Paris, 9–10 March 1959, Doc. 2, pp. 2–3, CAB 133/294. This report was released by the PRO in 1995.
9 Ibid., pp. 2–7.
10 Ibid., pp. 8–12 and pp. 18–24.
11 Ibid., pp. 18–24.
12 PM Visit to Paris, 9–10 March, Doc. 5, p. 21, CAB 133/294. Macmillan was wary about supporting the Agency Theory, as he feared Adenauer’s reaction.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., Doc. 5, p. 23.
16 Cabinet Conclusions 16 (59), Minute 5, 11 March 1958, CAB 128/33.
17 Ibid.
18 See Burr, NSA Essay, p. 34.
21 Ibid.
27 PM Visit to Bonn, 12–13 March 1959, Doc. 3, pp. 7–9, CAB 133/293.
31 Ibid.
32 Adenauer Erinnerungen, pp. 480–481.
33 Cabinet conclusions 17(59), minutes 2,4, 17 March 1959, CAB 128/33.
34 Ibid.
35 Meeting between PM and Diefenbaker, 18 March 1959. FO 371/145826 WG 1073/165/G.
36 Ibid.
38 FO to Washington, 5 March 1959, no. 1318, PREM 11/2684.
39 Ibid.
40 FO Steering Brief, 16 March 1959, FO 371/145826 WG 1073/160.
NOTES

45 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Macmillan, Riding the Storm, p. 647.
50 Ibid., Doc. 6, pp. 23–26.
51 Ibid., Annex 2, pp. 50–51.
52 Ibid.; and Burr, NSA Essay, p. 34.
53 Meeting, PM Visit to Washington, 6 March 1959, Doc. 6, Annex 2, pp. 50–51, CAB 133/241.
54 Ibid., Doc. 6 and Annex 11, p. 50, CAB133/241.
55 Burr, NSA Essay, p. 35.
56 COS Meeting, 24 April 1959, DEFE 5/91.
58 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
62 In 1958, the British COS, Joint Planning Committee considered a plan for disengagement, including a ‘special zone’, put forward by the FO. ‘Plan for European Security’, 10 March 1958, COS(58) 22, Min. 1, DEFE 4/89.
64 SIA, 1959–1960, p. 27.
66 Bruce to DOS, 24 March 1959, NSA no. 1040.
67 Lloyd to PM, 2 April 1959, T. 182/59, PREM 11/2717.
68 See the Report of Four-Power Working Group, 9–12 March 1959, FO371/145827 WG/1073/166, for more detail.
69 Lloyd to PM 2 April 1959, T. 182/59, PREM 11/2717.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Cabinet Conclusions 22 (59) Minute 2, 9 April 1959, CAB 128/33.
73 Ibid.
74 Caccia to Lloyd, 4 April 1959, no. 908, PREM 11/2717.
75 Steel to Lloyd, 4 April 1959, no. 404 PREM 11/2717.
76 Letter, Jebb to Rumbold, 18 April 1959, FO 371/145828 WG 1073/179.
77 Record of Meeting between Macmillan and the French, 13 April 1959, FO 371/145827 WG 1073/171.
78 Ibid.
79 US Embassy, London to DOS, 15 April 1959, NSA no. 1153.
80 Working Group Report, 23 April 1959, NSA no. 1198.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., paras 27, 28, 29.
83 Meeting of the Western Foreign Ministers, 29 April 1959, NSA no. 1258.
84 Ibid., NSA no. 1234.
NOTES

85 Lloyd to PM, T. 226/59, 29 April 1959, PREM 11/2717.
86 Herter to President, 5 May 1959, NSA no. 1245.
87 Cabinet Conclusions 28(59) 5 May 1959, CAB 128/33.

6 THE GENEVA FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE,
11 MAY–5 AUGUST 1959

1 Thompson to DOS, NSA no. 1078, 31 March 1959.
2 The German Delegation at the Four Power Working Group in London briefed their colleagues on Kroll’s conversation with Gromyko, 17 April 1959, NSA no. 1175.
3 Ibid.
5 PM to Khrushchev, 29 April 1959, T. 220/59, PREM 11/2685.
6 PM to President, 20 April 1959, T. 212/59, PREM 11/2685.
7 Ibid.
8 MID Report for Central Committee, 22 April 1959, AVP RF Fond 069, Opis 46, Papka 194, Delo 21, pp. 87–104.
9 Ibid.
10 Press Statement by the Soviet Embassy, 29 April 1959, PREM 11/2717.
11 Ibid.
12 Communication from Moscow to Ulbricht, agreeing the position of the DDR at the Geneva Conference, 8 March 1959 (located in Ulbricht’s Office, SED Politburo), SAPMO-Barch, DY30, JIV 2/202/128.
15 Ibid.
17 Ibid., p. 44.
18 Ibid., Draft Peace Treaty with Germany, Doc. 57, pp. 223–237.
19 Cabinet Conclusions 32 (59) Minute 4, 28 May 1959, CAB 128/33.
20 Memo by Lloyd on the Foreign Ministers’ Conference, 13 June 1959, c.(59) 102 CAB 129/98.
22 Conversation between Gromyko and Lloyd, 26 May 1959, PREM 11/2717.
24 Ibid.
25 Lloyd to PM, 1 June 1959, T. 283/59, PREM 11/2717.
26 UK Del, Geneva to FO, 3 June 1959, no. 146, 1959, PREM 11/2717.
27 Lloyd to PM, 3 June 1959, T. 291/59, PREM 11/2717.
29 Lloyd to PM, 4 June 1959, T. 297/59, PREM 11/2717.
32 President to Dillon, 16 June 1959, NSA no. 1417.
33 Cabinet Conclusions 35(59), Minute 2, 15 June 1959, CAB 128/33. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Foreign Secretary, C. (59) 102, CAB 129/98, reporting on the situation in Geneva.

