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Source: *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 3, Why Great Men are, or Are Not, Elected President (Summer, 1980), pp. 306-316

Published by: Wiley on behalf of the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27547587>

Accessed: 25-07-2018 14:38 UTC

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HARRY S TRUMAN, THE BERLIN BLOCKADE AND THE 1948 ELECTION

by

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On June 24, 1948, after several months of limited interference with Western access to Berlin, the Soviet Union halted rail, canal and road traffic between this city and the Western occupied zones of Germany. Occupying a sector of the city, the United States was compelled to respond to the imposition of this blockade. This essay examines the nature of the American response and the nature of its determination. It moves beyond an investigation of American decisions and decisionmaking during the blockade to scrutinize the impact on these decisions of President Harry S Truman's concurrent participation in a difficult campaign to win the Democratic Party's presidential nomination and the subsequent contest for the presidency. While Robert A. Divine has studied the impact of foreign policy on the election of 1948, the impact of electoral politics on foreign policy during the Berlin blockade crisis requires clarification.¹ Such clarification is necessary if Truman's decisionmaking in this prolonged crisis situation is to be fully comprehended and if his presidential character and style are to be more adequately portrayed.

As is well known, the background to the Soviet blockade lay in the breakdown of co-operation between the Soviets and the Western powers in the joint management of occupied Germany. After the failure of the Council of Foreign Minister's meeting in November, 1947, the United States, Great Britain and France began to discuss Germany's future exclusive of the Soviet Union. In February, 1948, the three powers joined by the Benelux countries met in London and by March they decided to draw the Western

zones of Germany into the European Recovery Program to foster their economic reconstruction. Integrally linked with this proposal was a plan to reform the currency in the Western zones. Furthermore, the London Conference announced plans moving towards the establishment of a separate government in West Germany.²

The Soviet Union publicly protested Western actions in Germany and started to impose restrictions on Allied access to Berlin and to withdraw from the Joint Allied decision making bodies for Germany. In brief outline, in January of 1948 the Western powers, needing to supply both their own military personnel and the civilian population of Berlin, began to experience difficulties in the transportation of military supplies to the city. By April this had reached such a point that the United States and Britain implemented a small scale airlift, the so-called 'Little Airlift', to supply their own personnel. In March the Soviet representative left the Allied Control Council for Germany and in mid-June the Soviet commander left the Berlin Kommandatura and the Russians began to hold up civilian as well as military supply trains. The Western powers introduced the reformed currency into their German zones on June 20. After the Soviets rejected their demand for joint control of currency in Berlin they took the further step on June 24 of introducing the reformed currency into the Western sectors of the city. That same day the Russians, claiming 'technical difficulties' as their reason, severed virtually all but air traffic between West Berlin and the Western zones of Germany and drastically reduced the supply of electricity to the Western sectors.

Given such a protracted series of restrictions and disagreements it is difficult, in retrospect, to conceive of the Americans being surprised by the imposition of the full blockade. Such, however, seems to have been the case. Despite warnings from General Lucius D. Clay, United States Military Governor for Germany, as early as the Fall of 1947 that the Soviets might attempt to force the Allies out of Berlin no precautions were taken nor were contingency plans made in Washington.³ A further warning from Clay on March 5, 1948, that war might come with "dramatic suddenness" produced intense alarm but inconsequential preparations to meet a possible emergency.⁴ The increasing Soviet restrictions led only to moves to reduce the number of American dependants in Berlin and more notably to discussion, within the Department of the Army in particular, of the possibility of withdrawing from Berlin.

Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall believed the Americans might be forced to leave Berlin as a result of a Soviet blockade of military supplies. In late April, 1948, he wrote former Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson: "We will hold out in Berlin as long as it is feasible, that is until the Soviets make life unbearable for even a small group."⁵ He did not even consider the feasibility of using force to maintain the American position. Acutely aware of the weakness of the American Army, Royall leaned in the direction of the French government's position which sought Western withdrawal from a Berlin considered to be a strategic liability.⁶ The Army Secretary was not alone in holding to these views. During April General Omar Bradley, Army Chief of Staff and Royall's principal military adviser, questioned Clay about the efficacy of staying in Berlin, and mentioned "here [Washington] we doubt whether our people are prepared to start a war in order to maintain our position in Berlin." Clay, unmoved by this observation, advised firmly that the United States should remain in Berlin "unless driven out by force."⁷ However, Clay cast doubt on the possibility of the Soviet Union im-

posing a full blockade on Berlin. He believed the Russians would not take such an action because it would risk alienating the German population.⁸

