

Cable from Cecil Lyon to the State Department Reported on Afternoon Meeting of the Western Commandants, 17 June 1953, 9:00 p.m. CET

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

ACTION COPY

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Rec'd: June 17, 1953 6:37 p.m.

From: BERLIN

To: Secretary of State

No: 1676, June 17, 9:00 p.m.

CDT's [Commandants] reconvened again this afternoon to discuss Berlin developments. Following again was taken:

(1) Press release issued, as follows:

“The British, French and US CDTs met with the Berlin municipal authorities this morning. Together they considered all aspects of present situation. The CDTs and the Berlin authorities fully agreed on the need of maintaining public order in the Western Sectors and on the advisability of adopting a completely calm attitude.

They noted certain information according to which demonstrations in Soviet Sector were alleged to have been incited by West Berlin agents. Since such allegation may give rise to serious misunderstandings as to the origin of such demonstrations, the French, British and US CDTs stressed clearly that, neither the Allied authorities nor the West Berlin authorities have, in any manner whatsoever, either directly or indirectly, incited or fostered such demonstrations.”

(2) Again discussed West Berlin sympathy rally, since Berlin authorities reported that it was too late to change locale thereof. French and British Generals felt that CDTs should order police to prohibit holding of meetings at Oranien Platz. General Timberman argued that even if order given it would probably be impossible for Police to execute order as crowds already gathering. Finally it was decided to send word to Dr. Suhr, who was addressing meeting, that he should do his best to move crowd away from sector border in order to avoid spilling German blood.

(3) Considered question of having chairman CDT call on Dengin with view to urging restraint on part of Soviets. French CDT indicated that French High Commissioner with whom he had discussed possibility of some such action urged that initiative by Allies on this matter be delayed.

(4) British CDT stated he had received information from British High Commissioner that latter had communicated with Vienna and requested that all possible be done to assist and expedite Reuter's return to Berlin.

(5) CDTs decided refrain from using Allied military personnel in disturbance unless disorders became widespread in all Western Sectors or extremely serious in any one or more Sector. In case of such emergency if time permitted CDTs would meet and discuss question before issuing orders. However, if situation was so pressing then any one of CDTs would make his own decision re using his troops in his own Sector.

(6) Instructed communication officers to ascertain facts on S-Bahn situation since considerable number of S-Bahn trains are at present idle in the Western Sector.

Latest reports indicate SPD meeting at Oranien Platz took place without disturbance in originally announced location. Crowd, which was in neighborhood of 35,000, was quiet and speeches given by [West Berlin union leader Ernst] Scharnowski and [Joachim] Lipschitz were not (repeat not) inflammatory. Both speakers demanded free elections with Scharnowski emphasizing need for free unions in Soviet Zone and Lipschitz stressing necessity Allied action to solve German question. Most surprising feature of speeches was statement by Lipschitz to effect entire disturbances manipulated by Soviets in order get rid of SED Government.

Large restrictive crowd which had gathered both sides Potsdamer Platz disbursed about 8:15 [p.m.] after intermittent shootings and several buildings on East side set fire.

CDTs plan meet again in morning at 9:30 [a.m.] though all three prepared meet any time during night if situation requires.

Lyon

MGG: MEJ/1

Note: Advance copy to Mr. Montenegro 6/17/53, 9:45 p.m. EH.

[Quelle: NARA, RG 59, 662A.0221/6-1753, dok. in: Christian F. Ostermann (Hg.), Uprising in East Germany. The Cold War, the German Question and the First Major Upheaval Behind the Iron Curtain. National Security Archive Cold War Readers, New York: CEU Press 2001, Dokument Nr. 34, S. 198/99.]