201
NOTES

34 Ibid.
35 PM to President, 16 June 1959, T. 326/59, PREM11/2718.
36 President to Dillon, 16 June 1959, NSA no. 1417.
37 Cabinet Conclusions 36 (59) Minute 4, 17 June 1959, CAB 128/33.
41 UK Del. NATO Paris to FO, 18 June 1959, no. 212, PREM 11/2718.
43 Thompson to DOS, 17 June 1959, NSA no. 1426.
44 Ibid.
45 Letter from Ulbricht in Riga to SED Politburo, 10 June 1959, SAPMO-Barch, DY/30 2/202/128.
46 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
52 Cabinet Conclusions 37(59), 23 June 1959, Minute 1, CAB 128/33.
53 Ibid.
56 Reilly to Lloyd, 29 June 1959, no. 967, PREM 11/2719.
57 Caccia to Lloyd, 1 July 1959, no. 1504, PREM 1/2719.
58 Lloyd to Caccia, 3 July 1959, no. 2944, PREM 11/2719.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Reilly to FO, 9 July 1959, no. 1010, PREM 11/2719.
69 Lloyd to PM, no. 403, 23 July 1959, PREM 11/2719.
70 Kozlov/Harriman interview, 1 July 1959, NSA no. 1519.
71 Letter from Murphy to Kozlov, 3 July 1959, NSA no. 1521.
72 Conversation between the President and Kozlov, 1 July 1959, NSA no. 1527.
73 President to PM, 23 July 1959, T. 398/59, PREM 11/2719.
74 Lloyd to PM, 27 July 1959, no. 412, PREM 11/2719.
75 Ibid.
76 Record of conversation between Lloyd and Gromyko, 27 July 1959, PREM 11/2719 WG/1015/341.
78 Lloyd to PM, 31 July 1959, T. 428/59, see after no. 423 in file.
79 See Appendix A, Western and Soviet Papers of 28 July 1959, Lloyd to FO, nos 358 and 359, 28 July 1959, PREM 11/2719.

202
NOTES

80 Lloyd to PM, 1 August 1959, T. 438/59, PREM 11/2719.
81 PM to Lloyd, 1 August 1959, T. 436/59, PREM 11/2719.
82 Ibid.
83 Cabinet Conclusions C.49(59), Minute 1, 29 July 1959, CAB 128/33.
84 Ibid.
85 PM to President, 30 July 1959, T. 424/59, PREM 11/2719.
86 President to PM, 29 July 1959, T. 423/59, PREM 11/2719.
87 Lloyd to PM, 3 August 1959, T. 448/59, PREM 11/2719.
88 PM to Lloyd, 4 August 1959, T. 455/59, PREM 11/2719.
89 NSA, 30 July 1959, no. 1600.
91 Statement by Gromyko, 5 August 1959, Cmnd 868, Doc. 84, pp. 317–324.
92 Ibid.

7 EAST–WEST NEGOTIATIONS ON AN INTERIM AGREEMENT FOR WEST BERLIN, SEPTEMBER 1959 UNTIL THE PARIS SUMMIT CONFERENCE, MAY 1960

1 Macmillan, Pointing the Way, p. 82.
2 Ibid., p. 83.
3 Macmillan, Pointing the Way, pp. 78–81.
5 Cabinet Conclusions 50(59) Minute 1, 1 September 1959, CAB 128/33.
6 Reilly to Lloyd, 6 August 1959, no. 1141, PREM 11/2675.
7 Ibid., pp. 160–161 for an account of the meeting.
8 Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers.
10 Camp David Meeting, 15 September 1959, NSA nos 1653 and 1654.
12 Ibid.
13 Camp David Meeting, 27 September 1959, FRUS, Crisis in Berlin, pp. 42–44.
14 Ibid.
15 FO Minute, 2 October 1959, FO 371/145709 WG/1015/364.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., p. 101.
19 Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 397.
21 A. Adzhubei, Face to Face with America: The Story of the Voyage of N.S. Khrushchev to the United States, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House 1959, p. 44.
22 Ibid. See also Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, pp. 201–202.
23 See Dunn, Diplomacy at the Highest Level, p. 69.
26 Ibid.

203
NOTES

29 Richter, *Khrushchev’s Double Bind*, p. 120; see also pp. 131, 141.
30 Conversation between Lloyd and Malik, 28 October 1959, FO 371/143431 NS/1051/52.
31 Record of conversation between Malik and the Foreign Secretary, 30 November 1959, FO 371/143431 NS/1051/57.
33 Ibid.
42 Borisov and Koloskov, *Study of Sino-Soviet Relations*, p. 153; Khrushchev was in Peking in August 1958, so this lack of consultation is particularly significant.
43 Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, see Chapter 7 and pp. 235–238.
45 Interview with Adzhubei, in Khrushchev’s former apartment in Moscow, 10 September 1991; see Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p. 231; they share Adzhubei’s opinion on this point.
46 Ibid.
48 See Volkogonov, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire*, pp. 229–233, for an account of Khrushchev’s relations with Mao.
49 See Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p. 231.
50 Ibid., p. 229; see also Gaddis, *We Now Know*, Ch. 3.
51 Memo of conversation between Caccia and Herter, 16 October 1959, NSA no. 1724.
52 Discussions between Eisenhower and Segni, 30 September 1959, NSA no. 1678.
53 Ibid.
54 Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*.
55 Eisenhower to de Gaulle, 9 and 16 October 1959, NSA nos 1692 and 1708; and Eisenhower to Adenauer, 16 October 1959, NSA no. 1707.
56 Steel, GB Ambassador to Bonn, to Lloyd, 28 October 1959, no. 244, PREM 11/2990.
59 Ibid.
60 Minute, Lloyd to PM, 12 October 1959, PREM 11/2990.
61 PM to President, 16 October 1959, T. 563/59, PREM 11/2990.
63 Memo of White House Meeting on 1 October 1959, NSA no. 1681.
64 Ibid.; see NSA nos 1737, 30 October 1959, and 1740, November 1959, for US discussions on the Norstad Plan on force reductions and an arms control agreement.
65 Conference with the President, 22 October 1959, NSA 1719.
66 Ibid.
67 Memo by Hillenbrand, DOS expert on German Affairs, on US Draft and British Memo on Berlin, 23 October 1959, NSA 1721. (There is no copy of the British memo in the relevant file in the PRO.).
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Macmillan to Diefenbaker, Canadian PM, 10 November 1959, T. 601/59, PREM 11/2977.
74 The countries of the European Community and European Free Trade Area.
75 Conversation between Herter and Alphand, French representative on the Working Group, 5 December 1959, NSA no. 1767.
76 Conversation between Eisenhower and Herter, 30 December 1959, NSA no. 1788.
78 Memo for President, 2 December 1958, NSA no. 1773.
79 Memo for President, 10 December 1959, NSA no. 1776.
80 Record of Meeting at the Elysee Palace and Rambouillet, 19 December 1959, PREM 11/2991.
82 Meeting at Rambouillet, 19 December 1959, PREM 11/2991.
84 Minute, Lloyd to PM, M. 59/134, PREM 11/2991.
86 Reilly to Lloyd, 5 January 1960, no. 5, FO 371/151919 NS/1022/2.
87 Chancery, Moscow to FO, 14 January 1960, no. 54, FO 371/151919. NS 1022//7.
89 Embassy, Moscow to FO, 11 January 1960 (103800), FO 371/151919 NS/1022/6.
The Embassy regarded these lectures by Communist Party officials and academics as a reliable source of current Soviet thinking.
90 Soviet Memo given to Ollenhauer by Smirnov, 13 January 1960, NSA no. 1891.
91 Richter, *Khrushchev’s Double Bind*, p. 121.
95 Ibid., p. 187. East–West disarmament talks were taking place in Geneva, see SIA p. 53.
96 Report by Pervukhin for MID, 18 February 1960, AVP Fond 5, Opis 49, Delo 186, pp. 129–133.
97 Ibid.
99 Ibid.; also FO Minute, Northern Dept, 2 February 1960, FO 371/151920 NS 1022/18 on the decline of the Sino–Soviet alliance.
100 Conversation between the PM and President, Buckingham Palace, 6 April 1960, PREM 11/2978. See also SIA pp. 59–60.