In the higher echelons of the Army Department no one expected the Soviet move and a similar feeling prevailed at this time in the State Department.⁹ The Central Intelligence Agency, while warning on May 12 that "further gradual tightening of Soviet restrictions on the position of the Western Powers in Berlin is to be anticipated" had concluded by June 17 that "there is increasing reason to believe that the Kremlin is also genuinely interested in exploring the possibility of easing the tension between the USSR and the West, for tactical purposes" and it failed to predict the imminent Soviet imposition of a full blockade.¹⁰ Not surprisingly then, Truman had no warning of this Soviet action and in the weeks immediately prior to it he was pre-occupied with a whistlestop tour through Nebraska, Idaho, Washington and California aimed at boosting his flagging electoral prospects.¹¹

The United States did not attempt in any way to deter the Soviet Union from imposing the blockade.¹² The indecision among policymakers on the feasibility and desirability of staying in Berlin seemed to prevent the Administration from deterring the Soviet action. Truman certainly received no advice regarding possible deterrence measures. In short, surprised American decision makers, with one exception, faced on June 24 a crisis situation without any plans to meet it and without any guidelines to formulate such a plan. The exception was in Berlin itself where the United States Commandant for that city, Colonel Frank Howley, implemented his 'Operation Counterpunch', drawn up several months before and designed not for this specific situation but for any contingency. Under this plan electric power was generated for emergency needs, food and power were rationed and order was maintained. The thesis, advanced by Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, that the Truman Administration orchestrated the conflict over Berlin because it sought

“a manageable crisis that did not lead to war” for domestic political benefit is quite obviously *not* substantiated by evidence.¹³

After briefly consulting with his military staff and with Ernest Reuter, the leader of the Social Democrats in Berlin, General Clay decided to implement an airlift of supplies to Berlin. Clay called Lieutenant General Curtis LeMay at Wiesbaden, the European headquarters of the U.S. Air Force, and instructed him to mobilize all the aircraft at his disposal and to begin the airlift into Berlin the following day.¹⁴ Clay made his decision without consulting Washington. Although he lacked faith in the effectiveness of an airlift to overcome the blockade his action was crucial for it made any decision to retreat from Berlin more difficult.¹⁵ Also use of the airlift extended the time for negotiating a settlement.

On June 25 Clay advised the Department of the Army that the German population in Berlin would begin to suffer in a few days and that this suffering would reach a serious stage within two weeks. He recommended “a determined movement of convoys with troop protection” although he admitted “the inherent dangers of this proposal.”¹⁶ Clay’s actions on the airlift and his suggestion of an armed convoy alarmed Washington. Royall, anxious to avoid the possibility of armed conflict, ordered Clay to desist from any action, including the issuance of Western currency in Berlin, which might provoke it and he sought from Clay recommendations for American actions other than the airlift and armed convoy. The Military Governor suggested a joint Anglo-American-French note of protest and if this was rejected by the Soviet Union then putting external pressures on that nation. During this tele-conference Clay also informed Royall he was instituting an economic counterblockade, in particular stopping the flow of Ruhr coal and steel to the Soviet zone. Clay resisted any accelerated reduction of American military and civilian personnel from Berlin.¹⁷ From the beginning of the blockade crisis Clay not Washington was the chief

source of recommendations to deal with it.

Truman and his advisers first seriously discussed the Berlin blockade on June 25. After a Cabinet meeting the President met with Royall, Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal and Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett. The reluctance to let Berlin develop as an issue to ignite a war was again revealed, especially on the part of Royall. Indicative of the lack of ideas in Washington, Clay’s recommendations to Royall, given earlier that day, formed the basis of discussion. Neither was accepted. Outside retaliation, such as closing United States ports and the Panama Canal to the Soviet Union, was deemed ineffective and perhaps counterproductive if it in turn led to general economic warfare. The group dismissed the immediate dispatch of a protest note fearing it might lead to a “typewriter war.” Although the meeting agreed that “determined steps should be taken to stay in Berlin,” it refrained from adopting the courses of actions suggested by Clay and it considered no others.¹⁸ The situation remained fluid.

On June 26 Truman validated the actions taken by Clay in Berlin by directing the airlift be put on a full scale organized basis.¹⁹ The airlift was, however, viewed as little more than a palliative and on the following day—a Sunday—a conference attended by Royall, Forrestal, Lovett, Navy Secretary John Sullivan and their military and civilian advisers was held in the Army Secretary’s office. The meeting considered three courses of action—withdrawal from Berlin, retention of Berlin “by all possible means, including supplying Berlin by convoy or using force in some other manner,” and maintenance of the American position in Berlin while seeking resolution of the dispute through diplomacy and postponing the ultimate decision to stay or withdraw.²⁰ Although some discussion centered on means to augment the American position in Europe, this *ad hoc* group displayed a marked lack of decisiveness.²¹ Compounding Royall’s unwillingness to risk an armed conflict over Berlin was State’s

procrastination over the basic question of whether or not to stay in Berlin. State preferred to defer this fundamental question and to consider instead actions which might be taken prior to the Berlin situation becoming completely untenable.²² Consequently no consensus formed around any single course of action and the conferees resolved that Royall, Forrestal and Lovett should meet with Truman the following day and present the issues for his decision.