205
NOTES

101 Ibid.
102 Ibid. (These Soviet Proposals were sent to de Gaulle on 9 May; see Appendix B.)
103 PM to Menzies, PM of Australia, 2 February 1960, T. 60/231, PREM 11/9977.
104 Richter, Khrushchev’s Double Bind, p. 128.
105 Macmillan, Pointing the Way, p. 179.
106 Ibid., p. 188.
108 Macmillan, Pointing the Way, p. 188.
110 Conversation between the PM and President, Camp David, 28 March 1960, NSA no. 1856. The PRO is still withholding the FO record of the meeting, PREM 11/2994.
111 Ibid.
113 Talks between the President and de Gaulle, 4 April 1960, NSA no. 1878.
114 Caccia to Lloyd, 28 January 1960, no. 50, FO 371/154083 WG/1074/7.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Meeting of Western Foreign Ministers, 13 April 1960, Washington, PREM 11/2992.
120 Conversation between Lloyd and Couve de Murville, 13 April 1960, PREM 11/2992.
122 Ibid.

8 THE U-2 CRISIS, MAY 1960

1 Beschloss, Mayday, pp. 355–363.
4 Lashmar, Spy Flights of the Cold War, p. 144.
6 Gaddis, We Now Know, p. 245.
7 Beschloss, Mayday, p. 239.
8 Ibid.
9 Divine, Eisenhower and the Cold War.
10 Lashmar, Spy Flights of the Cold War, Ch. 15.
11 Ambrose, Eisenhower: The President, p. 573.
13 Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, pp. 203–204.
14 SIA, pp. 61–66.
16 Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, p. 203.
18 Werth, The Khrushchev Phase, p. 246.
19 Interview with Adzhubei, 12 September 1991, Moscow.
20 Tompson, Khrushchev, A Political Life, pp. 222–223.

206
NOTES

21 Text of Khrushchev’s speech to the Supreme Soviet, 5 May 1960, Chancery, Moscow to FO no. 564, FO 371/151921, NS/1022/27.
23 Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles, p. 32.
24 Letter, Khrushchev to President, 6 May 1960, PREM 11/2992.
25 See SIA 1959–1960, pp. 61–70; Beschloss, Mayday.
27 Divine, Eisenhower and the Cold War, p. 149.
31 Werth, The Khrushchev Phase, p. 249.
33 See Appendix B.
34 Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and his Era, p. 458.
38 Werth, The Khrushchev Phase, p. 250.
39 Ibid.
40 Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles, p. 32.
43 Ibid.
44 Minute, Reilly to Rumbold, 17 May 1960, PREM 11/2992.
45 Macmillan, Pointing the Way, p. 205.
47 Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and his Era, p. 463.
48 Memo of Conference between President and Herter. 12 May 1960, NSA no. 1898.
51 Selwyn Lloyd’s Diary, Selo, 4/33, Churchill Archive, Cambridge.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 459.
57 Werth, The Khrushchev Phase, p. 255.
58 Heads of Government Meeting, 19 May 1960, Doc. 37, p. 56, PREM11/2992. The Western leaders intended to discuss the question of nuclear tests with Khrushchev during the first days of the summit. See Heads of Government Meeting, record of meeting between Lloyd and Herter at the British Embassy on 14 May 1960, Doc. 2, PREM 11/2992.
59 Richter, Khrushchev’s Double Bind, p. 131.
60 Reilly to Lloyd, 28 May 1960, FO 371/151922 NS 1022/38.
61 Reilly to Lloyd, 25 May 1960, no. 42, FO371/151922 NS 1022/36.
NOTES

63 UK Del to NATO Paris to FO, 3 June 1960, FO 371/151922 NS 1022/35.
64 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Tatu, Power in the Kremlin, p. 60. See also Slusser, The Berlin Crisis of 1961.
68 Ibid.
70 Taubmann, Khrushchev: The Man and his Era, p. 454.
71 Memo by Thompson, 16 May 1960, NSA 1897. This account has been corroborated by Sergei Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles, p. 32.
72 Beschloss, Mayday, p. 259.
73 Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, p. 233.
74 Volkogonov, The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire, p. 251; Aksuitin, Khrushchev: A Biographical Study; Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and his Era.
75 Khrushchev, Khrushchev on Khrushchev, pp. 28–32.
76 Ibid.
77 Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and his Era, p. 460.
78 Burlatsky, Khrushchev and the First Russian Spring, p. 157.
79 Interview with the author, Khrushchev’s apartment in Moscow, 12 September 1991. Adzhubei was ‘recognised by those in the know as Khrushchev’s unofficial deputy for foreign affairs’; and Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and his Era.
80 Interview with Adzhubei in Moscow, 12 September 1991.
81 Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, p. 205.
82 Volkogonov, The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire, p. 251.
83 See Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, for the views of Trosyanovsky, recorded during an interview in the US, 9 March, 1993, p. 205.
85 Interview with the author, 12 September 1991, Moscow.
87 See the Foreword of Strobe Talbott, in Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: the Glasnost Tapes.
89 Ibid.
90 Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament, pp. 449–450; this account of events is corroborated by Sergei Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles, p. 30.
92 Interview with Adzhubei, Moscow, 12 September, 1991. This interview took place in Nikita Khrushchev’s former apartment in Moscow, just after the attempted coup, in which Yeltsin defeated the conspirators. That day, all Communist Party premises had been closed. Adzhubei said it was the first time he felt he could speak without the risk of the KGB watching him. Since the fall of Khrushchev, he said he too had been in disgrace. He said that in these post-coup days Moscow was ‘heady’ and full of hope.
93 See Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles, pp. 30, 32–37.
94 Ibid.
95 Tatu, Power in the Kremlin, p. 62.
97 Interview with Adzhubei, 12 September 1991.

208
NOTES

99 NSA no. 1893, 14 May 1960.
100 Minute from Rumbold to Hoyer-Millar, 13 May 1960, PREM 11/2992. See Appendix A for a comparison with the Soviet 28 July 1959 Geneva proposals.
101 Ibid.
102 Meeting of Foreign Ministers, Quai D’Orsay, 3 pm 14 May 1960, Doc. 1, PREM 11/2992. See Appendix C for the revised version of the Western Proposals of 28 July 1959 at the Geneva Conference.
103 The FRG had demanded the insertion of this clause at the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Istanbul.
104 See Appendix C.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid. During the Geneva Conference, the Western powers were discussing a figure of 8,000.
108 Ibid.
110 SED Archive in the former East Berlin, SAPMO Barch, DY30/J IV, 2/202/128. The author found this document in a file from Ulbricht’s Office. It was undated but filed at the beginning of May 1960.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
114 See Appendix D: this Russian document, dated 11 May 1960, was located in a file from Ulbricht’s Office, SAPMO Barch, DY30/J IV, 2/202, 128. In 1994, the author was promised, by 1996, key Soviet documents which would corroborate this evidence on CPSU proposals for the summit, but they were not released by TsKhSD and were transferred to the Presidential Archive.
115 See Appendix E.
117 Conversation between Lloyd and Herter, in Tehran, 28 April 1960, PREM 11/2992.
118 Reilly to Rumbold, 10 May 1960, PREM 11/2992.
121 Ibid.

CONCLUSION

2 Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Emergence of a Superpower*, p. 449.
3 See Dunn, *Diplomacy at the Highest Level*, p. 262.
5 *Institute of Contemporary British History* Witness Seminar on HMG Embassy, Moscow, at the FO, 8 March 1999.
NOTES

7 Lashmar, Spy Flights of the Cold War, p. 95.
8 Ibid., p. 145.
9 Ibid., p. 201.
10 Ambrose, Eisenhower: The President, p. 568.
12 Beschloss, Mayday, p. 319.
14 Appendix C.
15 See Beschloss, Mayday, p. 377.
16 Ambrose, Eisenhower: The President, p. 567.
18 Selwyn Lloyd’s diary entry, 16 May, Selo, 4/33, Churchill Archive, Cambridge.
19 Divine, Eisenhower and the Cold War, p. 152.
20 Beschloss, Mayday, p. 364.
22 Taubman, p. 468.
23 Reilly to Rumbold, 10 May 1960, PREM 11/2992.
24 Interview with Adzhubei, Moscow, 12 September 1991.
25 See Dunn, Diplomacy at the Highest Level, pp. 252–265.
26 Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, pp. 202–220; see also Richter, Khrushchev’s Double Bind.
27 See Khrushchev, Crises and Missiles, pp. 30–37.
28 Memo by Thompson on U-2 incident, 16 May 1960.
29 Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, p. 204.
30 Dobrynin, In Confidence, p. 43.
31 Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, p. 205.
32 Khrushchev, Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower, p. 389.
33 See Appendices.
34 Trachtenberg, A Constructed Peace, pp. 277–278.
35 Beschloss, Mayday, p. 379.
36 Ibid.
37 Burlatsky, Khrushchev and the First Russian Spring, pp. 156–157.
38 See Khrushchev, Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower, p. 391, and Beschloss, Mayday, pp. 156–157.

APPENDICES

1 Meeting of Heads of Government, PREM 11/2992, Annex III.
3 Ibid.

210
I Primary Sources

Unpublished

Great Britain

CAB 131 Defence Committee: Minutes and Memoranda.
CAB 133 Commonwealth and International Conferences.
DEFE 4 Ministry of Defence: Chiefs of Staff Committee: Minutes.
DEFE 5 Ministry of Defence: Chiefs of Staff Committee: Memoranda.
DEFE 6 Ministry of Defence: Joint Planning Staff Reports.
FO 371 General Correspondence: Political.
PREM 11 Prime Minister’s Office: Correspondence and Papers.

Soviet Union

Storage Centre for the Preservation of Contemporary Documents (TsKhSD), Moscow,
CPSU Central Committee Archive, Fund 5.
Archives of the Foreign Policy of the USSR (AVP RF) Moscow, Fund 069.

DDR

Archive of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO Barch), Berlin.

Private Papers

Conservative Party Archives, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
Duncan Sandys’ Papers, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge University.
Selwyn Lloyd’s Papers, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge University.
Published Document Collections

**Great Britain**


**Germany**


**United States**


National Security Archive on Microfilm, Liddell Hart Archive, King’s College London.

**Newspapers and periodicals**

*Guardian*

*Daily Telegraph*

*Novoye Vremya*

*Sunday Times*

*The Times*

**Interviews**

Adzhubei, Alexei, Khrushchev’s son-in-law, ex-Editor of Izvestiya, ex-member of the Central Committee of the USSR, Moscow, 12 September 1991.

Aknalkatsi, Dimitri, S. Research Fellow, US Canada Institute, Moscow, 13 September 1991.

Aksuitin, Yury, Lecturer at the former Communist Party School, which became the University of the Humanities in 1991; Member of the Central Committee during Khrushchev’s era, 12 September 1991.

Batyyuk, Vladimir, Research Fellow US Canada Institute, Moscow, 13 September 1991.

Chubarian, Professor, Head of the Institute of General History, Russian Academy of Sciences, April 1994.

Filitov, Dr. Alexei, German Expert at the Institute of General History, Russian Academy of Sciences, 8 September 1991.

Melnikova, Professor V. Institute of General History, Russian Academy of Sciences, 8 September 1991.
MEMOIRS AND DiARIES


II Secondary Sources

BIBLIOGRAPHY


215


**Articles**

Unpublished material

PhD theses


Articles – CWIHP working papers

Burr, W., ‘Comments’, introductory speech at the CWIHP Conference on ‘The Soviet Union, Germany and the Cold War, Essen, June 1994.