The Secretaries met with Truman on June 28. Lovett reported on their meeting the previous afternoon and introduced for discussion the specific question—"were we to stay in Berlin or not?" At this stage Truman interrupted him and said there would be no discussion on this point, stating bluntly "We were going to stay period." Royall, despite having heard Truman's forthright view, suggested the problem might not have been thought through fully. He intimated his reluctance to have the United States committed to a position, in which it might have to fight its way into Berlin, unless the consequences of this stand were recognized. Truman said that that situation would be dealt with when it developed. For him the crucial issue was that the United States was "in Berlin by terms of an agreement and the Russians had no right to get us out by either direct or indirect pressure."²³

Determined to avoid succumbing to Soviet pressure Truman made his decision without significant deliberation or an explication from his advisers of the reasons for and against remaining in Berlin. Interestingly, and at a time when the Republican convention had just nominated Thomas Dewey and when his own nomination by the Democratic Party was still not assured, Truman consulted none of his White House staff or his campaign advisers on either the substance of his decision or even about the manner in which the decision might be publicly presented. Indeed George M. Elsey, a senior member of Truman's White House staff, recalled that throughout the Berlin blockade crisis the White House staff "had no

direct role whatever in any decisions or in the execution of any of the carrying out of the airlift."²⁴ Truman himself saw little connection between the decisions to be taken during the blockade crisis and the nature of his co-incidental campaign for renomination and re-election and he did not tailor any decisions for specific domestic political effect. The President did not view the crisis as an opportunity for the management of public impressions, for the "selling" of himself and his leadership to an aroused and perturbed public despite his low standing in public opinion polls and the almost universal prognostications of his pending defeat at the hands of Thomas Dewey.

Truman's decision to remain in Berlin ended the open debate on this question among his advisers, although many still held grave reservations regarding the wisdom of his decision.²⁵ Truman made no effort to persuade or convince them that the airlift would work or that it held the potential for a permanent resolution of the crisis.²⁶ He simply revealed an unequivocal intention to stay and by implication ordered them to produce the means to do so. Unavoidably, attention then focused on the question of means to break or circumvent the blockade. Truman and his Cabinet advisers promptly resolved to use the Berlin situation for external propaganda purposes against the Russians, to continue the air supply of Berlin, to increase further the American air strength in Europe and to investigate the possibility of sending, in tandem with Britain and France, notes of protest to the Soviet Union.²⁷

Notably, the American position was publicly revealed on June 30 in a statement issued not by Truman but by his decidedly non-partisan Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, affirming the American intention to remain in Berlin.²⁸ By refusing to adopt the role of chief spokesman for his Administration's foreign policy Truman rejected an element of the campaign strategy devised by presidential adviser Clark Clifford and submitted in a long memorandum in November, 1947. Clifford had recommended that Truman

exploit foreign policy in his campaign and specifically suggested that Truman emerge more forcefully as the architect of policy so it would be identified with the President rather than with the Secretary of State.²⁹ Well aware of Clifford's tactical advice that he make foreign policy pronouncements himself, Truman's decision to have Marshall announce the American position on Berlin undoubtedly represents a deliberate foregoing on his part of the opportunity to exploit the crisis for domestic political advantage.

Significant measures were undertaken to demonstrate the extent of the American determination to remain in Berlin. On July 2 Marshall reported at a Cabinet meeting that B-29 strength in Germany had been increased from one squadron to a group.³⁰ After further deliberation within the National Security Council it was decided to send two groups of B-29s to Britain. The B-29s were intended in large part as psychological weapons. This aircraft was "known throughout the world as the atomic bomber," Walter Millis explained, "and to put a strong force of them into British bases would be to bring them within striking distance of Moscow." Truman approved this decision on July 15.³¹ He refused, however, to transfer custody of atomic weapons from civilian to military authorities. Intent on preventing an accidental or precipitous use of the weapons, the President explained to Forrestal that he intended to "keep in his hands the decision as to the use of the bomb, and did not propose to have some dashing lieutenant colonel decide when would be the proper time to drop one."³² Truman's refusal to turn over the weapons to the military and the fact that the B-29s sent to Britain were not modified to carry atomic bombs strongly suggests that no serious planning was given to the actual use of atomic weapons.³³ Such lack of planning is understandable in view of Truman's desire to avoid war and his hope to have a diplomatic settlement of the crisis. Truman, to this end, issued no ultimatums to the Soviets and made no public declarations which might interfere with such a settlement.