INDEX

Acheson, Dean 18
Adenauer, Konrad: anti-British stance of 58–9, 84, 104; and Berlin access 43, 50, 52, 116, 123, 133, 134, 135, 136–7, 161–2, 164, 176–7; contact with East Germany 91, 92, 123; meeting with Macmillan 80, 87–90; and nuclear armament 27, 96, 99–100; relations with France 54, 169; response to FO Memorandum 8133 41; and reunification 20, 60, 61, 85, 99, 170; Soviet attacks on 138; US support for 3, 171
Adzhubei, Alexsei: and Khrushchev’s visit to Peking 131; and Macmillan’s visit to Moscow 36; at Paris Conference 157, 158–62, 177; relations with China 10–11; relations with Khrushchev 2, 7, 8; and U-2 crisis 147, 175
Agency Theory 42–4, 45, 46–7, 50, 60, 76, 93–4, 95
Aksuitin, Yury 11, 28
Aldermaston March 63
Allied Commanders in Chief, Germany 58
Allied Control Council (ACC) 16, 17
Allied High Commissioners, Germany 42
Allies: contingency planning 42–4; impact of Macmillan’s visit to Soviet Union 56–9, 78–81; need for conciliatory stance 80; negotiations for Interim Agreement 132–5; planning for negotiations with Soviet Union 94–5; reaction to Soviet Note of 27 November 1958 44–50; Soviet draft note to 186
Ambrose, Stephen 146
Andropov, Yury 25
Anglo-French mission to Soviet Union (1939) 69
Anglo-French relations 83–4
Anglo-German conference, Bonn (1959) 88–90
Anglo-German relations 58–9, 83–4, 87–8
Anglo-Soviet communiqué, March 1959 77–8, 86
Anglo-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty, proposal for 64, 68–9, 74, 77, 82
Anglo-US Minute on Contingency Planning for Berlin (1959) 93–4
Anglo-US relations 13–14, 83–4, 169–70
Associate Agreement on Control Machinery in Germany (1945) 22
Atomic Energy Commission 146
Austrian State Treaty (1955) 18
Baghdad Pact (1955) 13
Bay of Pigs 71
Beria, Lavrentii 6, 10, 18–19
INDEX

Berlin Blockade (1948–1949) 17, 23
Berlin Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (1954) 19, 20
Berlin Revolt (1953) 19
Berlin Wall 71
Bermuda Conference (1957) 14, 15, 137
Bevan, Aneurin, 31, 46
Bevin, Ernest 17
Bishop, Sir Frederick (Freddie): on Macmillan 12; role as PPS 13, 47–8, 53, 169; visit to Moscow 63, 70
Brentano, Heinrich von 43, 84, 88–9, 96, 97, 100
Brezhnev, Leonid 2, 154, 156
Britain: contribution to Allied planning for Soviet negotiations 94–5; Defence Committee 12, 27–8; Defence White Paper (1958) 14; delegation to NATO Council 155; discussions with France 97–8; Dulles’ visit to 59–62; Foreign Office Memorandum 8113 40–1; foreign policy objectives 12–15; initiative on Berlin 51–4; Jebb Memorandum 48, 52, 53–4, 55, 90, 170; Lloyds’s meeting with Allies 135–6; Macmillan’s visit to Soviet Union 35–8, 56–9, 63–82, 170–1; Macmillan’s visits to Paris, Bonn and Washington (March 1959) 83–94, 171; mediation role of 151, 153–4, 169–71; Ministry of Defence, study on Berlin 55–6; Outline Plan for European Security (1958) 56; perceptions of Soviet policy 75–8; policy impact of Macmillan’s visit to Moscow 79–80; policy on Berlin 10–27 November 1958 39–40; policy towards Soviet Union December 1958–February 1959 51–4; Prime Ministerial Directive February 1959 52–3, 55–6, 90, 92; public opinion 35, 43, 45–6, 52, 57, 59, 63, 70, 122; reaction to Soviet Note of 27 November 1958 44–50; role in contingency planning 42–4, 46–7; and Soviet proposals for Interim Agreement 182–3; Soviet visit to 45; world status 13, 14; see also Anglo-US relations; Anglo-German Relations; Anglo-Soviet communiqué; Anglo-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty; Anglo-US Minute on Contingency Planning; Anglo-US relations
British Cabinet: Butler’s report to 70–1; Lloyd’s reports to 43–4, 97, 100, 109–10, 112–13; Macmillan’s reports to 53–4, 79–81, 89, 123; reaction to Geneva Conference 119; Review of Geneva Conference 107, 121
British Chiefs of Staff (COS) 13, 51–2, 55, 56, 58, 94
British Foreign Office: assessment of Soviet aims 39–40, 44–6; brief for Macmillan’s Washington visit 90–1; contingency planning concerns 52, 93–4; and Interim Agreement 133; Memorandum 8113 40–1, 48–9, 51–2, 55–6, 59–60, 135; preparations for Foreign Ministers’ Meetings 48–9, 143; preparations for Macmillan’s visit to Moscow 2, 63–4; Steering Committee report 83–4
Brooke, Sir Norman 63
Bruce, David 26, 27, 97
Brussels Pact (1948) 17
Bucharest Communist Party 156
Bucharest Conference (1960) 132
Bulganin, Nikolai 10
Bundestag: Defence Committee of 140; Resolution (July 1958) 28–9; Resolution (March 1958) 26
Bundeswehr, fears at rearmament of 26–8, 37–8, 82
Burlatsky, Fedor 11, 157, 177
Burr, Dr William 2
Butler, R. A. 70
Caccia, Sir Harold 40, 52, 53, 56, 57, 113, 134
Camp David Agreement: background to 122–7, 172–3; impact on negotiations within Western Alliance 132–5; impact on Sino-Soviet relations 129–32; impact on Soviet relations with the West 127–9
CDU 26
China: Khrushchev’s visit to 131–2; meeting with Warsaw Pact countries (1959) 104; opposition to Khrushchev’s détente policy 156, 157, 158; see also Sino-Indian conflict; Sino-Soviet relations
Christian Democratic Party 89
Churchill, Winston 4, 13, 14, 15, 19, 22
CIA 145–6, 147, 158, 173
Clay, Lucius 16
INDEX

CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) 46; see also Aldermaston March
Cold War History Project, Washington 2
Communist Party: anti-Party coup (1957) 7, 10; anti-Party Group 24, 157; Central Committee 29, 36–8, 75, 103, 147, 155, 158; Praesidium 7, 19, 28–9, 131, 155–6, 157–8, 158, 159, 175; Twentieth Congress 6, 22, 167; Twenty-First Congress 9, 32, 35
Conservative Party 12, 35, 79
Couve de Murville, Maurice 41, 86, 96, 116, 118, 144
Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) 2, 177
Czechoslovakia 56, 87; Communist coup (1948) 17

Daily Telegraph 78
de Gaulle, Charles: and Berlin access 85, 96; correspondence with Khrushchev 128; and Interim Agreement 133, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 150, 162, 173; on Khrushchev 71, 136, 137; at Paris Summit 152, 153; recognition of East Germany 96; relations with Adenauer 3, 43, 136, 137, 169; relations with Britain 12, 84; and reunification 125; visit to Britain 80, 89–90, 97–8
de Zulueta, Philip: on Khrushchev 71; and Memorandum 8113 48–9; role as policy advisor 13, 47, 48, 53, 169; and Soviet initiative 39; visit to Moscow 63
Debré, Michel 85–6
Democratic Party 20, 145
Dillon, Douglas 148
Divine, Robert 146
Dixon, Sir William 58
Dobrynin, Anatoly 147, 176, 177
Dolgilevich, P.B. 26
Donbass Workers’ Movement 6
Dulles, Allen 147, 150, 153
Dulles, John Foster: appointment as Secretary of State 19–20; and Berlin access 43, 48–9, 52, 57–8; illness of 45, 63, 91, 94, 107; meeting with Mikoyan 34–5; reaction to Macmillan’s Moscow visit 53; on Soviet Union 127; on Strauss 26–7; visit to UK 36, 57, 59–62
Dunn, David 8

East Germany: destabilising influences 25–6; diplomatic recognition of 21–2, 24–6, 28–30, 40–1, 48–9, 76; Note of 30 September 1958 29; Note of 7 January 1959 33; objectives for Geneva Conference 104–5; participation in Geneva Conference 34; role in issue of Soviet Ultimatum 24–6
East–West relations: background (1945–1958) 15–23; Camp David as turning point 172–3; Khrushchev’s review of 65–6; need to normalise 14–15
East–West Summits see Geneva Summit; Paris Summit
Eastern Bloc: fears of Bundeswehr rearmament 26–8, 31; Soviet desire to strengthen hold of 76–7
Ebert, Friedrich 28
Economist, The 32
EDC Treaty (1954) 21
Eden Plan 19, 36, 47, 73, 82
Eden, Anthony 14, 21
Eisenhower, Dwight: acceptance of moratorium agreement 113, 161–2; and Agency Theory 60; ‘Atoms for Peace’ speech 20; confrontational stance of 42, 43; correspondence with Macmillan 133; and Free City plan 49; and Geneva Conference 116–17, 118, 119–20; inauguration 19–20; and Interim Agreement 132–3, 134–5, 165–6; meeting with Macmillan 90–4; meetings with Khrushchev 4, 110, 122–7, 139, 142, 165, 172; Note to Khrushchev 109, 111; nuclear strategy 14, 96; and Paris Summit 152, 153, 154, 173–5, 177–8; reaction to Macmillan’s Moscow visit 71, 79; support for Adenauer 3; and U-2 crisis 1, 145–54, 155, 156, 158–9, 160; US defence under 3; visit to Europe 122–3; and Western Summit 137
European Defence Community 18
European Economic Community 20, 43, 54, 84, 87
European Free Trade Area 87
European security: British perceptions of Soviet policy 75–8; discussed on Macmillan’s visit to Moscow 64, 66, 67–8; Soviet concessions on 75–8; ‘Exercise Oldster’ 174

Foreign Affairs 124

222
INDEX

Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (March 1959) 96–7; see also Berlin Foreign Ministers’ Meeting; Geneva Foreign Ministers’ Meeting; Istanbul Foreign Ministers’ Meeting; Moscow Foreign Ministers’ Meeting; Paris Foreign Ministers’ Meeting

Four Power Agreements (1944/1945) 50

Four Power Working Group 50, 55, 56, 90, 94–5, 96, 97, 98–100, 106, 137, 142–4, 161, 165

France: Communist Party in 17; discussions with Britain 97–8; fears of German rearmament 21; Khrushchev’s visit to 140–1, 173; Macmillan’s visit to 83–7, 171; meetings with Allied Foreign Ministers in Washington 135–6; reaction to FO Memorandum 8133 41

Franco-German accord (1958) 3

Franco-German axis 47, 54, 98

Gaitskell, Hugh 79

Gates, Thomas 156

Geneva Foreign Ministers’ Conference (1959) 9, 14, 36, 61, 171; comparison of Soviet and Western Papers 179–81; final communiqué 120; final session 114–17; recess 112–13; Soviet policy prior to 101–5; Soviet proposals on Berlin 109–12; Western Plan/Soviet proposals 105–8; Western proposals on West Berlin 108–9; Western/Soviet Papers (28 July 1959) 117–21

Geneva Summit (1955) 14, 18, 21–2, 36, 55, 60, 65, 68–9, 97, 127

German Democratic Republic see East Germany

German Federal Republic see West Germany

Germany: background to problems (1945–1958) 15–23; British perceptions of Soviet policy 75–8; confederation proposals 67; negotiations with Britain on Berlin November 1959 135–6; peace treaty 10, 33–4, 53, 65, 76, 106–8; problem of (1945–58) 15–23; see also Anglo-German relations; East Germany; West Germany

Gomulka, Wladyslav 31, 44

Goodpaster, General Andrew Jackson 146–7, 173, 174

Gorbachev, Mikhail 2

Gordievsky, Oleg 169

Gray, Gordon 134

Grechko, General Andrei 156

Gromyko, Andrei: Central Committee reports 29–30; at Geneva Conference 106, 107, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115–16, 117, 118–20, 121, 143, 172, 173; and Macmillan’s visit to Moscow 35, 56, 64, 68, 73–4; meeting with West German Ambassador 102; meetings with Lloyd 169, 171; and nuclear testing 154; role as Foreign Minister 7; and U-2 crisis 148, 150, 159, 160

Guardian 140, 155

Gulag 9

H-bomb 18

Hallstein Doctrine 21

Hancock, Pat 39

Harriman, Averell 113, 128

Harrison, Hope 11

Healey, Denis 8, 44, 46, 79

Herter, Christian: appointment as Secretary of State 171; and Berlin access 134; and contingency planning 93; at Foreign Ministers’ Meeting 100; at Geneva Conference 105–6, 107, 108, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 120; on Paris Summit 141–2; and relationship with East Germany 97; report to Congress 126; and reunification 170; and U-2 crisis 148, 149, 150, 152

Hill, Charles 46

Horne, Alistair 12

House of Commons 46, 79

Hoyer-Millar, Sir Frederick 39, 154

Humphrey, Hubert 30

Hungary 22, 24

ICBMs (Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles) 33, 102, 139, 145, 146, 147