The first attempt at negotiating an end to the blockade took place early in July between Clay, his two Western colleagues and his Soviet opposite, Marshall Sokolosky. The meeting broke up without progress.³⁴ The Western nations then dispatched notes of protest to the Soviet Union. The American note affirmed the Western right to occupy Berlin and to enjoy free access to the city and categorically stated the American determination to uphold these rights.³⁵ The Soviet rejection of the note on July 14 convinced Clay and his Political Adviser, Robert D. Murphy, of the futility of seeking a diplomatic settlement and led them to suggest to Washington more direct means of breaking the blockade.³⁶ Debate on their suggestion took place within the Administration for a week and the decision regarding it set the future direction of American policy.

On July 10 Clay had proposed to Bradley that "if the Soviet blockade is not lifted with technical difficulties still alleged as the reason, we should advise the Soviet Government that we are prepared to overcome these technical difficulties and that we propose on a specific date to send in a convoy accompanied by the requisite bridge equipment to make our right of way into Berlin useable."³⁷ The Department of the Army asked for, and received, information regarding Clay's proposal but took no direct action.³⁸ In consequence on July 15, after reading the Soviet note of the previous day, Clay returned to this proposal and cabled Bradley that "the intransigent Soviet position as indicated in the note should be tested and I see no way in which it can be tested except by proceeding promptly with the movement of the armed convoy as I have recommended previously." He asked for authority to proceed with such a convoy as soon as it could be arranged. Bradley replied that the proposal was being carefully considered but informed Clay that the "decision for such action can obviously be taken only by the highest level."³⁹

The following day Royall requested Clay to return to Washington for discussions concerning the entire Berlin situation.⁴⁰ Clay was unable to go until July 21

and, although he continued to argue for an armed supply convoy, opposition to this tactic solidified in Washington.⁴¹ The center of opposition lay within the Joint Chiefs of Staff. All defense advisers recognized clearly the American conventional force weakness in Europe relative to the Soviet Union. Forrestal, at the apex of the defense establishment, referred to this weakness in a meeting with Truman and Marshall on July 19 pointing out the limits of the American capacity to meet any Soviet aggression. "Our total reserves were about two and a third divisions," he explained, "of which we could commit probably a third with any speed."⁴² The Joint Chiefs refused to approve Clay's proposal. Trained, as General Bradley later remarked, "in the concept that war is war and peace is peace," they did not want a limited application of force.⁴³

The issue was discussed and policy finally determined at an expanded meeting of the National Security Council on July 22. The meeting was chaired by Truman and attended by Marshall, Lovett and Counselor Charles E. Bohlen from the State Department, Forrestal, the Service Secretaries and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as Clay and Murphy. The use of armed convoys was soon rejected on the advice of the Joint Chiefs who, in Robert Murphy's view, "considered our defense establishment much too weak to enter any contest against the Red Army."⁴⁴ The issue then reverted to the possibility of using the airlift to circumvent the blockade. Clay maintained that if given enough planes the United States could hold on in Berlin indefinitely.⁴⁵ Now recognizing the full potential of the airlift, Clay presented it as more than simply a means of postponing the day of ultimate crisis. The Air Chief of Staff, General Hoyt Vandenberg, argued in reply that the concentration of aircraft necessary to supply Berlin would involve reducing American air strength elsewhere. Opposing the expansion of the airlift he indicated it would leave the United States exposed and would adversely affect American capabilities to wage warfare because it would make a major portion of the American Military Air Transport Ser-

vice vulnerable to a sudden strike by the Russians at a time when air transport would be needed on a world-wide basis.

As with the initial decision to remain in Berlin no consensus developed around either Clay's or Vandenberg's positions. No other adviser stated his views clearly and again Truman made the final decision. Considering that the airlift involved less risk than armed road convoys, Truman, still determined to remain in Berlin, decided in favor of Clay and ordered the Air Force to "furnish the fullest support possible to the problem of supplying Berlin."⁴⁶ Truman's decision against the armed convoy grew out of his perception of American military weakness in Europe and the fact that the airlift offered him a less provocative alternative. The airlift allowed him to maintain the position he had put to Marshall and Forrestal on July 19, of remaining in Berlin "until all diplomatic means had been exhausted in order to come to some kind of an accommodation to avoid war."⁴⁷ There is no evidence to substantiate Robert Murphy's assertion that Truman's decision in favor of the airlift resulted, at least in part, from his desire to avoid action which the voters might consider reckless and which would have further diminished his already bleak prospects in the oncoming election.⁴⁸