Industrial Academy, Moscow 6

Interim Agreement negotiations: background to Camp David Agreement 122–7; British negotiations with France and Germany 135–6; impacts of Camp David 127–35; Macmillan’s diplomacy January–May 1960 141–2; preparation of Interim Agreement 142–4; Soviet diplomacy January–March 1960 138–41; Western Summit December 1959 136–8
INDEX

International Review Lecture, Moscow 138
IRBMs (intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles): ban on 56, 99; NATO plans for 10, 22, 26–7, 48; range of 102, 169
Irish Times 165
Istanbul Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, (1960) 143, 144
Italy, Communist Party in 17
Izvestiya 2, 36
Japan 16
Jebb Memorandum 48, 52, 53–4, 55, 90, 170
Jebb, Sir Gladwyn: and all-German Committee proposal 62; in Anglo-French talks 98
Kennan, George 16, 18, 177
Kennedy, John F. 71, 154, 165–6, 174, 177
KGB 169
Khrushchev, Nikita: correspondence with de Gaulle 111, 139; correspondence with Lloyd 114–15; correspondence with Macmillan 31–2, 102–3, 141, 148–9; electoral speech 68–9, 71–2, 73, 81; historical consensus on 1; meeting with Harriman 113; meetings with Macmillan 63–72, 75–8; and Paris Summit 175–6; personality/policy objectives 5–12, 167–8; present consensus 2; quest for summit talks 167; reaction to U-2 flights 147–60; relations with Mao Tse Tung 11, 129–32; review of East–West relations 65–6; speech of 31 March 1959 101; speech to Supreme Soviet 138; at Twenty-First Party Conference 32–3; visit to France 140–1, 173; visit to US 122–7; willingness to make concessions 111–12, 143
Khrushchev, Sergei 2, 148, 150, 151, 152, 157, 159, 175, 177
Kiev, Macmillan’s visit to 72–3
Killian, James 145
Kissinger, Henry 177
Kistiakowsky, George 174–5
Kline, Ray 145
Kohler, Fay 42, 49
Korean War 18, 20
Kozlov, Frol 116, 155, 157
Kroll, Hans 101–2
Kurier Polski, 31
Kurchatov, Igor 9
Kuusinen, Otto 155
Kuznetsov, Vasily 72, 73, 74, 115
Labour Party 15, 79
Lashmar, Paul 146
Ledwidge, Sir Bernard 40–1, 81
LeMay, Curtis 146
Leningrad, Macmillan’s visit to 73–4
Leninism 6, 127, 130
LIVE OAK planning group 94
Lloyd, Selwyn: in Cabinet 43–4, 47; at Foreign Ministers’ Meeting 48–50, 99, 100; at Geneva Conference 107–11, 113, 114–16, 117, 118, 120; in House of Commons 46; and Interim Agreement 128–9, 133–4, 142–4; meetings with Allies 135–6, 161; and memorandum 8113 41, 112; relations with Macmillan 12–13, 14; talks with Dulles 59; and U-2 crisis 152, 153, 174; visit to Bonn 88, 90; visit to Moscow 48, 55, 57, 67, 68, 69–70, 73–4, 171; visit to Paris 85, 86
London Accords (1948) 17
MacMahon Act 14
Malenkov, Georgi 6, 7, 18, 19, 24
Malik, Yakov 36, 128–9, 148
INDEX

Malinovsky, Rodion 7, 145, 148, 156, 159, 160
Mao Tse Tung 2, 11, 151, 156, 157; relations with Khrushchev 129–32
Marshall Plan (1947) 17
Marxism 6
Marx, Karl 15–16
McElroy, Neil 27
Medvedev, Roy 130
Merchant, Livingston 52, 61
Mikoyan, Anastan 7, 36, 64, 72, 73, 175; visit to US 34–5
Molotov, Viacheslav 6, 7, 10, 18–19, 24, 127
Monnet, Jean 18
Moscow Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (1947) 17
Mountbatten, Lord Louis 51
Murphy, Robert 116, 149
Murray, Leo 165

NASA 147, 148
National Security Archive, Washington 2
National Security Council (NSC), US 15, 18, 19–20, 42, 49, 61
NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation): British membership/ support of 13, 14, 54, 169–70; Council Meetings 39, 46, 47, 50, 55, 61, 97, 111, 155; formation of 17–18; French withdrawal from 88; German participation in 22, 28, 33–4, 36, 53, 77, 99, 106; German weapons requirements 27; installation of IRBM bases 10; land probe agreement 51; non-aggression pact with Warsaw Pact 103, 105; Outline Plan for German Reunification and Security (1957) 48, 55; Review of 58; Soviet Note to 31–2; task force 140; threats to unity of 21, 69, 86, 87, 89
New York Times 31, 149
Nixon, Richard 148
Norstad, Lauris 27, 43, 93, 94, 140
North Atlantic Alliance 62
Novikov, Ignati 158
Novoye Vremya 31, 35–6
Nuclear Test Conference, Geneva 141
Nye, Joseph 14

O’Neill, Con 78
Oder–Neisse Line 19, 24
Okrugina, Marina 9

Ollenhower, Eric 161
Open Skies proposal 145

Paris Agreements (1955) 21, 39, 129
Paris Declaration (1958) 51
Paris Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (1957) 55
Paris Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (1958) 49–50, 51, 52
Paris Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (1959) 98–100, 171
Party of German Unity (SED), 25; opening of archives 162, 164
Passport Law, East Germany 25
Penkovsky, Oleg 145
Pentagon 4, 49, 142, 147, 148, 172
Pervukhin, Mikhail 25, 26, 29, 139
Poland 22, 24, 31, 56, 87
Politburo 6, 111, 176
Pospelov, Petr 155
Potsdam Agreement (1945) 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 28, 45
Powers, Gary 1, 145, 147, 148, 149, 154
Pravda 36, 72, 130, 141, 147, 160, 165
Quadripartite Agreement (1944) 3
Quemoy/Matsu, Chinese attack on 131, 132

Rapacki Plan (1957) 10, 22, 27, 31, 36, 56, 64, 78, 87, 89
Red Army 6, 155–6, 157, 158
Reilly, Sir Patrick: at Geneva Conference 115; on Khrushchev 7, 11, 155, 165, 175; and Macmillan’s visit to Moscow 35, 36, 56, 65, 69, 70, 72, 73, 78, 79; and nuclear disarmament 154
Republican Party 20
Reston, James 149
Roberts, Sir Frank 31, 39, 121
Romanian Communist Party 154
Rumbold, Sir Anthony 39, 43, 48–9, 53, 55, 63, 162