Truman made these careful and, in retrospect, correct decisions during a time of tremendous domestic political activity. On July 15 he had received the unenthusiastic nomination of the Democratic Party and, displaying no reticence to enter the political fray, immediately launched a frontal assault on the Republican Eightieth Congress. Throughout the summer and into the fall as he campaigned across the country Truman made no effort either to avoid discussion of the issues and his record as President or to try to stand above the political debate, although rather paradoxically his overconfident opponent did. Truman did not attempt to use the foreign policy crisis in Berlin to his political advantage and he continued to refrain from commenting upon it.

This is not to suggest that the Berlin

blockade did not reverberate to Truman's political advantage. Indeed, Robert Divine has argued that the "Berlin crisis was Truman's greatest asset in the 1948 election" because it blocked Thomas Dewey "from waging an all-out attack on the containment policy" and allowed Truman "to regain public confidence by his careful handling of the Berlin blockade."⁴⁹ While Divine has probably overly denigrated the relative contribution of domestic factors in Truman's victory, his argument bears substantial validity. The Berlin blockade crisis and Truman's handling of it unquestionably helped Truman to defeat Dewey but it is crucial to understand that Truman—innately political being that he was—did not seek to use the crisis to assist his campaign and deliberately refrained from doing so.⁵⁰

As Truman mounted what one author has titled "the loneliest campaign" the Berlin airlift was built up.⁵¹ It gradually rose to the point where it was capable, even during the winter months, of transporting the same tonnage of supplies as had been carried into Berlin by other means prior to the blockade.⁵² Coincident with the expanded airlift the Western powers continued their efforts to reach a diplomatic settlement. These efforts moved from Moscow where the three Western representatives met with Stalin and Molotov, back to Berlin where the discussions between the respective military governors ended in deadlock.⁵³ The Western powers then raised the matter in the United Nations Security Council but this proved futile as did attempts by other groups operating under the auspices of the United Nations.⁵⁴

During these diplomatic maneuvers, and despite some confidence that the airlift would prove adequate to supply Berlin, a deepening tension beset many American officials and an undercurrent of discontentment developed regarding Truman's decision to stay in Berlin. This discontentment, rarely noted by historians, was manifested in two conflicting directions. On the one hand Clay and his political adviser Robert Murphy were still upset that "neither our government nor its allies are willing and ready to force the

issue now."⁵⁵ A larger group viewing Berlin primarily from a military perspective took a basically contrary position. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Central Intelligence Agency both desired withdrawal as the "solution" because "neither air transport nor armed convoy in themselves offer a long-range solution to the problem," and they were supported in varying degrees by a diverse group of advisers.⁵⁶ The American ambassador to Moscow, Walter Bedell Smith, told George Kennan's Policy Planning Staff he had always opposed getting "into an exposed salient like Berlin" and expressed the hope that the discussions then taking place at the United Nations "will offer a chance for us to get out of Berlin."⁵⁷ Even Senator Arthur Vandenberg, the Republican Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told Under Secretary Lovett as early as July 19, "let's keep in mind that our 'basic position' is that we cannot be FORCED out of Berlin by duress. It is *not* that we will not GET out of Berlin voluntarily under satisfactory circumstances."⁵⁸ But Truman's steadiness and his firm adherence to his basic decision ensured that that this discontent did not surface as a serious challenge to his chosen course nor interfere with its execution.

After a hint from Stalin in late January, 1949, that he would lift the blockade in return for the lifting of the West's counter blockade the American and Soviet representatives on the UN Security Council, Philip Jessup and Jacob Malik, undertook secret negotiations resulting in an announcement on May 5, 1949, that the blockade and counter blockade would end one week later.⁵⁹ Truman's decision to extend the airlift to its fullest potential made possible the prolonged series of negotiations which ended the blockade. Truman charted a middle course between his overly cautious advisers in Washington and his perhaps dangerously impetuous commander in the field. His first basic decision—to stay in Berlin—was made over the latent opposition of important advisers in Washington. In his second fundamental decision—to build up the airlift while continuing to seek a diplomatic set-

tlement—Truman faced the explicit opposition of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the implicit opposition of many other advisers and General Clay supported the expanded airlift only after his initial proposal for an armed convoy had been rejected. That Truman was able to pursue this firmly moderate course resulted from his capacity to found his decisions upon standards uncontaminated by any desire to “manage” this particular crisis situation to his own domestic political reward.⁶⁰

Notes

1. Robert A. Divine, “The Cold War and the Election of 1948,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. LIX, No. 1 (June, 1972) pp. 99–110.
2. For greater detail of these developments see W. Phillips Davison, *The Berlin Blockade: A Study in Cold War Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958).
3. For discussion of these warnings see Jean Edward Smith, *The Defense of Berlin* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963), p. 99. Clay was very conscious of Berlin’s vulnerability and often referred to it in correspondence as “isolated Berlin.” See for example his letter to former Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, December 23, 1947, Papers of Robert P. Patterson, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., (hereafter Patterson Papers), Box 30.
4. Clay to Lieutenant General Stephen J. Chamberlain, Director of Intelligence, Army General Staff, March 5, 1948, in Jean Edward Smith, ed., *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay: Germany 1945–1949* Vol. II (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), p. 568.
5. Royall to Stimson, April 21, 1948, Stimson Papers, quoted in Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 373.
6. On the position of the French as revealed by Couve de Murville and Herve Alphonse in December, 1947, see Cyrus L. Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles: Memoirs and Diaries, 1934–1954* (New York: MacMillan, 1969), p. 369.
7. Bradley-Clay teleconference, TT-9341, April 10, 1948, Clay Papers, p. 622. Clay later claimed that he “detected some apprehension on the part of Secretary Royall and his advisers that a firm stand on our part might develop incidents involving force which would lead to war.” Lucius D. Clay, *Decision in Germany* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1950), p. 359. Clay possessed a deep emotional commitment to Berlin. In October, 1947, he told a visiting congressional delegation led by Christian Herter that even if the three Western zones were separated from the Soviet zone, he would “still keep his headquarters in Berlin until ordered out by his government or forced out by a Soviet act of aggression.” Clay’s remarks are recorded in a letter from his Special Adviser, J. Anthony Panuch, to Justice William O. Douglas, October 16, 1947, a copy of which is found in Patterson Papers, Box 43, file “Panuch, J. Anthony.”
8. Bradley-Clay teleconference, TT-9341, April 10, 1948, Clay Papers, II, p. 622.
9. Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929–1969* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), p. 276.
10. Central Intelligence Agency, “Review of the World Situation,” May 12, 1948; June 17, 1948, Papers of Harry S Truman, President’s Secretary’s File, Harry S Truman Library, Independence, Mo., Box 203, Folders “NSC Meeting No 11” and “NSC Meeting No 13.”
11. For a description of this whistlestop tour from June 4 to June 18 see Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S Truman, 1945–1948* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), pp. 396–402.
12. This point is made by Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke in *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 130.
13. For details of “Operation Counterpunch” see Frank Howley, *Berlin Command* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s, 1950), pp. 200–03. For the Kolko’s thesis see Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign policy, 1945–1954* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 491.
14. Clay, *Decision in Germany*, pp. 365–66. Note that William H. Draper, Jr., the then Under Secretary of the Army claimed that he and General Albert C. Wedemeyer, the Army’s chief planning officer, planned the airlift on a flight across the Atlantic on June 24, 1948. The available evidence indicates clearly, however, that the airlift was instituted upon Clay’s initiative. For Draper’s claim see Oral history Interview with William H. Draper, Jr., January 11, 1972, by Jerry Hess, Harry S Truman Library, transcript pp. 63–66.
15. On Clay’s lack of faith in the airlift note that he told the editor of *Neue Zeitung*, after announcing the beginning of the airlift, “I wouldn’t give you that [snap of his fingers] for our chances.” Quoted in Eugene Davidson, *The Death and Life of Germany: An Account of American Occupation* (New York: Knopf, 1961), pp. 202–03.
16. Clay to Department of Army, June 25, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*) 1948, Vol. II, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 918.
17. Royall-Clay teleconference, TT-9667, June 25, 1948, Clay Papers, II, p. 699; pp. 702–03.
18. Memorandum transcribing account by Lovett, June 28, 1948, *FRUS* 1948, II, p. 928.
19. Harry S Truman, *Memoirs* Vol. 2, *Years of*