Sakharov, Andrei 8, 9, 139
Salinger, Pierre 8
Sandys, Duncan 14
Scherpenberg, Hilger Albert von 58
Schmidt, Helmut 26
Schumann Plan (1950) 18
SDP (Social Democratic Party) 26
SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) 13
Segni, Antonio 132
Sino-Indian conflict 131
Sino-Soviet relations 10–12, 32–3, 67, 140, 156, 158; impact of Camp David 129–32, 173, 175
Smirnov, Andrei 138, 161
Smith, Gerard 58
Soviet draft peace treaty 10 January 1959 33–4
Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID), 28–9, 37, 65–6, 68–9, 75, 81, 103, 129, 139
Soviet Note of 10 December 1958 30–2
Soviet Note of 10 January 1959 33–4, 53, 106
Soviet Note of 13 December 1958 31–2
Soviet Notes of 18 October 1955 23
Soviet Note of 2 March 1959 74, 84
Soviet Note of 27 November 1958 26, 33, 34, 50, 65, 69, 75–6; Allies’ reaction to 44–50; background to 3, 15, 22–3, 28–30; role played by East Germany in 24–6
Soviet Ultimatum see Soviet Note of 27 November 1958
Soviet Union: Allied planning for negotiations with 94–5; British perceptions of policy 75–8; British policy towards (December 1958–February 1959) 51–4; clarification of intentions on Berlin 30–2; desire for disarmament 9–12; diplomacy (January–March 1960) 138–41; diplomatic mission to US 34–5; draft note to Allies (11 May 1960) 186; fears of Bundeswehr rearmament 26–8; foreign policy objectives 5–12; Kremlin 11, 157, 159, 131; Macmillan’s visit to (1959) 35–8, 56–9, 63–81, 170–1; objectives for Geneva Conference 104–5; opening of Archives 156–7; Papers of 28 July 1959 117–21, 179–81; policy on Berlin (November–February (1959) 24–38; policy prior to Geneva Conference 101–5; proposals of June 1959 105–8, 109–12; proposals of May 1960 160–5, 182–3, 185; reaction to Macmillan’s visit 81–2; reaction to U-2 crisis 154–60; relations with the West following Camp David Agreement 127–9, 172–3; Seven Year Plan 32, 102; ‘Starting Points and Possibilities for Compromise on the West Berlin Question’ (May 1960) 162–4; Supreme Soviet 127–8, 129, 138, 148; talks with Britain (2 March 1959) 75–8; see also German peace treaty; Sino-Soviet relations
Soviet-Polish Friendship Meeting (1958) 22
Spaak, Henri 26
SPD 137
Sputnik 10
Sputnik 10, 22
Stalin, Josef: death of 19, 65; Khrushchev’s denunciation of 2, 11, 129, 131; policy aims 16–17, 18
Stalinism 6–7, 22
Steel, Sir Christopher 27
Strauss, F. J. 26–7
Süd-Deutsche Zeitung 30–1
Suez crisis 10, 12, 13, 22, 69
Sunday Times 70
Suslov, Mikhail 139, 155, 156
Tass 72, 126, 140
Taubman, William 157
Test Ban Treaty, negotiations for 9–10
Thompson, Llewellyn, 78, 101, 113, 132–3, 150, 175–6
Thor missiles 14
Thorneycroft, Peter 47
Times, The 12, 35, 63, 78
Tito, Josef Broz 131
Trachtenberg, Marc 26, 168–9
Tripartite Ambassadorial Group, Bonn 42, 93
Tripartite Meeting (December 1959) 137
Troyanovsky, Oleg 10, 147, 157, 158, 159
Truman Doctrine (1947) 17
Truman, Harry S. 20
Twining, General Nathan 93, 146, 173
U-2 crisis: analysis of Soviet reaction 154–60; overview 1, 3, 4, 12; repercussions 160–6, 173–6; unfolding of 145–54
U-2 programme 10
Ulbricht, Walter: at Camp David 128; and confederation 22, 105; and nuclear armament 140; relations with Khrushchev 1, 11–12; reporting on

INDEX

226
Khrushchev’s summit strategy 111–12; role in issue of Soviet Ultimatum 24–6; and SED Party Archive 162, 164; and Soviet Note 44; talks with West Berlin Senate 139; vision for Germany 28, 29, 30, 31, 173

United Nations (UN) 48, 58, 66, 90, 95, 103, 104, 105, 107, 132, 134, 135, 163

United States (US): contacts with China 132; Dulles’ visit to UK 59–62; Khrushchev’s visit to 122–7; Macmillan’s visits to 83–4, 90–4, 142, 171; Mikoyan’s visit 34–5; ‘New Look’ defence strategy 20; reaction to Macmillan’s visit to Russia 57–8; see also Anglo-US relations

US Chiefs of Staff 43
US Defense Department (DOD) 27, 142, 146
US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) 26, 42–3, 146
US State Department 26–7, 49, 95, 113, 136, 142, 147, 148, 149, 150, 172

Vershinin, Konstantin 151
Vinogradov, Sergei 160

Warsaw Pact (1955) 21, 28, 31–2, 33, 34, 37, 56, 77, 103, 105, 106
Warsaw Pact countries, meeting with China (1959) 104
Werth, Alexander 158
West Berlin; Western proposals (1959) 108–9
West Germany: demands for contingency planning 42–4; fears at rearmament of 26–8, 31; Macmillan’s visit to 87–90, 171; meetings with Allied Foreign Ministers in Washington 135–6; objectives for Geneva conference 104–5; reaction to FO Memorandum 8133 41; reaction to Macmillan’s visit to Moscow 58–9
West: impact of Macmillan’s visit to Soviet; Union 56–9, 78–81; relations with Soviet Union following Camp David Agreement 127–9
West–East relations see East–West Relations

Western Alliance, impact of Camp David on negotiations for Interim Agreement 132–5

Western Europe; economic rehabilitation of 17–18

Western European Union (WEU) Protocols 100
Western Papers: (16 June 1959) 110–12; (28 July 1959) 117–21, 179–81
Western Plans: (1955) 106; (1957) 53; (1959) 105–8
Western Powers’ communiqué, (April 1959) 100
Western proposals 3 June 1959 108–9
Western Summit 136
Wynne, Greville 134

Yalta Conference (1945) 16

Zakharov, General M. 156
Zhukov, Georgi 7, 155, 157
Zorza, Victor 140, 155
Zubok, Vladimir 8, 10, 11