- Trial and Hope* first pub., 1956, (New York: Signet Books, 1965), p. 148.
20. Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), pp. 452–53. Millis commented immediately after this diary entry on the *ad hoc* nature of the American response and asked, “Where . . . was all the elaborate machinery which had been set up to deal with just such situations—the CIA, which was supposed to foresee and report the approach of crisis; the National Security Council which was supposed to establish government policy; the War Council, which was supposed to transmit the policy to the military so that they should have their plans set up to meet the requirements?” *Ibid.*, p. 454. The answer to Millis’s inquiry was simply that these mechanisms failed to operate in this instance.
 21. The ‘means’ referred to the possibility of dispatching B-29 bombers to Britain and sending additional B-29 squadrons to Germany. *Ibid.*, pp. 454–55.
 22. On the State Department’s early discussions see the memorandum on the “Berlin Situation” from Charles E. Bohlen to John Hickerson, June 26, 1948, Department of State Records—Records of Charles E. Bohlen, 1941–1952, National Archives, Washington D.C., Box 5, Folder “CEB Memos, 1948.”
 23. Millis, ed., *Forrestal Diaries*, pp. 454–55. Truman’s decision to remain in Berlin derived from more than a desire to uphold the legal niceties. For him, as he later put it, “what was at stake in Berlin was not a contest over legal rights . . . but a struggle over Germany and in a larger sense, over Europe.” Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 148.
 24. Oral History Interview with George M. Elsey by Jerry N. Hess, April 9, 1970, Harry S Truman Library, transcript p. 391.
 25. For an example of military reservations over Truman’s decision to stay in Berlin note the views of Admiral William D. Leahy, the Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, who confided to his diary on June 29, 1948, that “the American military situation in Berlin is hopeless” and that “it would be advantageous to the United States prospects to withdraw from Berlin, but very bad for those Germans who joined with us in good faith to reconstruct the economy of Western Germany.” Diary Entry June 29, 1948, Diary of William D. Leahy, Papers of William D. Leahy, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Box 6.
 26. In his examination of the Berlin blockade Richard F. Haynes incorrectly states that “Truman decided on a course of action—to stay in Berlin and supply the city by air—and he then convinced his military advisers that it would work.” Truman, however, made no such effort to “convince” his advisers, firstly because he ordered them to implement the airlift rather than persuaded them of its feasibility and secondly because even he was not certain that it would work. See Richard F. Haynes, *The Awesome Power: Harry S Truman as Commander in Chief* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), p. 141.
 27. Marshall to Embassy in the United Kingdom, June 28, 1948, *FRUS* 1948, II, pp. 930–31, which outlined Departmental policy after “preliminary State/National Defense discussions with the President.”
 28. For text of the statement see Department of State *Bulletin*, July 4, 1948, p. 54. Note that despite his public statement Marshall, according to the Head of the Division of European Affairs, John D. Hickerson, was “far from decided about standing firm [in Berlin] on purely military grounds of the difficulty of defending it if the Soviet Union really was ready to use substantial force to take it over.” See “Notes on Talk with John D. Hickerson” by Herbert Feis, July 1, 1967, in Papers of Herbert Feis, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Box 76.
 29. Memorandum, Clark Clifford to Harry S Truman, November 19, 1947, Papers of Clark M. Clifford, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Mo. Clifford’s memorandum is well summarised in Alonzo L. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S Truman and American Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 209–11. Truman apparently did accept Clifford’s advice on the occasion of his tough anti-Soviet address to Congress on March 17, 1948, and in his St. Patrick’s Day speech later that day. For a discussion of this occasion see Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making of the Cold War* (New York: Norton, 1979), pp. 106–07.
 30. Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, pp. 455–56.
 31. *Ibid.*, p. 456. For the Record of Actions by the National Security Council, July 15, 1948, see National Security Council Documents, Modern Military Records, National Archives, Washington D.C., Box 1.
 32. For Truman on the custody of the Atomic Bomb see Millis, ed., *Forrestal Diaries*, p. 458. On the custody of the Atomic Bomb also see Richard G. Hewlett and Francis Duncan, *Atomic Shield: 1947–1952* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1969), pp. 167–70.
 33. Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, p. 379, notes that the B-29s were not modified to carry Atomic Bombs.
 34. On the meeting see Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 367.
 35. Secretary of State to Soviet Ambassador, July 6, 1948, *FRUS* 1948, II, pp. 950–53.
 36. Soviet Ambassador to Secretary of State, July 14, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 960–64. Truman considered the Soviet reply “a total rejection of everything we asked for.” Charles Bohlen to Secretary of State reporting on his briefing of the President, July 14, 1948, Records of Charles E. Bohlen, Box 5, Folder “Memos CEB 1948.”
 37. Clay to Bradley, July 10, 1948, *Clay Papers*, p.

733. For Clay's later views of this proposal see Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 374.
38. The Army Department's request is referred to in General Charles K. Gailey, Office of Military Government of the United States for Germany, to General Vernon E. Prichard, European Command, U.S. Army, July 12, 1948, *Clay Papers*, II, pp. 735–36. For details of Clay's proposal see Teleconference, TT-9768, July 13, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 736–38.
 39. Clay to Bradley, July 15, 1948; Bradley to Clay, July 15, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 739–40.
 40. Royall to Clay, July 16, 1948, referred to in *ibid.*, p. 740.
 41. For a further example of Clay's arguing his case see Clay to Under Secretary of the Army William H. Draper, July 19, 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 743–46. Clay noted, "while I fully appreciate the importance of diplomatic procedures . . . we must recognize that all of these measures take time under which our own situation may well deteriorate."
 42. Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, p. 459. Truman thought Forrestal's warning was a questioning of his decision to stay in Berlin. He wrote in a private memo: "Jim Forrestal wants to hedge . . . I insist we will stay in Berlin—come what may." William Hillman, ed., *Mr. President* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952), p. 140.
 43. Omar N. Bradley, "A Soldier's Farewell," *Saturday Evening Post*, August 22, 1953, p. 21.
 44. Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 316.
 45. Clay, *Decision in Germany*, p. 368.
 46. For the Record of Action by the NSC, July 22, 1948, see National Security Council Documents, Box 1. The account of the NSC meeting relies upon that given by Truman in *Years of Trial and Hope*, pp. 149–51. On this NSC meeting also note the brief summary in Note 3, *FRUS* 1948, II, p. 977. On the positions of the decision makers see Smith, *The Defense of Berlin*, p. 111, who notes that even Marshall had doubts about the course pursued.
 47. Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, p. 459.
 48. Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, p. 316.
 49. Divine, "The Cold War and the Election of 1948," p. 109.
 50. During his election campaign Truman did make one attempt use a foreign policy issue for domestic political benefit. Worried by the "peace issue" as Alonzo L. Hamby explained, Truman "allowed his associates to persuade him that a dramatic exercise in personal diplomacy would be an act of high statesmanship, not a political ploy." Thereupon Truman proposed sending Chief Justice Fred Vinson to Moscow for direct conferences with Stalin but when Secretary Marshall firmly opposed such a mission Truman quickly abandoned it. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal*, pp. 253–54. The abortive character of this attempt is perhaps illustrative of Truman's incapacity to use foreign policy for beneficial political effect.
 51. Irwin Ross, *The Loneliest Campaign: The Truman Victory of 1948* (New York: New American Library, 1968).
 52. For details of the expanded airlift note the Record of Actions by the NSC, October 14, 1948, National Security Council Documents, Box 1; and Oral History Interview with William H. Draper, transcript pp. 67–68.
 53. On the negotiations in Moscow see Walter Bedell Smith, *My Three Years in Moscow* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1950) pp. 238–53. On the negotiations in Berlin between the military governors see Clay, *Decision in Germany*, pp. 369–71.
 54. See Philip C. Jessup, "The Berlin Blockade and the Use of the United Nations," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 50, No. 1. (October, 1971), pp. 163–73; and Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the United Nations* (New York: MacMillan, 1954), pp. 199–218.
 55. Clay's views regarding his government's unwillingness "to force the issue" are found in a letter he wrote to J. Anthony Panuch, August 31, 1948, Papers of J. Anthony Panuch, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Mo., Box 13, Folder "Military Government of Germany-Mi-W." Clay also told Panuch: "I have never felt so discouraged and hopeless as now since I've been here." Murphy was so critical of Truman's decision not to use armed convoys that he regrets not having resigned in public protest. Murphy, *Diplomatic Among Warriors*, p. 317. For an incisive critique of Murphy see Dean G. Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 262.
 56. For the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff see James Forrestal's memorandum for the National Security Council on "U.S. Military Courses of Action with Respect to the Situation in Berlin," July 26, 1948, Truman Papers, PSF, Box 204, Folder "NSC Meeting No. 17." For the views of the CIA see its "Review of the World Situation," August 19, 1948, Truman Papers, PSF, Box 204, Folder "NSC Meeting No. 18."
 57. Minutes of Policy Planning Staff, September 28, 1948, Department of State Records: Records of the Policy Planning Staff, National Archives, Washington D.C., Box 32.
 58. Vandenberg to Robert A. Lovett, July 19, 1948, Papers of Arthur H. Vandenberg, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Box 3, Folder "14." (Vandenberg's emphases).
 59. Philip C. Jessup, "Park Avenue Diplomacy—Ending the Berlin Blockade," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 87, (1972), pp. 377–400.
 60. This is not to give a blanket endorsement to all of Truman's actions. Indeed the extent of his exercise of Presidential authority is questionable. As Raymond G. O'Connor has noted, "the Berlin emergency evoked no appeal to the legislative branch or a consultation with congressional leaders. Public opinion and the atti-

tude of other nations evidently played little part in the president's decision. The American response to the Berlin blockade was as near complete an exercise of executive prerogative as

the nation had seen since the end of World War II." Raymond G. O'Connor, *Force and Diplomacy* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1972), p. 131.